Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project

Monterey County, California
05-Mon-68-PM (4.8-13.7)
EA 05-1J790
Project ID 0518000061

State Clearinghouse Number 2019090448

Final Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact



Prepared by the
State of California
Department of Transportation

The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 U.S. Code 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans.

June 2025

General Information About This Document

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, has prepared this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact for the proposed project in Monterey County, California. Caltrans is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Caltrans is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The document explains why the project is being proposed, what alternatives have been considered for the project, how the existing environment could be affected by the project, the potential impacts of each of the alternatives, and the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures. The Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was circulated to the public for 60 days between November 8, 2023 and January 8, 2024. Comments received during this period are included in Appendix L. Substantive changes made since the circulation of the draft environmental document are preceded in the document sections by a statement indicating that a change was made. Minor editorial changes have not been so indicated. This document may be viewed or downloaded at the following project website: https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-5/district-5-current-projects/d5-scenic-route-68-improvements. Copies of this document are available at the Caltrans District 5 office at 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, California, and at the Transportation Agency for Monterey County offices at 55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas, California.

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State Clearinghouse Number 2019090448
05-Mon-68-4.8/13.7
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Improve operations at nine intersections along State Route 68
from post miles 4.8 to 13.7 in Monterey County

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
with Finding of No Significant Impact

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code
(Federal) 42 U.S. Code 4332(2)(C) and 49 U.S. Code 303

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

Cooperating Agencies: Transportation Agency for Monterey County
Responsible Agencies: California Transportation Commission

Tim Campbell for
Scott Eades, District 5 Director
California Department of Transportation
NEPA and CEQA Lead Agency

06/18/2025
Date

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

for the

Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has determined that Alternative 1 will have no significant impact on the human environment. This Finding of No Significant Impact is based on the attached Environmental Assessment, which has been independently evaluated by Caltrans and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. Caltrans takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached Environmental Assessment.

The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for the project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 U.S. Code 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022 and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans.

Tim Campbell for
Scott Eades, District 5 Director
California Department of Transportation
NEPA and CEQA Lead Agency

06/18/2025
Date

Summary

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

Overview of Project Area

The project is in Monterey County on State Route 68 from just west of Josselyn Canyon Road and the Monterey County Regional Airport to just east of San Benancio Road. The project covers a distance of 8.9 miles from post mile 4.8 to post mile 13.7. Within the limits of the project, State Route 68 is a two-lane highway with multiple signal-controlled intersections that are configured with additional turning lanes and acceleration/deceleration lanes. State Route 68 is an undivided highway with 12-foot lanes and 4- to 8-foot-wide paved shoulders.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to:

- Improve intersection operations to reduce vehicle delay throughout the project corridor.
- Reduce the rate and severity of collisions on State Route 68 within the project area.
- Enhance wildlife connectivity and reduce the rate of collisions between vehicles and wildlife.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian access within the project corridor.

The project is needed because of the following:

- **Intersection Operations:** Heavy congestion along the State Route 68 corridor leads to travel delays, occurring primarily at signalized intersections. According to the Intersection Control Evaluation Step 2 and Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum (Caltrans District 5, Traffic Operations, August 2023), the State Route 68 corridor is currently experiencing 6,609 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay. Daily travel delay is forecasted to rise to 18,457 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay by the year 2045 based on the existing traffic intersection controls and lane configurations. Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay is the measurement of delay in travel time within a 24-hour period between any two locations within the highway corridor compared to the time it would take without interruption from stopped or slowed traffic due to congestion or impedance. An additional method of performance measure for a given day is Daily Person Hours of Delay. This metric factors in the number of people experiencing delay in vehicles while traveling on the highway corridor. The State Route 68 corridor is currently experiencing 11,565 Daily Person Hours of Delay and is forecast to have 32,300 Daily Person Hours of Delay in the year 2045. Traffic on the State Route 68 corridor is expected to experience increased vehicle delays from 259 and 747 Vehicle Hours of Delay in the current AM (morning) Peak Hour condition and PM (afternoon) Peak Hour condition, respectively, to a projected 377 Vehicle Hours of Delay and 884 Vehicle Hours of Delay in the year 2045, respectively. Traffic delay at the corridor intersections is caused, in part, by the inefficiency of the existing intersection controls due to limited green time for each direction of travel at the intersections and the lack of coordinated signal timing among the intersections. Queueing (lines of vehicles backed-up) at intersections occurs during peak hours of the morning and late afternoon/early evening when vehicles are unable to move through the intersection during the first green light period (also referred to as a signal phase) they encounter and must wait until the next green light period to move through the intersection. This queuing results in delays along the project corridor through stop-and-go traffic conditions at multiple intersections. Queuing also routinely blocks access to upstream side streets (cross-streets at State Route 68 behind an intersection) and driveways.
- **Vehicle Collisions:** Vehicle collision rates occurring from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2019 on the State Route 68 segment from 0.1 mile west of Laureles Grade (post mile 11.1) to 0.4 mile east of San Benancio Road (post mile 13.7) exceeded the statewide average total collision rate for similar facilities. Rear-end collisions compose the majority of the collision types occurring within the project area along State Route 68 and are typically associated with congestion or stop-and-go traffic conditions during peak periods. Current traffic signals generate a full-stop condition with queuing traffic needing to come to a complete stop during the red phase for each approach to the intersection.

- **Wildlife Connectivity and Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions:** State Route 68 intersects with a critical wildlife habitat area and acts as a barrier to the wildlife corridor, routinely resulting in roadkill, property damage, and human and vehicle safety issues when various wildlife species attempt to cross the roadway. Data shows that roadkill locations were close to culverts and bridges and that improvements would allow more wildlife to use those facilities to safely cross State Route 68.
- **Multimodal Deficiencies:** Lack of bike and pedestrian refuge areas, sidewalks, and marked bike lanes, along with the high number of conflict points at intersections, leads to increased delay for both bicyclists and vehicles at intersections.

Proposed Action

The following paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Caltrans proposes to make improvements along State Route 68 within the cities of Monterey and Del Rey Oaks and the County of Monterey that would include modifying nine intersections and improving wildlife connectivity. Two Build Alternatives were evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and updated herein for potential environmental impacts: Alternative 1 would construct roundabouts in place of the existing signalized intersections, and Alternative 2 would include upgraded signalized intersections with enhanced lane configurations. Both Build Alternatives include the same wildlife crossing improvements, which include replacement of existing underground culverts at five locations and providing guidance fencing along the highway to the culvert entrances.

Joint California Environmental Quality Act/National Environmental Policy Act Document

The proposed project is a joint project by Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration and is subject to state and federal environmental review requirements. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Caltrans is the lead agency under NEPA as well as the lead agency under CEQA. In addition, the Federal Highway Administration's responsibility for environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 U.S. Code Section 327 (23 USC 327) and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans.

Some impacts determined to be significant under CEQA may not lead to a determination of significance under NEPA. Because NEPA is concerned with the significance of the project as a whole, often a "lower level" document is prepared for NEPA. One of the most common joint document types is an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. This document is a Final

Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact.

After comments from the public and reviewing agencies were received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, Caltrans prepared this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact. Caltrans has prepared addenda to environmental and/or engineering studies to address comments. This Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment includes responses to comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and identifies a preferred alternative. A Notice of Determination will be published for compliance with CEQA, and Caltrans has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for compliance with NEPA. A Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Finding of No Significant Impact has been sent to the affected units of federal, state, and local governments, and to the State Clearinghouse in compliance with Executive Order 12372.

Project Impacts

The following table lists potential impacts resulting from the project alternatives. The table was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Summary of Potential Impacts from Alternatives

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Land Use – Existing and Planned Uses, Patterns, Densities	Alternative 1 would propose changes to existing intersections along State Route 68 within the project limits and no additional access routes are proposed. No areas within the project limits or cumulative study area identified for future development would be made directly more accessible with implementation of Alternative 1. Alternative 1 is not anticipated to change current planned development patterns in either the adjacent cities or county planning areas or change existing or future land uses and/or densities.	Same as Alternative 1.	Existing and planned land uses, patterns, and densities would remain unchanged.
Land Use – Consistency with Monterey County General Plan	Alternative 1 would be inconsistent with the Monterey County General Plan's Conservation and Open Space Element regarding visually sensitive areas and transit improvements/access, and with the County's Circulation Element regarding transit improvements/access. The project would potentially be inconsistent with the County's Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan regarding development setbacks from wetlands. The project would also be inconsistent or potentially inconsistent with the County's Toro Area Plan regarding four-lane widening of State Route 68, transit improvements/access, and oak removal.	Same as Alternative 1.	Inconsistent with General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element and Circulation Element regarding transit improvements/ access.
Land Use – Consistency with City of Monterey General Plan	Alternative 1 would potentially be inconsistent with the City of Monterey General Plan's Urban Design Element regarding highway construction grading outside the roadway right-of-way.	Same as Alternative 1.	No impact

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Land Use – Consistency with City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan	No Impact	No Impact	Land uses would remain unchanged.
Coastal Zone	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Wild and Scenic Rivers	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Parks and Recreational Facilities	Alternative 1 would result in up to 6.64 acres of permanent property acquisition affecting parks/recreation facilities, and up to 0.12 acre of temporary construction easements. This alternative would require the relocation of a disc golf course basket or other modification of course features at Ryan Ranch Park because of permanent partial right-of-way acquisition.	Alternative 2 would result in up to 8.18 acres of permanent property acquisition affecting parks/recreation facilities, and up to 0.10 acre of temporary construction easements. This alternative would not require relocation of a disc golf course basket or other modification of course features.	No Impact
Farmland and Timberland	The project limits do not contain any farmland or any land zoned as timberland, or timberland zoned Timber Production. However, the project limits contain “forest land” as defined in Public Resources Code (PRC) section 12220(g). Under Alternative 1, up to 4,000 trees may be impacted (removed or otherwise adversely affected), including approximately 1,100 to 1,200 coast live oaks and 300 to 400 Monterey pines. The balance would consist of other tree species.	The project limits do not contain any farmland or any land zoned as timberland, or timberland zoned Timber Production. However, the project limits contain “forest land” as defined in Public Resources Code (PRC) section 12220(g). Under Alternative 2, up to 5,500 trees may be impacted, including approximately 2,600 to 2,700 coast live oaks and 800 to 900 Monterey pines. The balance would consist of other tree species.	No Impact
Growth	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Community Character and Cohesion	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Relocations and Real Property Acquisition	Alternative 1 would require acquisition of about 15.48 acres of partial permanent right-of-way, 3.61 acres of temporary construction easements,1.42 acres of drainage easements, and 2.44 acres of slope and subsurface easements among up to 51 parcels (permanent and/or temporary impacts). There would be no housing or business displacements. Potential utility relocation impacts are described below under Utilities and Emergency Services. There would potentially be one full property acquisition of the church property at 1375 Josselyn Canyon Road.	Alternative 2 would require acquisition of about 38.6 acres of partial permanent right-of-way and 1.6 acres of temporary construction easements across 99 parcels. There would be no housing or business displacements. Potential utility relocation impacts are described below under Utilities and Emergency Services. There would potentially be one full property acquisition of the church property at 1375 Josselyn Canyon Road.	No Impact
Environmental Justice	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Utilities and Emergency Services	Alternative 1 would require permanent relocation of utilities including lines for water, sewer, natural gas, electrical, cable, and telecommunications. Effects on emergency services during construction would be minor because access for fire/paramedic and other emergency service vehicles through the project limits would be enabled through controlled work zones by the project's construction contractor. Alternative 1 is anticipated to improve long-term access or emergency services through the corridor. Roundabout design would provide sufficient lane width to allow for other vehicles to move aside for emergency vehicles passing through the intersection. Curbs in the roundabouts would be designed to be traversable by emergency vehicles. In addition, four of the nine roundabouts would have multiple lanes, providing additional space.	Same as for Alternative 1 in regard to construction period effects on emergency vehicle access, except larger area of construction work compared to Alternative 1. Alternative 2 is anticipated to improve long-term access for emergency services through the corridor with expanded through and turn lanes at the intersections and priority access for emergency vehicles programmed into the signal systems.	No Impact

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Traffic and Transportation – Intersection Operations	Alternative 1 (roundabouts) is anticipated to result in a Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay savings of 2,787, 4,419, and 5,206 hours in 2025, 2035, and 2045, respectively, compared to the No-Build condition. The delay savings in 2045 is 28% over the No-Build condition. Alternative 1 would result in savings of 4,844, 7,734, and 9,111 Daily Person Hours of Delay in 2025, 2035, and 2045, respectively. This translates to a reduction of 28% in Daily Person Hours of Delay in 2045 as compared to the No-Build condition. Roundabouts would provide fewer conflict points at intersections than signalized intersections and would therefore have potentially fewer and less severe collisions.	Alternative 2 (intersection improvements) is anticipated to result in a higher Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay savings of 4,056, 8,057, and 13,188 in 2025, 2035, and 2045, respectively, over the No-Build condition. Alternative 2 would result in savings of 7,097, 14,100, and 23,079 Daily Person Hours of Delay in 2025, 2035, and 2045, respectively. This translates to a reduction of 71% in Daily Person Hours of Delay in 2045 as compared to the No-Build condition.	Traffic delays at project intersections on State Route 68 would continue to increase.
Traffic and Transportation – Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities	Pedestrian and bicycle access would improve.	Same as Alternative 1.	Pedestrian and bicycle access on State Route 68 in the project area would be unchanged or continue to deteriorate.
Visual/Aesthetics	Roundabout elements would include structural features, retaining walls, barriers, islands and shared pathways for pedestrians and bicyclists and removal of up to an estimated 4,000 trees and other vegetation. The project would increase urban character and reduce visual quality of a designated California Scenic Highway corridor. Substantial visual impacts would remain after mitigation.	Same types of visual impacts as Alternative 1, with larger areas of potential impacts than Alternative 1 due to larger physical project footprints and additional structural features and cumulative retaining wall mass, expanded turn and auxiliary travel lanes at the intersections, landform alternations for cut slopes and altered profiles and removal of up to an estimated 5,500 trees and other vegetation. Substantial visual impacts would remain after mitigation to the largest degree among alternatives.	No Impact

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Cultural Resources	Alternative 1 would not impact any of the five previously recorded sites in the Archaeological Study Area. However, this alternative may have the potential to impact currently unknown buried cultural resources through deep ground disturbance (3+ feet deep) from construction of new retaining walls and improved underground culverts for wildlife crossings. Areas within the project limits with elevated archaeological sensitivity will be tested as part of the project's Cultural Resources Management Plan.	Alternative 2 would not impact four of the five previously recorded sites in the Archaeological Study Area, but with larger intersection footprints than Alternative 1 it may potentially impact an untested portion of site CA-MNT-3 that was previously determined eligible for listing on the National Register. This alternative may also have the potential to impact currently unknown buried cultural resources through deep ground disturbance (3+ feet deep) during construction. Areas within the project limits with elevated archaeological sensitivity would be tested as part of the project's Cultural Resources Management Plan.	No Impact
Hydrology and Floodplain	Alternative 1 could result in minimal adverse effects to hydrology and floodplains.	Alternative 2 could result in adverse effects to hydrology and floodplains. These would be minimal and would be addressed through the use of design features and Standard Specifications. Under this alternative only, incursion into El Toro Creek regulatory floodway would be necessary for State Route 68 bridge widening. Bridge design would minimize the extent of the incursion.	No Impact
Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff	The project would result in up to 24.33 acres of disturbed soil area and 2.12 acres of net new impervious surface area within the project limits.	Alternative 2 would result in up to 59.54 acres of disturbed soil area and 11.95 acres of net new impervious surface area within the project limits.	No Impact

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Geology, Soils, Seismicity, and Topography	In general, geologic hazards on a project site can be avoided, reduced to an acceptable level, or accommodated. Both proposed Build Alternatives would require grading, trenching, and other earthwork operations for the construction of retaining walls, concrete barriers, culvert improvements, and more. The project design would be based on the results of geotechnical studies conducted throughout the project area and would follow current State of California seismic engineering standards to ensure maximum strength and safety of all constructed features under both static and dynamic (earthquake-caused ground shaking) conditions, as well as associated hazards such as seismic-related ground failure (e.g., rupture, landslide, liquefaction). Slope compaction specifications would be applied to project designs for slopes and embankment areas in liquefaction and landslide-prone areas of the project limits so as not to cause potential instability of the soils onsite or offsite.	Same as for Alternative 1, except larger area of potential impacts than Alternative 1 due to larger project footprint.	No Impact
Paleontology	The project has the potential for deep ground disturbance (3+ feet deep) during construction to disturb buried paleontological resources.	Same as for Alternative 1, except larger area of potential impacts than Alternative 1 due to larger project footprint.	No Impact

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Hazardous Waste and Materials	There is very little risk of impacts due to unanticipated hazardous waste or other contamination-related issues. Known leaking underground storage tanks under a fuel station property southwest of Corral de Tierra Road/State Route 68 will be avoided by construction of a roundabout at that intersection. However, Alternative 1 would require grading, trenching, and other earthwork operations for the construction of retaining walls, concrete barriers, culvert improvements, and more. Therefore, the potential exists for project construction to encounter unanticipated hazardous chemicals in the soil, as well as to release hazardous chemicals from existing roadway materials. Standard and non-standard special provisions would be implemented for potential contact or disturbance of any present hazardous waste and materials.	Same as for Alternative 1, except larger area of potential impacts than Alternative 1 due to larger project footprint. Alternative 2 would include widening of the El Toro Bridge portion of State Route 68, and the potential exists for asbestos-containing materials and lead-containing paint to be disturbed, removed, or disposed of if present. Standard and non-standard special provisions would be implemented for potential contact or disturbance of any present hazardous waste and materials.	No Impact
Air Quality	The roundabout alternative would not increase the overall capacity of State Route 68 in the project area, and therefore it would not generate additional traffic that would otherwise have the ability to degrade local air quality over the long term.	Same as Alternative 1.	No Impact

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Noise and Vibration	Alternative 1, converting intersections to roundabouts, would not involve any substantial widening of State Route 68 or the addition of auxiliary lanes. Under this alternative, one- and multi-lane roundabouts would be placed with a circular configuration of the highway and cross street intersection with minimal change to the original intersection location, leading to no extensive substantial change in distance between the sensitive receptors and noise sources. This alternative would result in minor, temporary increases in noise due to construction activities.	Alternative 2 would not increase roadway capacity or traffic volume. However, this alternative would add auxiliary lanes in some locations, shifting traffic noise closer to certain sensitive receptors. Exceedance of the Caltrans/Federal Highway Administration Noise Abatement Criteria threshold of 67 decibels would occur only at one location, a basketball court/parking area near Josselyn Canyon Road. This alternative would result in minor, temporary increases in noise due to construction activities.	No Impact
Energy	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Natural Communities	Alternative 1 has the potential to result in temporary and permanent, direct and indirect impacts, to natural communities. These include coast live oak woodland (6.755 acres of temporary and 1.123 acres of permanent impacts), Monterey pine forest (1.885 acres of temporary and 0.0547 acre of permanent impacts), and red willow riparian woodland and forest (0.499 acre of temporary and 0.144 acre of permanent impacts).	Alternative 2 has the potential to result in temporary and permanent, direct and indirect impacts, to natural communities. These include coast live oak woodland (15.393 acres of temporary and 3.027 acres of permanent impacts), Monterey pine forest (7.094 acres of temporary and 2.452 acres of permanent impacts), and red willow riparian woodland and forest (1.66 acres of temporary and 0.266 acre of permanent impacts).	No Impact
Wetlands and Other Waters	Alternative 1 has the potential to result in temporary and permanent, direct and indirect impacts, to jurisdictional wetlands and other waters due to construction activities. Potential impacts include 0.536 acre of temporary impacts and 0.352 acre of permanent impact to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-regulated wetlands, and 0.519 acre of temporary and 0.121 acre of permanent impacts to Other Waters of the United States.	Alternative 2 has the potential to result in temporary and permanent, direct and indirect impacts, to jurisdictional wetlands and other waters due to construction activities, including 1.038 acres of temporary impacts and 0.222 acre of permanent impacts to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-regulated wetlands, and 1.138 acres of temporary and 0.432 acre of permanent impacts to Other Waters of the United States.	No Impact

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Plant Species	The project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent, direct and indirect impacts, to special-status plant species other than those listed as Threatened or Endangered, or species proposed for listing as Threatened or Endangered (see "Threatened and Endangered Species" below), due to construction activities. These plant species include Hooker's manzanita, Toro manzanita, sandmat manzanita, Pajaro manzanita, Congdon's tarplant, Lewis' clarkia, and Monterey pine.	Same as for Alternative 1, except larger area of potential impacts than Alternative 1 due to larger project footprint.	No Impact
Animal Species	The project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent, direct and indirect impacts, to special-status animal species other than those listed as Threatened or Endangered, or species proposed for listing as Threatened or Endangered (see "Threatened and Endangered Species" below), due to construction activities. These animal species include special-status and other nesting birds, roosting bats such as pallid bat and western red bat, Monterey dusky-footed woodrat, American badger, Northern California legless lizard, and two-striped garter snake.	Same as for Alternative 1, except Alternative 2 would have a larger area of potential impact due to larger project footprint.	No Impact

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Threatened and Endangered Species	Alternative 1 has the potential to result in temporary and permanent, direct and indirect impacts, to species listed as Threatened or Endangered, or species proposed for listing as Threatened or Endangered, due to construction activities. These species include the endangered Yadon's piperia (plant), California red-legged frog, southwestern pond turtle, and California tiger salamander. As the selected preferred alternative, the following effects determinations under Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act are made for Alternative 1: • May affect, likely to adversely affect: California tiger salamander, California red-legged frog, and southwestern pond turtle; • May affect, not likely to adversely affect: Yadon's piperia; • No effect: western spadefoot, Monarch butterfly, and South-Central California coast steelhead. • The updated determination under the California Endangered Species Act for the state listed species Crotch bumble bee, tricolored blackbird, and western burrowing owl is that the project is not anticipated to have any impacts. The project is not anticipated to have impacts on the newly listed state candidate species western burrowing owl.	Alternative 2 has the potential to result in temporary and permanent, direct and indirect impacts, to species listed as Threatened or Endangered, or species proposed for listing as Threatened or Endangered, due to construction activities. This includes the endangered Yadon's piperia plant, California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, southwestern pond turtle, and South-Central California coast steelhead. Only Alternative 2 has the potential to impact South-Central California coast steelhead since it is the only alternative proposing work within El Toro Creek. All other impacts are the same as for Alternative 1, except that Alternative 2 has a larger area of potential impacts than Alternative 1 due to a larger project footprint.	No Impact

Potential Impact	Build Alternative 1	Build Alternative 2	No-Build Alternative
Invasive Species	Though there is a potential for invasive species to occur due to project activities, in compliance with the Executive Order on Invasive Species (EO 13112) and guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, the landscaping and erosion control included in the project would not use plant species listed as invasive. None of the species on the California list of invasive species is used by Caltrans for erosion control or landscaping.	Same as Alternative 1, except larger area of potential impacts than Alternative 1 due to larger project footprint.	No Impact
Cumulative Impacts (CEQA only)	(Visual/Aesthetics only) Within the context of 22 other current and reasonably foreseeable projects in the region, the project would increase urban character and reduce visual quality of a designated California Scenic Highway corridor.	Same as Alternative 1.	No Impact
Wildfire (CEQA only)	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Senate Bill 743 Induced Demand Analysis (CEQA only)	No Impact	No Impact	No Impact
Climate Change (CEQA only)	The project would result in temporary construction-related air pollutant emissions (including greenhouse gases) and fuel consumption that exceed current conditions. After project completion, it is expected that air pollutant emissions and fuel consumption would decrease overall due to reduced traffic congestion and associated reduction of idling and start-stop movements. The project would not increase roadway capacity and is not expected to result in an increase in climate change-related natural hazards such as wildfire, heat waves, drought, or flooding.	Same as Alternative 1.	No Impact

Coordination with Public and Other Agencies

This section has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Caltrans' cultural resources staff initiated consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer in accordance with the January 1, 2014 First Amended Programmatic Agreement Among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer and Caltrans regarding compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the January 2019 Memorandum of Understanding between Caltrans and State Historic Preservation Officer regarding compliance with Public Resources Code 5024 and as the proposed project pertains to cultural resources in the project Area of Potential Effect. The project has minor access restriction constraints because of sensitive biological resources in the same area as sensitive archaeological resources and will require an Incidental Take Permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife prior to conducting archaeological subsurface testing. Caltrans District 5 received approval from the Cultural Studies Office (State of California) to proceed with a minor phased approach to the identification, evaluation, and Findings of Effect for this project due to the likelihood that testing in the restricted portion of the project will not have an adverse effect on historic properties. Therefore, the project Cultural Resources Management Plan proposes a minor phased approach for completion of testing of heightened geoarchaeological sensitive areas to determine the project's effects on potential sensitive archaeological resources and prescriptive treatment steps depending on the findings of testing results. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer is ongoing.

Caltrans has conducted coordination and consultation with Native American tribes, entities, and individuals knowledgeable about cultural resources in the project area, as summarized in Section 4.3 of this document. Coordination is ongoing and will be continued throughout the project development process.

Caltrans has coordinated with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, the County of Monterey, City of Monterey, and City of Del Rey Oaks in regard to potential effects on the properties under the jurisdiction of those agencies. Coordination is ongoing and will continue through the remaining phases of the project development process as necessary.

Caltrans will submit applications for permits from various federal, state, and local public agencies for the selected preferred alternative, Alternative 1. The following permits and approvals will be required for the project:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Alternative 1: Potential 404 Nationwide Permit for the project. Potential pre-certified Nationwide Permit for subsurface geotechnical drilling for final design.

- Regional Water Quality Control Board – 401 Certifications for the project and for geotechnical drilling.
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife – 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreements for the project and for geotechnical subsurface drilling for final design.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Programmatic Biological Opinion and Take Permit for the California red-legged frog; project-specific Biological Opinion for the California tiger salamander and the southwestern pond turtle.
- U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management – Special Use Permit for temporary use of land during construction.
- U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management – Highway easements for construction within the federal right-of-way.
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife – 2081 Incidental Take Permits for the California tiger salamander, completion of archaeological surveys, geotechnical drilling for project design, and the overall project.
- State Historic Preservation Officer – Minor Phased Approach and Finding of Effect.
- Monterey County Public Works – Highway easements for highway road improvements on County lands.
- Monterey County Public Works – Encroachment Permits for construction within the County right-of-way and roads.
- City of Monterey Public Works – Encroachment Permits for construction within the City right-of-way and local roads.
- City of Monterey Public Works – Highway easements for highway road improvements on City lands.

Table of Contents

Summary iii
Chapter 1 Proposed Project 1
1.1 Introduction 1
1.1.1 Background 3
1.2 Purpose and Need 7
1.2.1 Purpose 7
1.2.2 Need 7
1.2.3 Independent Utility and Logical Termini 11
1.3 Project Description 11
1.4 Project Alternatives 12
1.4.1 Build Alternatives 13
1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative 48
1.5 Comparison of Alternatives 49
1.6 Identification of a Preferred Alternative 50
1.7 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion Prior to the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment 51
1.7.1 Full Corridor Widening (Expressway) 51
1.7.2 Corral de Tierra Bypass Alternative 51
1.7.3 Managed Lanes 53
1.8 Permits and Approvals Needed 53
Chapter 2 Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures 55
2.1 Human Environment 56
2.1.1 Existing and Future Land Use 56
2.1.2 Consistency with State, Regional and Local Plans and Programs 77
2.1.3 Parks and Recreational Facilities 89
2.1.4 Growth 99
2.1.5 Community Character and Cohesion 104
2.1.6 Relocations and Real Property Acquisition 120
2.1.7 Equity 143
2.1.8 Utilities and Emergency Services 145
2.1.9 Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities 148
2.1.10 Visual/Aesthetics 173
2.1.11 Cultural Resources 202
2.2 Physical Environment 216
2.2.1 Hydrology and Floodplain 216
2.2.2 Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff 226
2.2.3 Geology, Soils, Seismicity and Topography 235
2.2.4 Paleontology 243
2.2.5 Hazardous Waste and Materials 248
2.2.6 Air Quality 254
2.2.7 Noise 266
2.2.8 Energy 279
2.3 Biological Environment 284

2.3.1 Natural Communities 284
2.3.2 Wetlands and Other Waters 300
2.3.3 Plant Species 318
2.3.4 Animal Species 323
2.3.5 Threatened and Endangered Species 330
2.3.6 Invasive Species 360
2.3.7 Cumulative Impacts 362
Chapter 3 California Environmental Quality Act Evaluation 383
3.1 Determining Significance Under CEQA 383
3.2 CEQA Environmental Checklist 383
3.2.1 Aesthetics 384
3.2.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources 386
3.2.3 Air Quality 388
3.2.4 Biological Resources 389
3.2.5 Cultural Resources 394
3.2.6 Energy 395
3.2.7 Geology and Soils and Paleontological Resources 396
3.2.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions 399
3.2.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials 399
3.2.10 Hydrology and Water Quality 401
3.2.11 Land Use and Planning 404
3.2.12 Mineral Resources 405
3.2.13 Noise 405
3.2.14 Population and Housing 407
3.2.15 Public Services 407
3.2.16 Recreation 408
3.2.17 Transportation 408
3.2.18 Tribal Cultural Resources 410
3.2.19 Utilities and Service Systems 411
3.2.20 Wildfire 413
3.2.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance 414
3.2.22 Senate Bill 743/Induced Demand Analysis 419
3.2.23 Wildfire 422
3.3 Climate Change 425
3.3.1 Regulatory Setting 426
3.3.2 Environmental Setting 430
3.3.3 Project Analysis 437
3.3.4 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies 441
3.3.5 Adaptation 444
3.3.6 Climate Change References 453
3.4 Cumulative Impacts 457
3.4.1 Regulatory Setting 457
3.4.2 Affected Environment 458
3.4.3 Environmental Consequences 468
3.4.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures 474
Chapter 4 Comments and Coordination 479
4.1 Project Scoping Process and Notice of Preparation 479

4.2 Consultation and Coordination with Public Agencies 481
4.3 Consultation and Coordination with Native American Tribes and Representatives 483
4.4 Public Open House Meeting 485
4.5 Public Hearings on Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment 486
4.6 Public Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment 487
Chapter 5 List of Preparers 489
Chapter 6 Distribution List 495
Appendix A Final Section 4(f) Analysis 509
Appendix B Title VI Policy Statement 527
Appendix C Summary of Relocation Benefits 528
Appendix D Project Consistency with State, Regional and Local Plans and Policies 533
Appendix E Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary 559
Appendix F List of Acronyms and Abbreviations 585
Appendix G Notice of Preparation 586
Appendix H Preliminary Design Plans for Build Alternatives 589
Appendix I Proposed Intersection Design Elements of the Build Alternatives 590
Appendix J Proposed Right-of-Way Acquisitions 630
Appendix K Required Consultation and Concurrence Documentation 645
Appendix L Comment Letters and Responses 653
Appendix M List of Technical Studies 895

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Project Vicinity Map 2
Figure 1.2 Project Location Map 3
Figure 1.3 Project Intersections and Wildlife Crossing Locations 17
Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 1 of 6) 18
Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 2 of 6) 19
Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 3 of 6) 20
Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 4 of 6) 21
Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 5 of 6) 22
Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 6 of 6) 23
Figure 2.1 Existing Land Uses in the Cities of Monterey and Del Rey Oaks.59
Figure 2.2 Existing Land Uses in Monterey County Planning Areas....60
Figure 2.3 Parks and Recreation Areas in the Project Vicinity....91
Figure 2.1.4.1 Analysis Considerations of Determining Potential for Project-Related Growth 102
Figure 2.1.5.1 U.S. Census Tract Map....106
Figure 2.1.9.1 Comparison of Vehicle-to-Vehicle Conflict Points at Signalized and Roundabout Intersections 167
Figure 2.1.9.2 Vehicle to-Pedestrian Conflict Points at Signalized Intersections 169
Figure 2.1.9.3 Vehicle-Pedestrian Conflict Points at a Single-Lane Roundabout 170
Figure 2.1.10.1 Visual Assessment Units 178
Figure 2.1.10.2 Visual Assessment Unit 1 179
Figure 2.1.10.3 Visual Assessment Unit 2 180
Figure 2.1.10.4 Visual Assessment Unit 3 181
Figure 2.1.10.5 Visual Assessment Unit 4 181
Figure 2.1.10.6 Key View 1 182
Figure 2.1.10.7 Eastbound State Route 68 Approaching Josselyn Canyon Road 187
Figure 2.1.10.8 Alternative 1 Hardscaped Roundabout 188
Figure 2.1.10.9 Alternative 1 Landscaped Roundabout....189
Figure 2.1.10.10 Alternative 2 Signalized Intersection 189
Figure 2.2.1.1 Flood Zone Map – State Route 68/State Route 218 and State Route 68/Ragsdale Drive Intersections....220
Figure 2.2.1.2 Flood Zone Map – State Route 68/York Road Intersection..221
Figure 2.2.1.3 Flood Zone Map – State Route 68/Pasadera Drive Intersection 222
Figure 2.2.1.4 Flood Zone Map – State Route 68/Laureles Grade Intersection 223
Figure 2.2.1.5 Flood Zone Map – State Route 68/Corral De Tierra Road and State Route 68/San Benancio Road Intersections....224
Figure 2.2.7.1 Noise Levels of Common Activities....269
Figure 2.2.7.2 Short-Term Noise Monitoring Locations....271

Figure 2.2.7.3 Sensitive Receptors – State Route 68/Josselyn Canyon Road Intersection 272
Figure 2.2.7.4 Sensitive Receptors – State Route 68/Olmsted Road Intersection 273
Figure 2.2.7.5 Sensitive Receptors – State Route 68/Pasadera Drive Intersection 274
Figure 2.2.7.6 Sensitive Receptors – State Route 68/Laureles Grade Intersection 275
Figure 2.2.7.7 Sensitive Receptors – State Route 68/San Benancio Road Intersection 276
Figure 2.3.2.1 Project Area Watersheds and Major Streams 305
Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 1 (Sheet 1 of 6) 306
Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 2 (Sheet 2 of 6) 307
Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 3 (Sheet 3 of 6) 308
Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 4 (Sheet 4 of 6) 309
Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 5 (Sheet 5 of 6) 310
Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 6 (Sheet 6 of 6) 311
Figure 2.3.7.1 California Red-Legged Frog and Jurisdictional Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Habitat Resource Study Area 365
Figure 2.3.7.2 California Tiger Salamander Resource Study Area 366
Figure 2.3.7.3 South-Central California Coast Steelhead Resource Study Area 367
Figure 2.3.7.4 Coast Live Oak Woodland Habitat Resource Study Area 368
Figure 2.3.7.5 Monterey Pine Forest Habitat and Yadon's Piperia Resource Study Area 369
Figure 3.2.23.1 Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Areas for Monterey County 424
Figure 3.3.2.1 U.S. 2022 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2022b) 433
Figure 3.3.2.2 California 2022 Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Scoping Plan Category (Source: California Air Resources Board 2022a) 434
Figure 3.3.2.3 Change in California Gross Domestic Product, Population, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Since 2000 (Source: California Air Resources Board 2022a) 434
Figure 3.3.5.1 Predicted Coastal Inundation with 10 Feet of Sea Level Rise, Year 2100 448
Figure 3.3.5.2 Predicted Percent Change in 24-Hour, 100-Year Storm Precipitation Depth, Year 2085 450
Figure 3.3.5.3 CalFire - Fire Hazard Severity Zones 2023 452

Figure 3.4.2.1 California Red-Legged Frog and Jurisdictional Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Habitat Resource Study Area 460
Figure 3.4.2.2 California Tiger Salamander Resource Study Area 461
Figure 3.4.2.3 South-Central California Coast Steelhead Resource Study Area 462
Figure 3.4.2.4 Coast Live Oak Woodland Habitat Resource Study Area 463
Figure 3.4.2.5 Monterey Pine Forest Habitat and Yadon's Piperia Resource Study Area 464

List of Tables

Summary of Potential Impacts from Alternatives vii
Table 1.1 Intersections Evaluated by the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan 6
Table 1.2 Collision Rates by Highway Segment for State Route 68 from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019 9
Table 1.3 Collision Rates by Intersection for State Route 68 from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019 10
Table 1.4 Summary of Proposed Wildlife Connectivity Improvements.....24
Table 1.5 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in Project Build Alternatives 26
Table 1.6 Alternative 1 Roundabout Intersection Design Summary.....30
Table 1.7 Alternative 2 Signalized Intersections Design Summary 38
Table 1.8 Permitting and Approving Agencies 53
Table 2.1.1.1 Proposed Development in Regional Vicinity of Project Area...63
Table 2.1.1.2 Built-Out Development 74
Table 2.1.3.1 Public Parks and Recreational Facilities in Project Vicinity 90
Table 2.1.3.2 Park and Recreation Lands Property Acquisition 95
Table 2.1.4.1 Project Area Growth.....100
Table 2.1.5.1 Project Study Area Census Tract Demographics.....107
Table 2.1.5.2 City and County Census Demographics 108
Table 2.1.6.1 Properties Potentially Affected by Build Alternatives.....121
Table 2.1.6.2 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Josselyn Canyon Road124
Table 2.1.6.3 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Josselyn Canyon Road125
Table 2.1.6.4 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Olmsted Road.....127
Table 2.1.6.5 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Olmsted Road.....127
Table 2.1.6.6 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at State Route 218.....129
Table 2.1.6.7 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at State Route 218.....130
Table 2.1.6.8 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Ragsdale Drive 130
Table 2.1.6.9 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Ragsdale Drive 131
Table 2.1.6.10 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at York Road 132
Table 2.1.6.11 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at York Road 133
Table 2.1.6.12 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Pasadera Drive-Boots Road 134

Table 2.1.6.13 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Pasadera Drive-Boots Road 134
Table 2.1.6.14 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Laureles Grade 136
Table 2.1.6.15 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Laureles Grade 137
Table 2.1.6.16 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Corral de Tierra Road 138
Table 2.1.6.17 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Corral de Tierra Road 139
Table 2.1.6.18 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at San Benancio Road .. 141
Table 2.1.6.19 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at San Benancio Road .. 142
Table 2.1.8.1 Utilities in Conflict with the Build Alternatives 146
Table 2.1.9.1 Level of Service Criteria for Signalized Intersections 153
Table 2.1.9.2 Level of Service Criteria for Unsignalized Intersections, Including Roundabouts 153
Table 2.1.9.3 Existing Intersection Level of Service 154
Table 2.1.9.4 Number of Collisions by Segment (January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019) 155
Table 2.1.9.5 Number of Deaths and Injuries Resulting from Collisions by Segment (January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019) 156
Table 2.1.9.6 Number of Collisions by Day of Week and Time of Day (January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019) 156
Table 2.1.9.7 State Route 68 Segments with Three-Year Collision Rates Above the Statewide Average (January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019) 157
Table 2.1.9.8 State Route 68 Segments with Three-Year Collision Rates in Relation to Statewide Average October 2019 through September 2022 158
Table 2.1.9.9 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay Comparison of Alternatives 162
Table 2.1.9.10 Daily Person Hours of Delay Comparison of Alternatives ... 163
Table 2.1.9.11 Morning Peak Hour Vehicle Hours of Delay Comparison by Alternative and Horizon Year 164
Table 2.1.9.12 Evening Peak Hour Vehicle Hours of Delay Comparison by Alternative and Horizon Year 165
Table 2.1.10.1 Visual Impact Ratings Using Viewer Response and Resource Change 186
Table 2.1.11.1 Historic-Era Resources Evaluated for National and California Registers 207
Table 2.2.4.1 Geologic Units Found Along the State Route 68 Corridor 244
Table 2.2.6.1 State and Federal Criteria Air Pollutant Effects and Sources 258
Table 2.2.6.2 State and Federal Criteria Air Pollutant Standards 260
Table 2.2.7.1 Noise Abatement Criteria 267
Table 2.2.8-1 Predicted Construction Phase Fuel Consumption, Alternative 1 280
Table 2.2.8-2 Predicted Construction Phase Fuel Consumption, Alternative 2 281
Table 2.3.1.1 Study Area Locations and Associated Intersections in the Biological Study Area 286
Table 2.3.1.2a Natural and Semi-Natural Land Cover Types in the Biological Study Area 287
Table 2.3.1.2b Cultivated Land Cover Types in the Biological Study Area . 288

Table 2.3.1.3 Summary of Wildlife Roadkill Incidents in the Project Area ...291
Table 2.3.1.4 Summary of Proposed Wildlife Connectivity Improvements ..293
Table 2.3.1.5 Potential Impacts to Special-Status Natural Communities in the Biological Study Area 295
Table 2.3.5.1 Impacts to Potential Yadon's Piperia Habitat 337
Table 2.3.5.2 Impacts to Potential California Red-Legged Frog Habitat 338
Table 2.3.5.3 Impacts to Potential California Tiger Salamander Habitat 339
Table 3.3.2.1. Regional and Local Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plans 436
Table 3.3.3.1 Construction Phase Greenhouse Gas Emission Estimates, Alternative 1 439
Table 3.3.3.2 Construction Phase Greenhouse Gas Emission Estimates, Alternative 2 439
Table S4-1 Permanent Section 4(f) Use Summary for Build Alternatives ...510

Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes intersection and mainline improvements to State Route 68 from post mile 4.8, west of the Josselyn Canyon Road intersection, to post mile 13.7, east of the San Benancio Road intersection in Monterey County. This project involves only the portion of State Route 68 east of State Route 1 and does not include any portion of the State Route 68 segment west of State Route 1.

Caltrans, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, is the lead agency for the project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Caltrans is also the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Two Build Alternatives and a No-Build Alternative have been considered for this project. Wildlife connectivity improvements are also proposed for each Build Alternative.

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Subsequent to the circulation of the project Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, design modifications for Alternative 1, Roundabouts, were evaluated for the three easternmost project intersections. The modifications involve changing from a single-lane design to hybrid roundabout designs, which would have a combination of one lane and two lanes in the roundabouts. Please see Section 1.4.1, Build Alternatives, for additional explanation.

The 8.9-mile project spans multiple jurisdictions and is a joint project by Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), with input from local partners, including the County of Monterey, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), the Fort Ord Reuse Authority (FORA), the City of Monterey, the City of Del Rey Oaks, the City of Salinas, and other cities located within the Monterey Peninsula.

The current estimated cost ranges from $189,200,000 for Alternative 1 to $230,900,000 for Alternative 2. The project is funded with 20.xx.075.600 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RIP) funds in the 2024 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), 20.xx.724.000 (LPP-F), 20.30.010.300 Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP), and 20.10.400.100 Local Measure X of Monterey County. The project is identified for funding in the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's 2016 Transportation Safety and Investment Plan through the funding received from Measure X. The Transportation Safety and Investment Plan allocates $50 million to address

safety and traffic flow along State Route 68. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show the project vicinity and location maps.

Figure 1.1 Project Vicinity Map

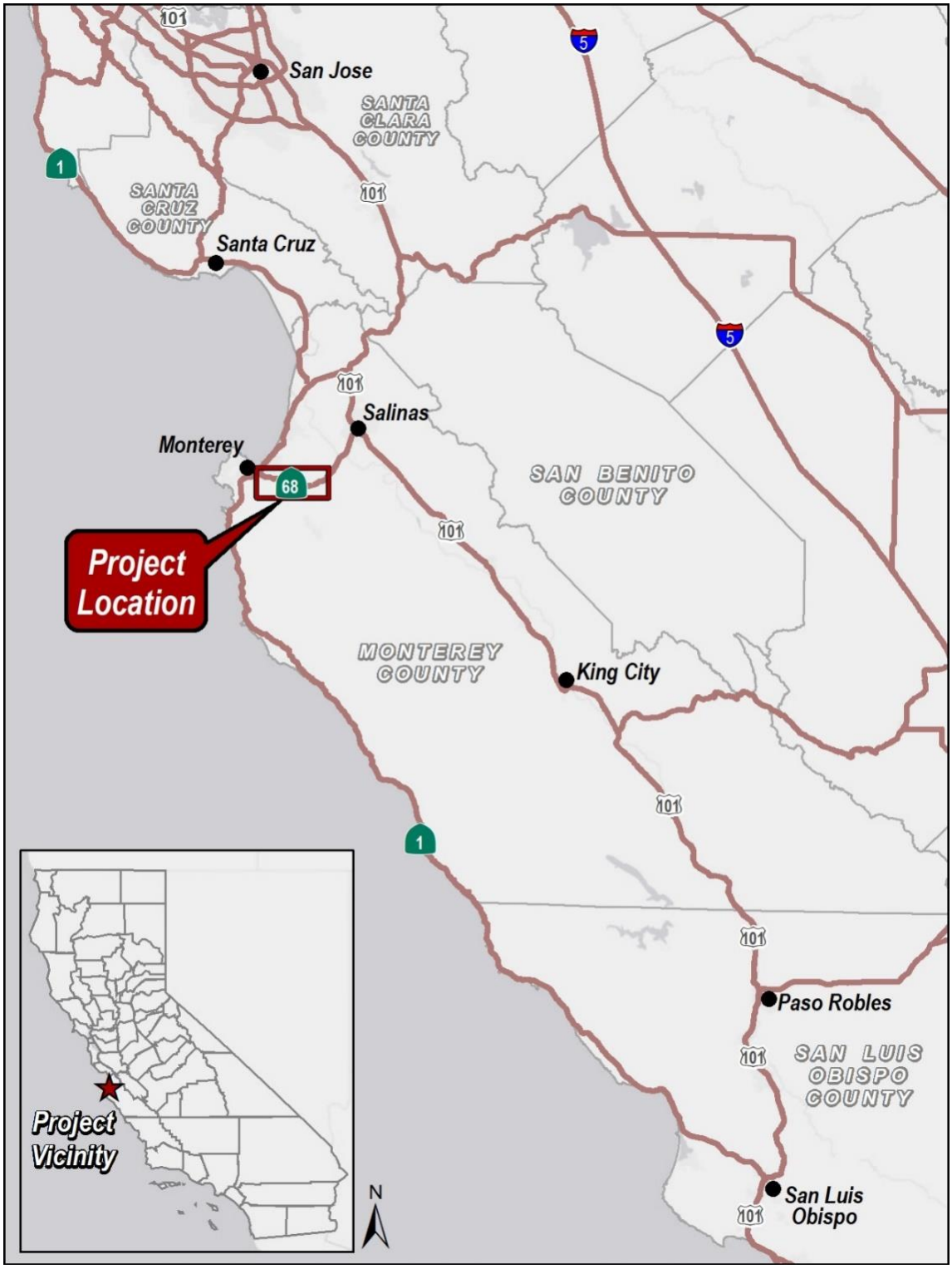
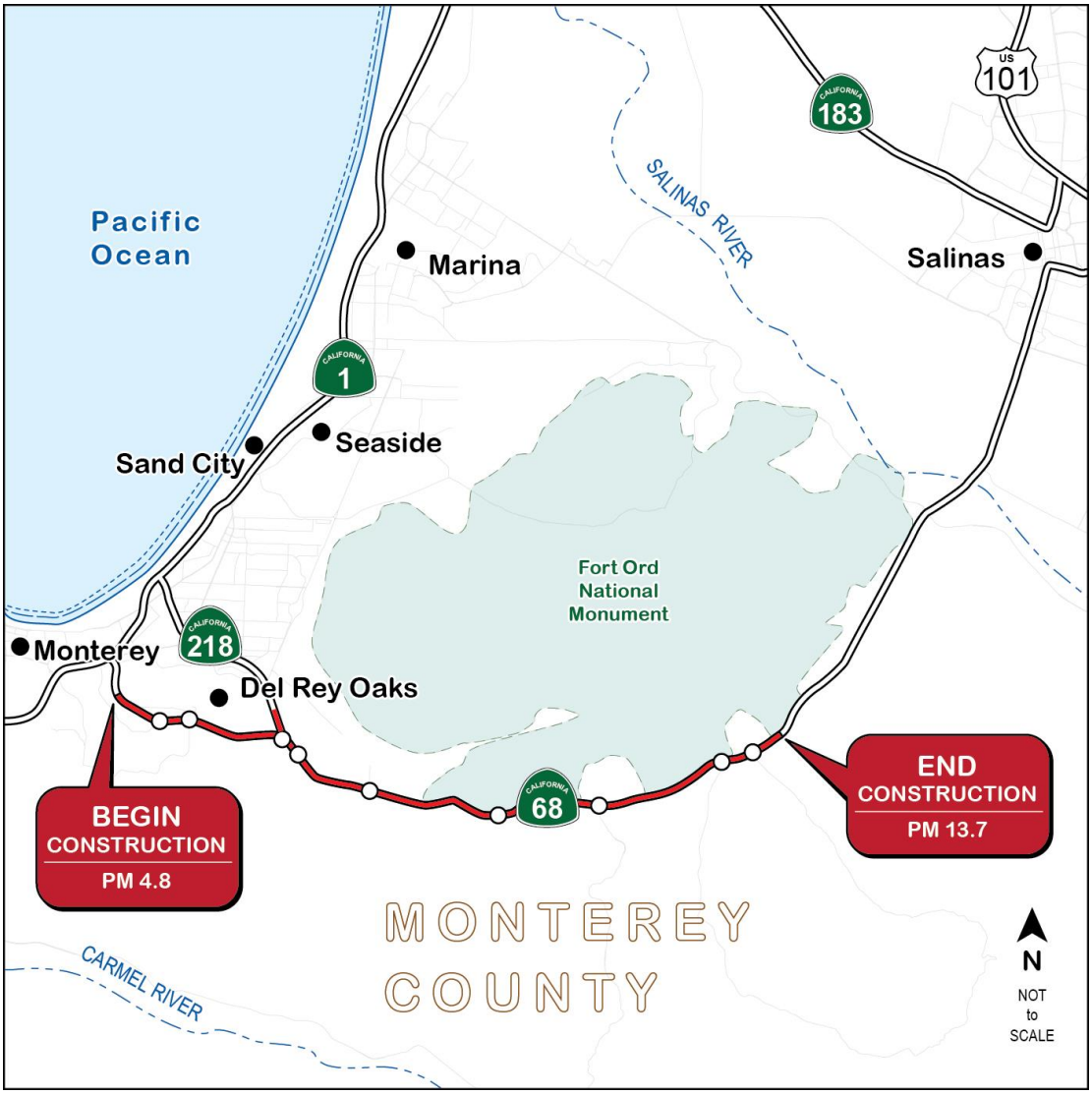


Figure 1.2 Project Location Map



1.1.1 Background

History

The State Route 68 corridor has long been an important route between the Monterey Peninsula and the Salinas Valley. From prehistoric times, indigenous peoples living in the area used the east-west corridor for travel between the coast and inland valleys and established temporary and permanent settlements near waterways in the corridor.

The existing State Route 68 alignment generally follows the historic trail used by Spanish Lieutenant Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza's expedition in 1775 as the group traveled from the Salinas Valley to the Monterey Peninsula. By the mid-1800s, the route was a well-traveled stagecoach route used by the

California Stage Company. With the increase in travel by automobile, the State Route 68 roadway was upgraded from a dirt wagon road to a paved two-lane road by the County of Monterey in 1937.

In the 1950s, studies were begun to upgrade then-Highway 68 to a freeway. Portions of the freeway route were adopted, but agreement could not be reached for some segments of the alignment; after 15 years, consensus still had not been reached between the City and County of Monterey. In 1973, the California Transportation Commission (then known as the California Highway Commission) nullified the freeway route adoption and halted studies.

During the late 1970s, the City and County of Monterey began to move forward with freeway alignment planning with the development of new official plan lines. In the 1970s and1980s, segments of State Route 68 between Toro Park Estates and Salinas were widened to a four-lane divided highway.

In 1989, voters in Monterey County approved Measure B, which would have allocated $30 million toward alleviating congestion on State Route 68, including possible construction of a bypass at Corral de Tierra, as shown in the County's official plan lines. However, in 1992, the U.S. 6th District Court of Appeals ruled Measure B to be unconstitutional as it did not receive at least two-thirds of the vote, and no alternative funding source was identified.

A full State Route 68 bypass was previously considered by Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County in the 1990s with potential funding under Measure B. With the retirement of Fort Ord Military Reservation in 1991, Caltrans, local agencies and the Bureau of Land Management entered into discussions that identified potential alternate routes for State Route 68 along the southern portion of Fort Ord. In 1993, a Memorandum of Understanding was approved between Caltrans and the Bureau of Land Management, and Fort Ord land was designated as a potential State Route 68 bypass corridor. A State Route 68 bypass would be an access-controlled freeway aligned north of the existing State Route 68 highway and extending east from the intersection of State Route 218/State Route 68 to the western side of the Toro Park community.

As recently as 2010, the bypass alignment was included in various planning documents, including the 2010 Monterey County Land Use Plan Fort Ord Master Plan (2010 Monterey County General Plan Figure# LU6a). However, creation of the Fort Ord National Monument by presidential proclamation in 2012 greatly reduced the feasibility of constructing a new State Route 68 alignment through the former Fort Ord, along with the substantial costs and environmental constraints that would occur. Subsequent studies evaluated current and future travel patterns between Salinas and Monterey. The studies concluded that a future bypass on the reserved transportation corridor alignment route is not the preferred long-term solution. This, in addition to a lack of funding priority, led Caltrans in 2021 to notify the partner agencies that

Caltrans would no longer pursue any bypass alternative and would allow the affiliated Memorandums of Understanding to expire.

Today, most of State Route 68 is a State of California-designated scenic highway connecting the Monterey Peninsula to U.S. Highway 101 at the City of Salinas. State Route 68 is a key route for commuter travel between the Monterey Peninsula and communities in the Salinas Valley, as well as for tourism and special event travel. State Route 68 also serves as a link to communities north of the City of Monterey, including Del Rey Oaks and Seaside via connection to State Route 218, and to communities to the south, including Carmel Valley and Carmel via connection to Laureles Grade. Community resources accessed from State Route 68 corridor include the Monterey Regional Airport, Jacks Peak County Park, Stone Creek shopping center, Ryan Ranch businesses, golf courses, multiple private schools, Laguna Seca Raceway, and Toro Regional Park.

2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan

As a result of concerns expressed by residents living along the State Route 68 corridor and commuters using State Route 68 to travel between the Monterey Peninsula and Salinas, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County obtained a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Planning Grant to study the corridor conditions. The study, titled the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, evaluated current and future travel patterns between Salinas Valley and the Monterey Peninsula and feasibility of mid-term solutions. The plan was finalized in August 2017. The plan found that congestion, safety, and reliability issues on State Route 68 from Josselyn Canyon Road to Blanco Road are ongoing concerns to motorists using State Route 68 to travel between the Monterey Peninsula and Salinas Valley on regular basis.

The stated goal of the plan was to identify a preferred State Route 68 corridor concept and associated infrastructure improvements that would best meet both local and regional goals, while providing the highest return on investment of limited regional transportation funding for the next 20 years.

Phase 1 of the plan was an evaluation of existing conditions and analysis of future conditions. Based on research evaluating traffic conditions, public input, and cost-benefit analysis, Phase 2 of the plan developed and evaluated corridor concepts to determine the most suitable option for affordable mid-term operational improvements. Three corridor concepts were evaluated, and a preferred concept was identified.

Table 1.1 lists the intersections that received intersection control evaluation Level 1 Analysis in the August 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan prepared by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County.

Table 1.1 Intersections Evaluated by the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan

Intersection Name	Post Mile	Intersection Number
State Route 68/Josselyn Canyon Road	5.22	1
State Route 68/Olmsted Road	5.57	2
State Route 68/State Route 218 Canyon del Rey Boulevard	6.81	3
State Route 68/Ragsdale	7.08	4
State Route 68/York Road	8.15	5
State Route 68/Pasadera Drive	9.78	6
State Route 68/Laureles Grade	11.22	7
State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road	12.95	8
State Route 68/San Benancio Road	13.33	9
State Route 68/Torero Drive	14.68	10
State Route 68/Blanco Road	19.96	11

The larger project area is bordered by vast open space areas, which offer important wildlife habitat, including the approximately 14,000-acre Fort Ord National Monument north of State Route 68, and Sierra de Salinas south of State Route 68, which connects to the Ventana Wilderness and Santa Lucia Range in Los Padres National Forest. The location of State Route 68 between these open space areas splinters wildlife habitat and inhibits wildlife mobility. Regional and statewide conservation efforts have identified the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan study area as a critical link to maintain landscape connectivity for a variety of wildlife species (California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project (2010), Critical Linkages-Bay Area and Beyond (2013), Regional Wildlife Corridor and Habitat Connectivity Plan (2014)). To address this fragmentation, the plan also coordinated concurrent development of the State Route 68 Wildlife Connectivity Study to evaluate wildlife connectivity and propose solutions along the corridor. The Transportation Agency for Monterey County-sponsored study also identified animal-vehicle collision hot spots within the project limits that could be addressed, at least partially, through the measures proposed to improve wildlife connectivity.

The plan concluded with a concept recommendation for a project that supports both improved travel and wildlife connectivity along the State Route 68 corridor while also having a strong benefit-cost ratio.

Following completion of the concept recommendation, additional discussions by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and the Caltrans Project Development Team were conducted, and it was determined that the concept

showed no improvement at Blanco Road and the improvements at Torero Drive were not needed at this time. As a result, the two intersections were removed from this project. The proposed project alternatives evaluated by this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment aim to implement the needed mid-term operational improvements at the remaining intersections along State Route 68 identified by the plan.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The project's purpose and need were developed by Caltrans with input from the Transportation Agency for Monterey County. The project "purpose" is the set of objectives the project intends to address. The project "need" is the transportation deficiency that the project was initiated to address.

1.2.1 Purpose

The project proposes to:

- Improve intersection operations to reduce vehicle delay throughout the project corridor.
- Reduce the rate and severity of collisions on State Route 68 in the project area.
- Enhance wildlife connectivity and reduce the rate of collisions between vehicles and wildlife.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian access within the project corridor.

1.2.2 Need

Intersection Operations

The State Route 68 corridor (project limits) currently experiences heavy congestion leading to travel delays, primarily occurring at signalized intersections. According to the Intersection Control Evaluation Step 2 and Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum (Caltrans District 5, Traffic Operations, August 2023), the State Route 68 corridor is currently experiencing 6,609 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay. Daily travel delay is forecasted to rise to 18,457 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay by the year 2045 based on the existing traffic intersection controls and lane configurations. Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay is the measurement of delay in travel time within a 24-hour period between any two locations within the highway corridor compared to the time it would take without interruption from stopped or slowed traffic due to congestion or impedance.

An additional method of performance measure for a given day is Daily Person Hours of Delay. This metric factors in the number of people experiencing delay

in vehicles while traveling on the highway corridor. The average number of persons per vehicle in California is 1.73, according to the 2017 Federal Highway Administration National Household Travel Survey, and 1.75 in the Salinas-Monterey Region. The State Route 68 corridor is currently experiencing 11,565 Daily Person Hours of Delay and is forecast to have 32,300 Daily Person Hours of Delay in the year 2045. Hourly performance metrics for traffic operations also show that traffic on the State Route 68 corridor is expected to experience increased vehicle delays from 259 and 747 Vehicle Hours of Delay in the current AM (morning) Peak Hour condition and PM (afternoon) Peak Hour condition, respectively, to a projected 377 Vehicle Hours of Delay and 884 Vehicle Hours of Delay in the year 2045, respectively.

Traffic delay at the corridor intersections is caused, in part, by the inefficiency of the existing intersection signal controls due to limited green time for each direction of travel at the intersections and the lack of coordinated signal timing among the intersections. Queueing (lines of vehicles backed-up) at intersections occurs during peak hours of the morning and late afternoon/early evening when vehicles are unable to move through the intersection during the first green light period (also referred to as a signal phase) they encounter and must wait until the next green light period to move through the intersection. This queuing results in delays along the project corridor through stop-and-go traffic conditions at multiple intersections. Queuing also routinely blocks access to upstream side streets (cross-streets at State Route 68 behind an intersection) and driveways.

Vehicle Collisions

Traffic collision rates within the segments of the State Route 68 corridor for the three-year period between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2019, are provided in Table 1.2 below. The rate values are per million vehicle miles, or million vehicles divided by segment distance and traffic volume. These data are from the Traffic Accident Surveillance System (TASAS) for the most recent period. The data represent 288 documented collisions, of which three were fatality collisions and 132 were injury collisions. It is noted that the last segment of the highway in the table below extends past the project limits at San Benancio Road to east of Torero Drive. Within the project limits there were a total of 259 collisions.

The 8.9-mile-long State Route 68 corridor has several segments with collision rates above the statewide average for similar facilities. These segments are shown in bold text (also indicated with a B before the number) in Table 1.2 and include above-average collision rates from post miles 4.82 to 6.68 (Fatal plus Injury, F+I), which includes the portion of the project corridor west of Josselyn Canyon Road to just east of State Routes 218, post miles 6.97 to 8.33 (Total) west of Ragsdale Drive to east of York Road, and post miles 11.1 to 11.21(F), west of and including the intersection of Laureles Grade and State Route 68.

Rear-end collisions compose most of the collision types occurring within the project area along State Route 68 and are typically associated with congestion or stop-and-go traffic conditions during peak periods. During the three-year period, there were a total of 259 collisions along State Route 68 from post miles 4.82 to 13.7. Over 72 percent, or 187, of the 259 collisions that occurred during that time were rear-end-type collisions. Current traffic signals generate a full-stop condition with queuing traffic needing to come to a complete stop during the red phase for each approach to the intersection.

In Table 1.2 below, F+I indicates Fatal plus Injury Collisions. Collision Rates indicate per million vehicle miles or million vehicles divided by segment distance and traffic volumes. Total Collision Rates are composed of a combination of Fatal, Fatal plus Injury (F+I), and Property Damage Only collisions.

Table 1.2 Collision Rates by Highway Segment for State Route 68 from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019

Segment Begin Post Mile	Segment End Post Mile	Segment Length (miles)	Actual Fatal Rate	Actual F+I Rate	Actual Total Rate	Statewide Average Fatal Rate	Statewide Average F+I Rate	Statewide Average Total Rate
4.80	4.82	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.007	0.27	0.66
4.82	6.68	1.86	0	**B 0.47**	0.63	0.013	0.40	0.82
6.68	6.71	0.04	0	0	0	0.007	0.27	0.67
6.72	6.81	0.10	0	0.04	0.04	0.003	0.14	0.32
6.81	6.97	0.16	0	0.04	0.04	0.005	0.26	0.67
6.97	8.33	1.36	0	0.32	**B 0.86**	0.013	0.40	0.82
8.33	11.10	2.77	0	0.37	0.87	0.02	0.49	1.20
11.10	11.21	0.11	**B 0.034**	0.27	0.51	0.023	0.39	0.94
11.21	15.18	3.97	0.017	0.49	1.13	0.02	0.49	1.19
4.80	15.20	Total 10.40	Average 0.01	Average 0.45	Average 0.95	Average 0.018	Average 0.47	Average 1.07

Source: Caltrans Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS).

The Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System also includes data on collision rates at intersections within the State Route 68 corridor for the same three-year period of January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2019. Of the nine study intersections, five intersections (56 percent) exceeded the statewide average rate for similar facilities in the categories of Fatality plus Injury (F+I) rate and/or total collision rate. In addition, four of the nine intersections (44 percent) exceed the statewide average rate in both categories as shown in bold text (accompanied by the letter B) in Table 1.3. In Table 1.3, Collision Rates indicate per million vehicle miles, or million vehicles, and F+I indicates Fatal plus Injury Collisions.

Table 1.3 Collision Rates by Intersection for State Route 68 from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019

Intersection ID	Post Mile	Intersection	Actual Fatal Rate	Actual F+I Rate	Actual Total Rate	Average Fatal Rate	Average F+I Rate	Average Total Rate
1	5.22	Josselyn Canyon Road	0	0.07	0.14	0.001	0.09	0.19
2	5.57	Olmsted Road	0	0.07	0.1	0.001	0.11	0.24
3	6.81	State Route 218/Canyon del Rey Boulevard	0.022	0.04	0.04	0.001	0.11	0.24
4	7.08	Ragsdale Drive	0	0.04	0.11	0.001	0.11	0.24
5	8.15	York Road	0	**B 0.11**	**B 0.29**	0.001	0.09	0.19
6	9.78	Pasadera Drive/ Boots Road	0	**B 0.26**	**B 0.53**	0.002	0.16	0.43
7	11.22	Laureles Grade	0	**B 0.16**	**B 0.48**	0.001	0.11	0.28
8	12.95	Corral de Tierra Road	0	**B 0.17**	**B 0.6**	0.002	0.16	0.43
9	13.33	San Benancio Road	0	**B 0.17**	0.2	0.002	0.16	0.43

Source: Caltrans Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS)

The Caltrans Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System report for State Route 68 (January 2020) cites speeding as the top collision factor (over 67 percent of collisions) and shows that collision hot spots are clustered at or close to the York Road, Pasadera Drive, Laureles Grade, Corral De Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road intersections. The cluster of collision hot spots near the intersections is another indication that congestion, coupled with speeding between signalized intersections, is largely the cause of the rear-end collisions. Furthermore, the collisions are occurring mostly during the weekday afternoon peak period when delay at intersections from congestion is most prevalent.

Wildlife Connectivity and Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions

State Route 68 intersects a critical wildlife habitat area connecting the coast of Monterey to the Sierra Azul range. As such, State Route 68 is a barrier to the wildlife corridor, routinely resulting in roadkill and vehicular property damage when various wildlife species attempt to cross the roadway. In 2017, consultant Pathways for Wildlife prepared the Monterey-Salinas State Route 68 Plan: Wildlife Connectivity Analysis Study for the Transportation Agency for Monterey County. The study data indicated that there is high use of the majority of the culverts and bridges by traveling animals. For animals still crossing the highway, Pathways for Wildlife recorded a total of 60 animals hit by vehicles on State Route 68 during the one-year study period in 2016 (see Appendix A.3 of the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan for study details). The roadkill data was compared to the locations of existing culverts

and bridges along State Route 68 and determined that most of the roadkill locations were close to culverts and bridges.

Multimodal Deficiencies

Lack of bike and pedestrian refuge areas, sidewalks, and marked bike lanes, along with the high number of conflict points at intersections, lead to increased delay for both bicyclists and vehicles at intersections.

1.2.3 Independent Utility and Logical Termini

Federal Highway Administration regulations (23 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 771.111[f]) require that the proposed transportation improvements under evaluation:

1. Connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope.

2. Have independent utility or independent significance (be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made).

3. Not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

The term logical termini is defined by the Federal Highway Administration as rational end points for a transportation project, and rational end points for review of the environmental impacts.

The limits of the proposed operational improvements for this project on State Route 68 are based on the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, which found that congestion, safety, and reliability issues on State Route 68 from Josselyn Canyon Road to Blanco Road are ongoing concerns to motorists using State Route 68 to travel between the Monterey Peninsula and Salinas Valley on a regular basis. The project proposes improvements at nine intersections between Josselyn Canyon Road and San Benancio Road to address these issues. It would not require new intersections, new ramps, lanes or connecting roadways outside of the existing highway corridor and intersections to be fully functional. Therefore, the proposed project maintains independent utility and logical termini.

1.3 Project Description

The project would make intersection operational improvements and wildlife connectivity improvements along State Route 68 in Monterey County from post mile 4.8, west of the Josselyn Canyon Road intersection, to post mile 13.7, east of the San Benancio Road intersection. The proposed intersection improvements are within this 8.9-mile stretch of State Route 68. Within most of

the project limits, State Route 68 is a conventional two-lane, undivided highway with 12-foot travel lanes and 4- to 8-foot-wide shoulders. The highway has a two-way left-turn median channelization between Corral de Tierra Road and San Benancio Road. East of the project limits, State Route 68 operates as a limited access freeway (between Portola Drive and Spreckels Boulevard interchanges) and as a four-lane expressway (between the Spreckels Boulevard interchange and Blanco Road). West of the project limits, State Route 68 is classified as a freeway as it converges onto State Route 1, continues south congruent with State Route 1, and then diverges west to the Monterey Peninsula.

As detailed in Section 1.2, the purpose of the project is to reduce travel delays, vehicle collisions, and collisions between wildlife and vehicles, as well as improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians within the project corridor. Under consideration are two project Build Alternatives that would either convert the nine existing signalized intersections identified within the corridor into one-lane, multi-lane, and/or hybrid roundabouts (Build Alternative 1) or improve the nine existing intersections with modifications to lane configurations and lengths and upgrades to signal equipment (Build Alternative 2). The nine intersections included in both project Build Alternatives are as follows:

- Josselyn Canyon Road (post mile 5.22)
- Olmsted Airport Road (post mile 5.57)
- State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard)-Monterra Ranch Road (post mile 6.81)
- Ragsdale Drive (post mile 7.08)
- York Road (post mile 8.15)
- Pasadera Drive-Boots Road (post mile 9.78)
- Laureles Grade (post mile 11.22)
- Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive (post mile 12.95)
- San Benancio Road (post mile 13.33)

A wildlife connectivity improvement component is also included in each alternative. This component proposes installation of new culverts at five locations along State Route 68 to facilitate large mammal crossing movement and/or installation of directional fencing to deter wildlife from entering onto State Route 68.

1.4 Project Alternatives

This section describes the proposed action and the project alternatives developed to meet the purpose and need of the project, while avoiding or

minimizing environmental impacts. Two Build Alternatives, Alternative 1 and Alternative 2, and the No-Build Alternative are evaluated in this environmental document.

A number of design concepts to address State Route 68 operational conditions were assessed in the August 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan prepared by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County. Public input was a key component of the development and evaluation of the plan's alternatives.

Following completion of the plan, Caltrans worked with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and other stakeholders to further refine the design concepts into the project alternatives. The project alternatives used for evaluation in the Draft (and later this Final) Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment were developed to meet the purpose and need of the project while also considering public input received during the public scoping period, operational conditions relative to current traffic demand at intersections, traffic efficiency and safety at intersections, wildlife habitat connectivity, specific environmental impacts, and project costs.

1.4.1 Build Alternatives

This section has been updated since the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was circulated.

This Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment analyzes the potential effects on the project environment from two Build Alternatives: Alternative 1, construction of roundabouts in place of the existing signalized intersections, and Alternative 2, signalized intersections with enhanced lane configurations and traffic signal system improvements.

After circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for public comments, Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County considered additional ways to enhance the operational performance of the preferred Alternative 1 roundabouts. Conversion of the three easternmost roundabouts from single-lane designs to hybrid was analyzed and it was found to further reduce travel delay within the project limits for the projected 20-year horizon. Therefore, Alternative 1 has been refined and addressed in this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact to include the three hybrid roundabouts (a combination of one-lane and two-lanes) at State Route 68/Laureles Grade, State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road, and State Route 68/San Benancio Road. The remaining six roundabout designs are unchanged from the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Both Build Alternatives are considered to be feasible and would reasonably attain the purpose and need of the project as stated in Sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, to improve intersection operation and alleviate traffic congestion at the

project intersections, enhance wildlife connectivity and reduce the rate of collisions between wildlife and vehicles, and improve bicycle and pedestrian access within the project corridor. Alternative 1 (roundabouts) would also reduce the rate and severity of collisions in the long term at the project intersections. The project intersections and wildlife crossing improvement locations are shown in Figure 1.3.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment analyzed preliminary designs of the roundabouts and signalized intersection alternatives. Because these types of intersection designs have distinctly different physical shapes, their footprints over the existing intersections, and in part the adjacent environment, vary. Figure 1.4, Sheets 1 through 6, shows the approximate footprints (permanent impact areas) of each of the two Build Alternatives, as well as an Area of Potential Impact for each of the project intersections. The Area of Potential Impact is the area anticipated to contain the direct footprints of the components of the Build Alternatives as well as areas of temporary construction work to encompass the study areas of environmental effects of both of the Build Alternatives. The following sentence was added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Area of Potential Impact also includes locations of investigative geotechnical soil drilling for purposes of informing the final design of the preferred alternative.

This paragraph was revised since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Appendix H provides information for access to the preliminary design plans for Alternatives 1 and 2 at each of the project intersections. The plans for each intersection are graphic illustrations and are accessible from Caltrans' project webpage due to their large electronic file sizes.

Common Design Features of the Build Alternatives

Wildlife Connectivity Improvements

This paragraph was revised since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Proposed wildlife connectivity improvements were developed from recommendations provided by the study titled 2017 Monterey-Salinas State Route 68 Plan: Wildlife Connectivity Analysis. Both project Build Alternatives propose wildlife crossing improvements at the same five existing box or pipe culvert locations within the project limits. Installation of new larger culverts is proposed at all five locations. To facilitate wildlife use of the new culverts, gentle approach slopes at the openings of each of the new culverts have been designed to create openness and visual clearance, and native soil would be added into the bottoms of the culverts. Increasing the size of each of the culverts and creating the approach slopes would require excavating into the landscape at both ends to develop necessary clearance to the existing topography.

This paragraph was revised since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Exclusionary fencing is also proposed at four of the crossings to guide animals to the crossing structures. Fencing was deemed to be appropriate at specific locations where it can be terminated into a natural landform so that wildlife is less likely to walk around the opposite end of the fencing and enter the roadway.

Figure 1.3 shows the locations of the proposed wildlife crossing improvements within the project limits: Site 1-York Road Culvert (post mile 8.12), Site 2-Roadkill Hot Spot Location west of Pasadera Drive-Boots Road (post mile 9.41, eastbound near the Water District property across from the golf course), Site 3-Boots Road Culvert (post mile 9.67), Site 4-Laureles Grade Culvert (post mile 11.15), and Site 5-Box Culvert west of San Benancio Road (post mile 13.19). The proposed wildlife crossing improvements are described in Table 1.4 and shown on the project design layout sheets for both Build Alternatives referenced in Appendix H.

Utilities Relocation

Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead distribution lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be relocated underground (subsurface) in accordance with State of California Scenic Highway regulations and California Public Utilities (CPUC) Section 320. Existing underground lines, including natural gas, sewer, and water lines in conflict with project improvements, would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the state highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing to locate underground utilities would be conducted as soon as feasible and would be done in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (final Design) phase of the project to positively identify the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Improvements

The Build Alternatives would provide various improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities at the project intersections as noted in the specific descriptions below. Alternative 1 would include 8-foot-wide shared bicycle and pedestrian pathways on all legs of the roundabout connecting to crosswalks across each leg, and a 5-foot-wide bicycle path and ramps after the shared paths end at the crosswalks. Crosswalks would be provided on all legs of the roundabouts.

Alternative 2 would include road widenings via auxiliary through lanes and/or designated left-/right-turn lane extensions where feasible that may also include accommodation provisions for new and/or extended bicycle lanes in accordance with the specific layouts of each intersection. Existing crosswalks would be restriped where the road is widened at the intersections.

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Figure 1.3 Project Intersections and Wildlife Crossing Locations

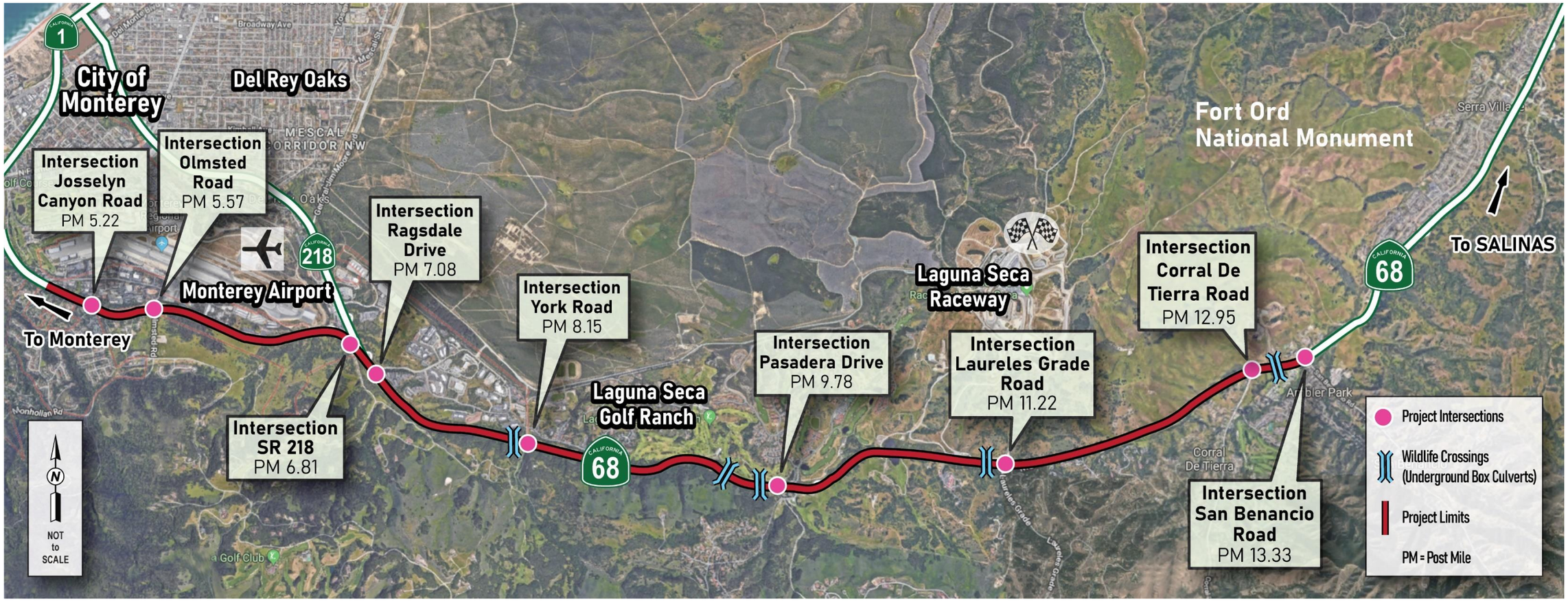


Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 1 of 6)

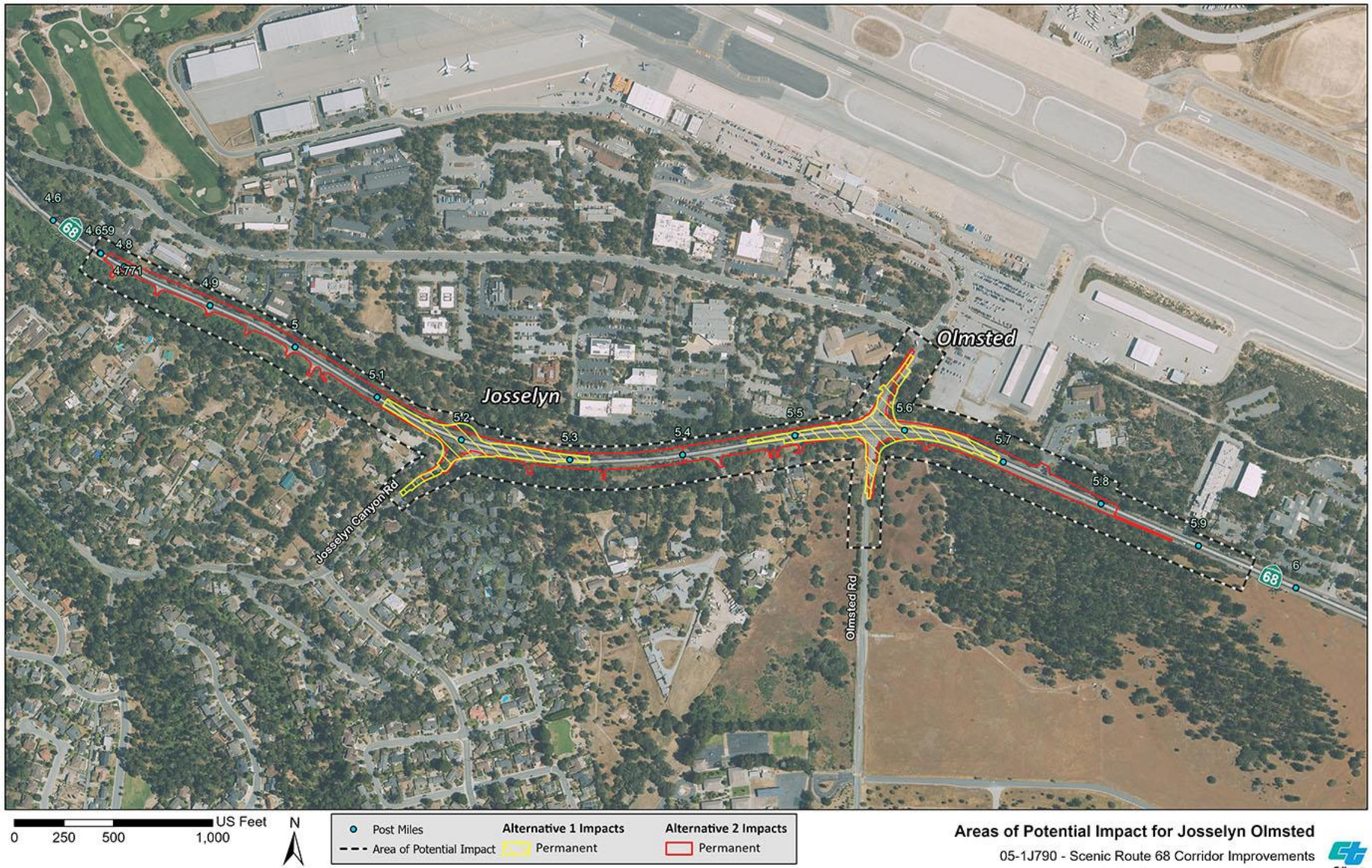


Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 2 of 6)

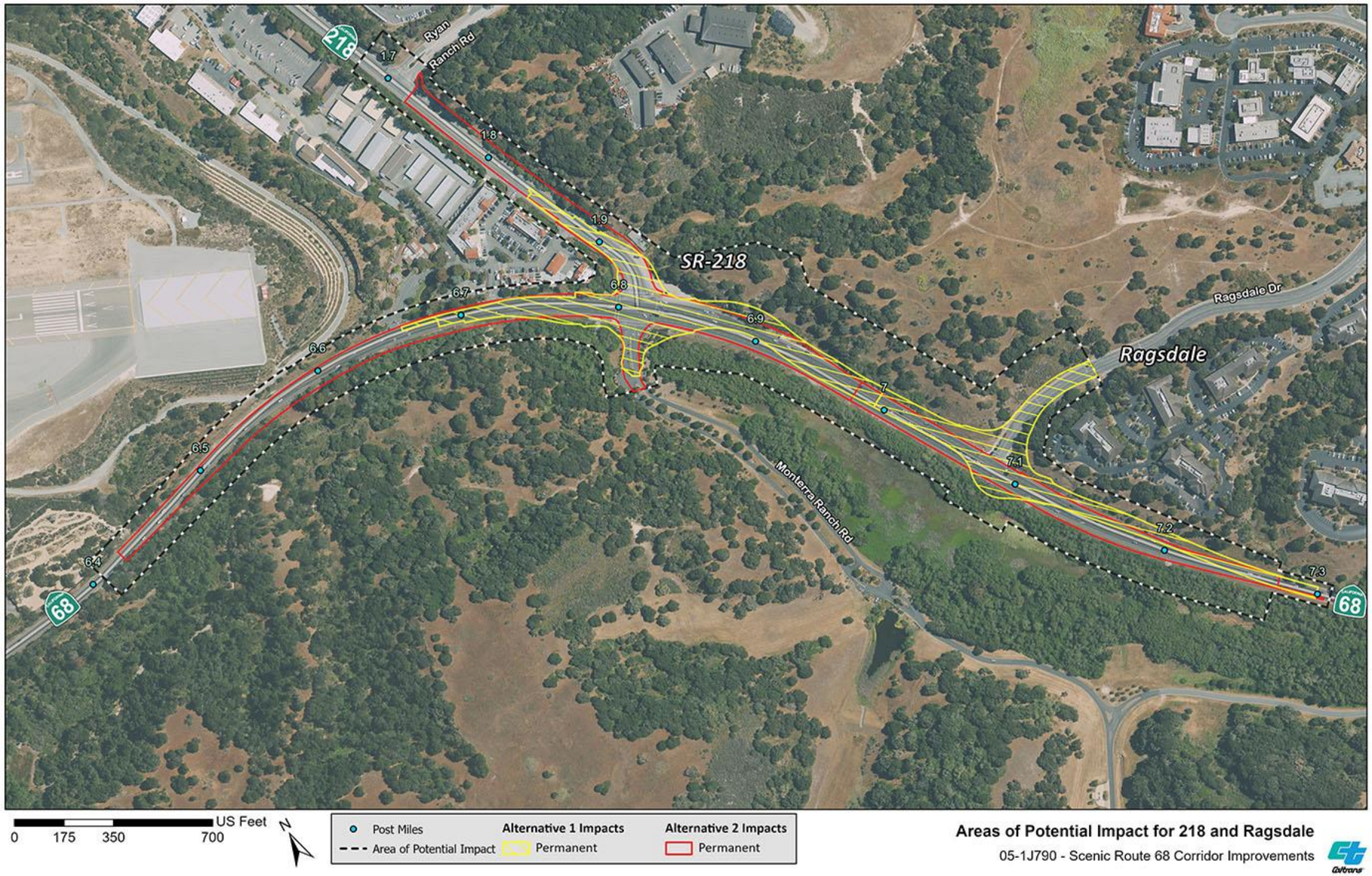


Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 3 of 6)

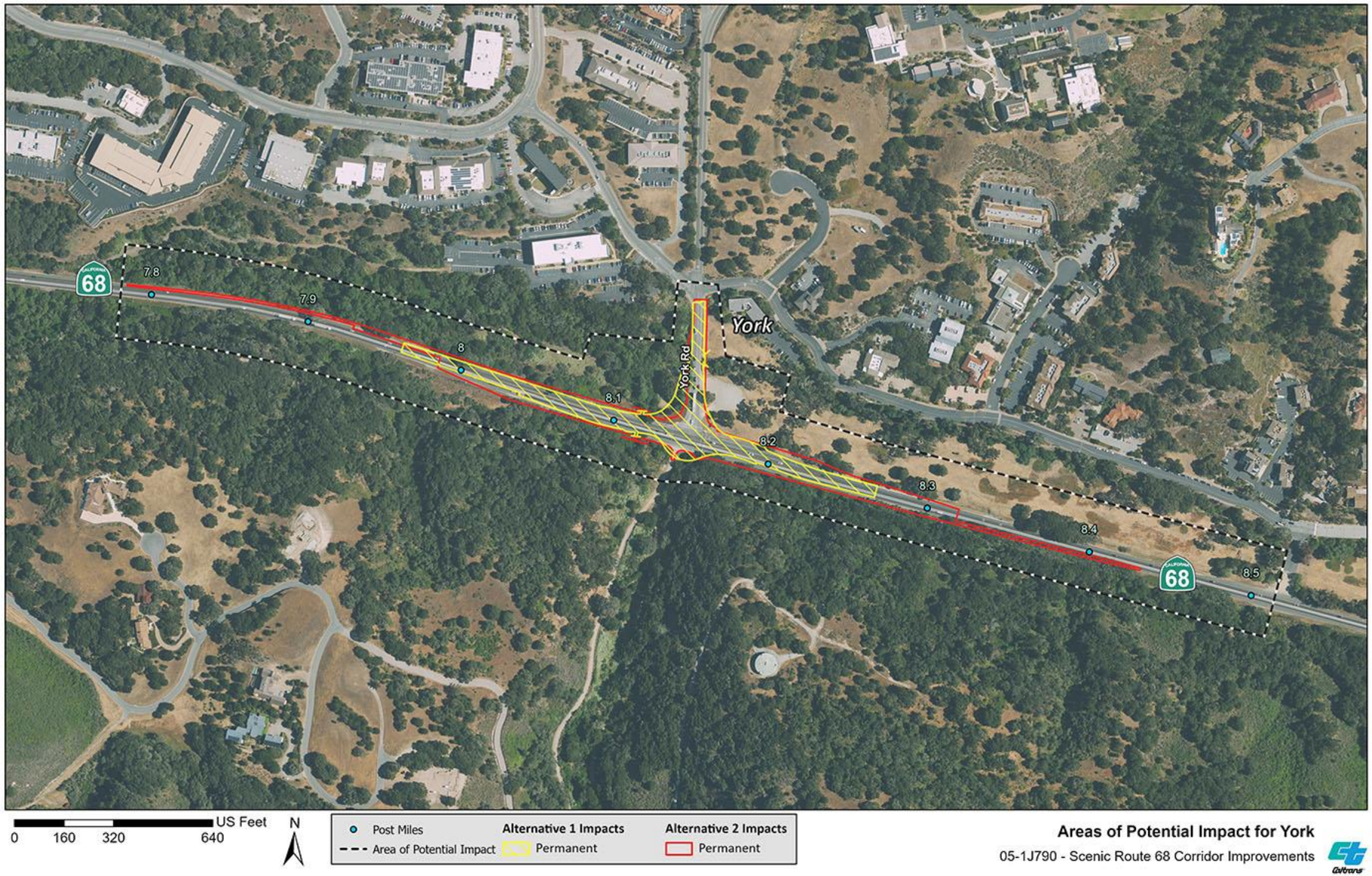


Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 4 of 6)



Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 5 of 6)



Figure 1.4 Project Areas of Potential Impact (Sheet 6 of 6)



Areas of Potential Impact for Corral de Tierra and San Benancio

05-1J790 - Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements

Table 1.4 Summary of Proposed Wildlife Connectivity Improvements

Location of Wildlife Crossing (State Route 68 Post Mile)	Existing Width/ Height/Type/ Length	Proposed Wildlife Crossing Improvement
Site 1-York Road Culvert (post mile 8.12)	6-foot by 4-foot reinforced concrete box culvert Length: 60 feet	A new 8-foot-wide by 8-foot-high by about 85-foot-long reinforced concrete box culvert would be installed under State Route 68, 18 feet west of the existing concrete box culvert, which would be abandoned in place. Excavation is required at approximately 90 to100 feet to the north and 75 to 85 feet south of the new culvert to conform to existing flow lines and improve visibility to facilitate large animal movement. Exclusionary fencing to be installed along both sides of State Route 68 to guide wildlife to the new culvert.
Site 2-Roadkill Hot Spot Location west of Pasadera Drive-Boots Road (post mile 9.41, eastbound near the Water District property across from the golf course)	3.5-foot-diameter corrugated steel pipe Length: 60 feet	A new 12-foot-wide by 11-foot-high by about 90-foot-long reinforced concrete box culvert would be installed under State Route 68 approximately 450 feet west of the evaluated roadkill hot spot at post mile 9.41. The existing culvert at the regulated floodway would not be altered. Excavation is required about 85 to 95 feet south of the new culvert to conform to existing flow lines and improve visibility to facilitate large animal movement. An outlet basin would be constructed to the north for proper drainage from the culvert during storms. The basin would be about 75 feet wide by 150 feet long. A smaller pond to the south would also be excavated to ensure drainage functionality of the crossing feature. Exclusionary fencing would be installed on both sides of State Route 68 from west of Pasadera Drive to the new culvert to guide wildlife to the crossing culvert.
Site 3-Boots Road Culvert (post mile 9.67)	4.5-foot-diameter reinforced concrete box culvert Length: 60 feet	A new 8-foot-tall by 8-foot-wide by 125-foot-long reinforced concrete box culvert would be installed under State Route 68 approximately 450 feet west of the evaluated roadkill hot spot at post mile 9.67, replacing a smaller-diameter corrugated steel pipe at the proposed location. The existing culvert at the regulated floodway at post mile 9.67 would not be altered. Excavation required is approximately 20 to 30 feet to the north and 60 to 70 feet south of the new culvert to conform to existing flow lines and improve visibility to facilitate large animal movement. Exclusionary fencing would be installed on both sides of State Route 68 to guide wildlife to the culvert.
Site 4-Laureles Grade Culvert (post mile 11.15)	2- to 2.3-foot by 1.8-foot corrugated steel pipe Length: 60 feet	A new 8-foot-wide by 8-foot-tall by about 170-foot-long reinforced concrete box culvert would be installed under State Route 68 approximately 50 feet west of the existing corrugated steel pipe, which will be abandoned in place. Excavation of an 1,800-foot-long ditch would be required about 45 to 55 feet to the north and 60 to 70 feet south of the new culvert to conform to existing flow lines and improve visibility to facilitate large animal movement.

Location of Wildlife Crossing (State Route 68 Post Mile)	Existing Width/ Height/Type/ Length	Proposed Wildlife Crossing Improvement
Site 5-Box Culvert west of San Benancio Road (post mile 13.19)	5-foot by 5-foot reinforced concrete box culvert Length 55 feet	A new 7-foot-wide by 7-foot-tall by 100-foot-long reinforced concrete box culvert would be installed under State Route 68 about 25 feet east of the existing culvert which will be abandoned in place. Excavation is required approximately 60 feet to the north and about 440 feet south of the new culvert to conform to existing flow lines and improve visibility to facilitate large animal movement. Exclusionary fencing will be installed on both sides of State Route 68 to guide wildlife to the culvert.

Zero Emission Vehicle Charging Station

Two Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) charging station systems would be installed at the existing Park and Ride lot operated by Monterey County on the east side of Laureles Grade south of State Route 68. The stations would be Level 2, solar-powered charging systems, providing charging capability for two electric vehicles at the same time. Up to three of the existing parking stalls in the portion of the lot south of a residential driveway would be converted for the charging systems equipment. The existing parking spaces in that portion of the lot would be restriped for eight parking stalls based on current design standards. A total of 15 parking stalls would be available in the entirety of the lot for Park and Ride users, a reduction of 5 stalls from the existing lot capacity of 20 stalls.

The charging station equipment and lot modifications would be constructed and installed by Caltrans through an encroachment permit to be obtained from the County of Monterey. The cost for the station would be sponsored by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, and the County would maintain the facilities. No right-of-way acquisitions would be required.

Standard Project Measures and Practices Intended to Reduce Environmental Impacts

The project contains standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project. These measures are addressed in more detail in the Environmental Consequences sections of the topical analyses found in Chapter 2.

Table 1.5 provides a list of standard measures and best management practices relevant to the proposed project for either build alternative. The measure numbers reference those in the Caltrans Standard Specifications book for construction contracts. Additional regulatory requirements are also included as applicable.

Table 1.5 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in Project Build Alternatives

Topic	Standard Measure/Best Management Practice
General	7-1.02A The contractor would comply with laws, regulations, orders and decrees applicable to the project.
Air Quality	7-1.02C Emissions Reduction: The contractor would submit a certification acknowledging compliance with emissions reduction regulations managed by the California Air Resources Board.
Air Quality	14-9.02 Air Pollution Control: The project would comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes.
Air Quality	14-11.04 Dust Control: Excavation, transportation, and handling of material containing hazardous waste or contamination must result in no visible dust migration. When clearing, grubbing, and performing earthwork operations in areas containing hazardous waste or contamination, a water truck or tank would be provided on the job site.
Archaeological Resources	14-2.03 Archaeological Resources: If archaeological resources are discovered within or near the construction limits, the resources would not be further disturbed, and all work near the discovery would stop immediately. The area would be secured, and the Resident Engineer and the project archaeologist would be notified.
Biological Resources	14-6.03 Species Protection: Instructions for the protection of regulated species and their associated habitat. If a protected species is discovered in a project work area, work would stop near the discovery and the Resident Engineer would be notified.
Construction Site	13-4 Job Site Management: Specifications for performing job site management work such as spill prevention and control, material management, waste management, non-stormwater management and dewatering activities.
Environmentally Sensitive Areas	14-1.02 Environmentally Sensitive Areas: Caltrans would mark areas that are environmentally sensitive. These areas cannot be entered unless authorized. If the environmentally sensitive area is breached, work would stop and the Resident Engineer would be notified.
Fire Protection	7-1.02M(2) Fire Protection: Development of a Fire Prevention Plan which would minimize the risk of starting a wildfire during construction.
Hazardous Waste	14-11.03 Hazardous Waste Management: Outlines procedures for handling, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous waste, in compliance with 22 California Code of Regulations Division 4.5.
Hazardous Waste	14-11.04 Dust Control: Excavation, transportation, and handling of material containing hazardous waste or contamination must result in no visible dust migration. A water truck or tank would be provided on the construction site when conducting clearing, grubbing, and earthwork operations in areas containing hazardous waste or contamination.
Hazardous Waste	14-11.06 Contractor-Generated Hazardous Waste: Provides instructions to the contractor for the management of hazardous wastes that may be generated during construction, and management of contaminated soils from accidental leaks or spills.
Hazardous Waste	14-11.08 for Regulated Material Containing Aerially Deposited Lead.
Hazardous Waste	14-11.09 for Minimal Disturbance of Regulated Material Containing Aerially Deposited Lead.

Topic	Standard Measure/Best Management Practice
Hazardous Waste	14-11.12 Removal of Yellow Traffic Stripe and Pavement Marking with Hazardous Waste Residue: Includes specifications for removing, handling, and disposing of yellow thermoplastic and yellow-painted traffic stripe and pavement marking. The residue from removal of this material is generated hazardous waste (lead chromate), and removal exposes workers to health hazards that must be addressed in a lead compliance plan.
Hazardous Waste	14-11.13C Safety and Health Protection Measures: Applies to worker protective measures for potential lead exposure.
Hazardous Waste	Standard Special Provision 14-11.14 Treated Wood Waste: Required to assess handling and disposal of any potential wood waste generated during the project.
Hazardous Waste	84-9.03C Remove Traffic Stripes and Pavement Markings Containing Lead: Includes instructions for the removal of yellow traffic stripe if the stripe would be removed using a cold plane or grinding operation.
Hazardous Waste	Standard Special Provision 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii): Earth Material Containing Lead.
Hazardous Waste	Standard Special Provision 36-4: For work involving residue from grinding and cold planing that contains lead from paint and thermoplastic.
Noise	14-8.02 Noise Control: Noise from construction work activities would be controlled and monitored so as not to exceed 86 decibels at 50 feet from the job site from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
Paleontological Resources	14-7.03 Discovery of Unanticipated Paleontological Resources: If unanticipated paleontological resources are discovered, the resources would not be further disturbed, and all work near the discovery would stop immediately. The area would be secured, and the resident engineer would be notified.
Solid Waste	14-10.02 Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Report: The types and amounts of solid waste taken to or diverted from landfills or reused on the project would be tracked and reported each calendar year.
Traffic Management	Transportation Management Plan: A Transportation Management Plan would be prepared and included with the project plans, specifications, and estimates for management of traffic flow during construction. The plan would include specific measures for movement of vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians through the project intersections such as lane closures, reversible lanes, detour routes, and public information programs and procedures.
Utilities	Overhead utility lines in conflict with project improvements shall be undergrounded by the responsible utility entity in accordance with Public Utilities Code 320 as required by the California Public Utilities Commission.
Water Quality	13-2 Water Pollution Control Program: Includes specifications for the development implementation of a Water Pollution Control Program.
Water Quality	13-5 Temporary Soil Stabilization: Includes specifications for placing temporary soil stabilization materials on stockpiles or disturbed soil areas.
Water Quality	13-6 Temporary Sediment Control: Includes specifications for installing temporary sediment controls, such as check dams and drainage inlet protections.
Water Quality	13-9 Temporary Concrete Washouts: Includes specifications for installing temporary concrete washouts to receive and dispose of concrete waste.
Water Quality	13-10 Temporary Linear Sediment Barriers: Includes specifications for installing temporary linear barriers to control sediment, like high-visibility fencing, fiber rolls, and temporary large sediment barriers.

Unique Features of the Build Alternatives

The following discussion has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. While both Build Alternatives propose changes to the same nine intersections, the types of changes at each intersection differ by alternative as described below and summarized in Table 1.6 (Alternative 1) and Table 1.7 (Alternative 2).

Alternative 1 State Route 68 Roundabouts

The following section has been updated since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Alternative 1 proposes to convert nine existing signalized intersections to roundabouts, including five single-lane, one multi-lane, and three hybrid-design roundabouts. Hybrid roundabouts are a combination of one and two lanes. The project locations on State Route 68 for Alternative 1 are numbered 1 through 7, with two locations combining two intersections due to their close proximity and the operational traffic characteristics of roundabouts:

- Location 1 (Alternative 1): Josselyn Canyon Road (post mile 5.22)
- Location 2 (Alternative 1): Olmsted Airport Road (post mile 5.57)
- Location 3 (Alternative 1): State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard) to Ragsdale Drive (post miles 6.65 to 7.23)
- Location 4 (Alternative 1): York Road (post mile 8.15)
- Location 5 (Alternative 1): Pasadera Drive-Boots Road (post mile 9.78)
- Location 6 (Alternative 1): Laureles Grade (post mile 11.22)
- Location 7 (Alternative 1): Corral de Tierra Road to San Benancio Road (post miles 12.81 to 13.47)

The roundabouts are designed to naturally reduce vehicle speeds to approximately 20 to 30 miles per hour as vehicles approach each of the roundabout intersections. The typical roadway section at each roundabout intersection would consist of a central island with apron, with two to four travel lanes (one or two travel lanes in each direction), a landscape buffer, splitter island with landscaping, and a shared path for bicyclists and pedestrians. Construction of retaining walls and/or landform grading would be required at some locations. The roundabout center islands would be hardscaped to minimize maintenance and associated temporary travel lane closures, and to facilitate worker safety. Landscaping the center islands may be considered during the final design phase.

Each roundabout would include a pedestrian and bicycle shared-use path to the north and south of the through vehicle travel lanes and accessible shared-use crosswalks across each leg of the roundabout. Safety features include island refuge areas to allow staged pedestrian and bicyclist crossings. All

roundabouts would include signage, illumination, and striping for pedestrian and bicycle crossings.

Since directional travel lanes entering and exiting the roundabout are separated by a splitter island, pedestrians and bicyclists would cross only one lane/direction of travel at a time to a refuge point in the splitter island. Crosswalks are set back from the roundabout entry to allow drivers to watch for crossing pedestrians and bicyclists before they begin to yield for any oncoming vehicles, and again before they have fully exited the roundabout. Bicycle lanes would lead up to the roundabout and, upon entering the roundabout, bicyclists would have the option of riding in the travel lane or using a ramp to the shared use path.

The main elements of each of the proposed roundabout designs under Alternative 1 at the project intersections are summarized in Table 1.6. For a complete list of design elements, see the scope of work descriptions in Appendix I. The contents of Table 1.6 and Appendix I have been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Table 1.6 Alternative 1 Roundabout Intersection Design Summary

Post Mile on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Roundabout Elements – Alternative 1
5.22	Josselyn Canyon Road	Single-lane roundabout at 3-legged intersection; Josselyn Canyon Road realigned to intersect near 90 degrees with State Route 68; 8-foot-wide shared path for bicycle and pedestrian use on all intersection legs, and 5-foot-wide bicycle path and ramps on all legs after shared path ends at crosswalks; Raised splitter island between through lanes on all legs; Retaining wall on north side of State Route 68 west of bicycle ramp (4 to 22 feet tall, 320 feet long), and retaining wall with concrete barrier adjacent to northbound Josselyn Canyon Road (4 to 18 feet tall, 192 feet long); both walls would have a concrete drainage ditch and landform grading; A concrete barrier would be placed on the north side of State Route 68 adjacent to the edge of pavement from the end of the bike ramp east of the roundabout and extending east 460 feet; Drainage infrastructure modifications to propagate runoff into ditches; Hammond Drive entrance onto State Route 68 east of the roundabout would have right turn in-and-out access due to raised splitter island on State Route 68; Permanent property acquisition from 6 Assessor's Parcels totaling up to 1.2 acres; Removal of several trees from widening of State Route 68; Relocation of overhead and underground utility lines and poles where in conflict.
5.57	Olmsted Airport Road	Single-lane roundabout at 4-legged intersection; Olmsted Road would have an opening in the raised splitter island to allow for left turn in-and-out access to the Comfort Inn; 8-foot-wide shared path for bicycle and pedestrian use on all intersection legs, and 5-foot-wide bicycle path and ramps on all legs after shared path ends at crosswalks; Raised splitter island between through lanes on all legs; Drainage infrastructure modifications to propagate runoff into ditches; Permanent property acquisition from 5 Assessor's Parcels totaling up to 1.95 acres; Relocation of overhead and underground utility lines and poles where in conflict.

Post Mile on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Roundabout Elements – Alternative 1
6.81	State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard)-Monterra Ranch Road	2-lane roundabout except for northbound and southbound State Route 218 and westbound State Route 68 which would have two southbound lanes and one northbound lane; 4-legged intersection; 8-foot-wide shared path for bicycle and pedestrian use on all intersection legs, and 5-foot-wide bicycle path and ramps on all legs after shared path ends at crosswalks; Raised splitter island between through lanes on all legs; State Route 68 east of the roundabout would be realigned to accommodate chicanes; Removal of several trees from realignment of State Route 68 east of the roundabout; Landform grading cut slope of 74 feet at 2 to 1 horizontal to vertical ratio in northeast quadrant of the roundabout; Two retaining walls, one in the southwest quadrant (5 feet tall and 119 feet long) and one in the southeast quadrant (5 feet tall and 105 feet long) to limit impacts of cut slope for realignment of State Route 68; Drainage infrastructure modifications to propagate runoff into ditches; Permanent property acquisition from 5 Assessor's Parcels totaling up to 2.70 acres; Temporary Construction Easement of up to 0.38 acre from one parcel for construction access; permanent slope easements from 2 parcels for up to 1.36 acres; Relocation of overhead and underground utility lines and poles where in conflict. Avoidance of historical elements on Tarpy's Roadhouse property adjacent to State Route 68.
7.08	Ragsdale Drive	Single-lane roundabout with a dedicated bypass lane for eastbound through traffic on State Route 68; 3-legged intersection with crosswalks on all legs; Dedicated right-turn lane on southbound leg (Ragsdale); 8-foot-wide shared path for bicycle and pedestrian use on all intersection legs, and 5-foot-wide bicycle path and ramps on all legs after shared path ends at crosswalks; Raised splitter islands between lanes on all legs; Three retaining walls and one concrete barrier: one in the northwest quadrant (about 4 to 20 feet tall, 254 feet long) with a trapezoidal ditch in front of the wall and a concrete drainage ditch and landform grading at the top and back side of the wall; one wall in the northeast quadrant with a length of about 370 feet and height of 4 to 22 feet, with a concrete drainage ditch at the top and backside of the wall; a concrete barrier with a length of 100 feet on the north side of State Route 68 adjacent to the highway edge of pavement; A third wall on the north side of State Route 68 starting at the end of the concrete barrier and extending easterly (about 4 to 15 feet high and 400 feet long) with a concrete ditch at the top of the wall, back side; Drainage infrastructure modifications to propagate runoff into ditches to accommodate capacity with graded slopes to meet design requirements for clear recovery areas; Permanent property acquisition from 5 Assessor's Parcels totaling up to about 2.88 acres; and 0.58 acre of slope easement. Relocation of overhead and underground utility lines and poles where in conflict.

Post Mile on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Roundabout Elements – Alternative 1
8.15	York Road	Single-lane roundabout at a 3-legged intersection; dedicated right-turn lane for southbound traffic (York Road); Crosswalks on all legs of the intersection; 8-foot-wide shared path for bicycle and pedestrian use on all intersection legs, and 5-foot-wide bicycle path and ramps on all legs after shared path ends at crosswalks; Raised splitter islands between lanes on all legs; Several trees to be removed for roundabout; Wildlife Crossing Number 1: realignment of existing drainage channel to the west using a larger reinforced concrete box (8 feet by 8 feet by 83 feet); construction of two temporary access roads: one on the north side of State Route 68, one on the south side of State Route 68. Drainage infrastructure modifications to propagate runoff into ditches; existing reinforced concrete box culvert for the regulated floodway north of State Route 68 and under York Road would be lengthened to accommodate the roundabout; Permanent property acquisition from 5 Assessor's Parcels totaling up to 1.14 acres; Temporary Construction Easement from four parcels of up to 1.24 acres; Relocation of overhead and underground utility lines and poles where in conflict.
9.78	Pasadera Drive-Boots Road	Single-lane roundabout at a 4-legged intersection; crosswalks on all legs; 8-foot-wide shared path for bicycle and pedestrian use on all intersection legs, and 5-foot-wide bicycle path and ramps on all legs after shared path ends at crosswalks; Raised splitter islands between through lanes; Several trees to be removed for roundabout; Drainage infrastructure modifications to propagate runoff into ditches to convey runoff from the south side to the north side of the roundabout and into the regulated floodway; Construction of retaining wall (about 4 to 6 feet high and 88 feet long) in the southwest quadrant to limit impacts to the slope and drainage facility; Permanent right-of-way acquisition from 6 Assessor's Parcels with a combined total of up to about 1 acre; Temporary Construction Easements from 3 parcels of up to 0.11 acre; Permanent drainage easements of up to 1.42 acres would be necessary for long-term maintenance of the drainage facilities; Wildlife Crossing (Site 2) would be constructed approximately 1,900 feet west of the intersection; a reinforced concrete box culvert (12 feet by 11 feet by 88 feet) would be installed, along with wildlife fencing; Wildlife Crossing (Site 3) would be constructed about 450 feet west of the intersection by installing a reinforced concrete box culvert (8 feet by 8 feet by 125 feet) filled with native material; wildlife directional fencing leading up to the culvert; Relocation of overhead and underground utility lines and poles where in conflict.

Post Mile on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Roundabout Elements – Alternative 1
11.22	Laureles Grade	Hybrid roundabout at a 3-legged intersection; Dedicated right-turn lane for northbound traffic (Laureles Grade); Crosswalks on all legs; 8-foot-wide shared path for bicycle and pedestrian use on all intersection legs, and 5-foot-wide bicycle path and ramps on all legs after shared path ends at crosswalks; Raised splitter islands between through and right-turn lanes; Several trees to be removed for roundabout; Drainage infrastructure modifications to propagate runoff into ditches to convey runoff; Driveway access to Seca Place east of Laureles Grade would be modified to a right-in only, and right and/or left out onto State Route 68; Retaining wall (4 to 10 feet high, 105 feet long) in the northeast quadrant extending east of the intersection to limit impacts to slope and private road; Permanent right-of-way acquisition from 3 Assessor's Parcels with a combination of up to 2.46 acres for intersection modifications; Temporary Construction Easements of up to 0.16 acre combined from 2 parcels; Two Zero Emissions Vehicle charging station systems proposed for installation on the existing Park and Ride lot on the east side of Laureles Grade; charging for up to two vehicles simultaneously; no right-of-way acquisition necessary; reduction of 5 parking stalls for a total of 15 stalls at the lot. Wildlife Crossing (Site 4): reinforced concrete box culvert measuring 8 feet by 8 feet by 170 feet would be installed approximately 250 feet west of the intersection; native soil material to line the bottom of the culvert; Relocation of overhead and underground utility lines and poles where in conflict.

Post Mile on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Roundabout Elements – Alternative 1
12.95	Corral de Tierra Road	Hybrid roundabout at 4-legged intersection; Crosswalks on all legs; 8-foot-wide shared path for bicycle and pedestrian use on all intersection legs, and 5-foot-wide bicycle path and ramps on all legs after shared path ends at crosswalks; Raised splitter islands between through lanes; Drainage infrastructure modifications to propagate runoff into ditches to convey runoff; In the northwest quadrant a four-to-one ratio (horizontal to vertical) fill embankment will extend east from the proposed bike ramp to limit impacts to the adjacent slope and sensitive resources. On the west side of Cypress Church Drive and north of State Route 68 a trapezoidal-shaped drainage ditch will be installed to maximize the treatment and discharge of surface drainage to the natural streambed. In the northeast quadrant (east of Cypress Church Drive and north of State Route 68) a trapezoidal ditch that transitions to a V shaped ditch will be constructed to maximize the treatment and discharge of surface drainage into the natural streambed. Drainage infrastructure located in the northeast quadrant will minimize impacts to adjacent property in the southeast quadrant. Permanent right-of-way acquisition from 5 Assessor's Parcels with a combination of up to 1.30 acres; Temporary Construction Easements from one parcel for up to 0.12 acre. Modification of driveway access from State Route 68 to the Corral Market & Deli property on the southwest side of the intersection would be modified due to the roundabout design to remove the easternmost driveway and to change the western driveway to right in/right out only; Full access to the southwest retail property would remain from Corral de Tierra Road; Preliminary design for the roundabout currently allows for left turn access from southbound Corral de Tierra Road to the southeast corner property at State Route 68. This access may be removed in the future pending County development review and conditions of approval for a proposed fuel station on this property; Relocation of overhead and underground utility lines and poles where in conflict.

Post Mile on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Roundabout Elements – Alternative 1
13.33	San Benancio Road	Hybrid roundabout at a 3-legged intersection; Crosswalks on all legs; 8-foot-wide shared path for bicycle and pedestrian use on all intersection legs, and 5-foot-wide bicycle path and ramps on all legs after shared path ends at crosswalks; Raised splitter islands between through lanes; Drainage infrastructure modifications to propagate runoff into ditches to convey runoff; Existing frontage road access at the north leg would be moved east about 200 feet, with left-turn access from State Route 68 onto San Benancio Road (east leg). Access from San Benancio Road onto State Route 68 would be changed to allow right-out-only movements; Frontage Road would be realigned due to the widened roundabout; Retaining wall Number 1 in the northwest quadrant will range from 4 to 18 feet tall, 280 feet long, extending east from the proposed bike ramp; a concrete barrier would be on top of the wall between the highway and the frontage road; Two retaining walls would be constructed in the northeast quadrant (east of San Benancio Road and north of State Route 68): Retaining Wall Number 2 ranges from 4 to 22 feet tall and 132 feet long; Retaining Wall Number 3 ranges from 4 to 7 feet tall, and 140 feet long. The Toro Creek Bridge (#44C0117) and northern approach slab would be widened to accommodate the roundabout and shared use path, and would include new wing wall-retaining walls to protect the slopes of the creek; sidewalk would also be added within the existing bridge width; Permanent right-of-way acquisition from 8 Assessor's Parcels with a combination of up to 0.84 acre; Temporary Construction Easements from 9 parcels of up to 1.60 acres, and 3 parcels with 0.07 acre of subsurface easements. Wildlife Crossing Number 5: A reinforced concrete box culvert (7 feet by 7 feet by 100 feet) with native soil material added in the bottom of the culvert would be installed approximately 650 feet west of the intersection (post mile 13.18); wildlife fencing would be installed to guide wildlife to the box culvert. Relocation of overhead and underground utility lines and poles where in conflict.

Alternative 2 State Route 68 Integrated Corridor Management and Adaptive Signal Control

Alternative 2 would make various types of operational improvements at the same nine intersections on State Route 68 as those included with Alternative 1, but through modifications and upgrades to the existing signal control systems and vehicle travel lanes, plus the addition of accommodations for bicycle travel ways and pedestrian facilities. The project locations on State Route 68 for Alternative 2 are numbered 1 through 6, with three locations including two intersections due to their close proximity and the operational traffic characteristics of signalized intersections:

- Location 1 (Alternative 2): Josselyn Canyon Road to Olmsted Road (post miles 4.8 to 5.9)
- Location 2 (Alternative 2): State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard) to Ragsdale Drive (post miles 6.45 to 7.3)
- Location 3 (Alternative 2): York Road (post miles 7.8 to 8.45)
- Location 4 (Alternative 2): Pasadera Drive-Boots Road (post miles 9.46 to 10.21)
- Location 5 (Alternative 2): Laureles Grade (post miles 10.94 to 11.50)
- Location 6 (Alternative 2): Corral de Tierra Road to San Benancio Road (post miles 12.55 to 13.7)

Traffic channelization (lane) improvements at the intersections and approach areas to the intersections would include widening of State Route 68 and/or the intersecting local street and restriping to provide additional through and/or dedicated left-turn or right-turn lanes, extending the storage length of the lanes, or provision for new auxiliary lanes (short sections of additional travel lane that would taper back to the existing highway width) where needed. Channelization improvements would require acquisition of new right-of-way beyond the existing road right-of-way at intersections, particularly where an additional approach through lane and departing lane would be required.

Traffic signal system equipment would be replaced with upgraded adaptive signal control technology that would adjust the timing of the red, yellow, and green light cycle times to accommodate variations in traffic patterns and improve movement through the intersection. All currently signalized intersections would be upgraded with traffic sensors/traffic detection, traffic signal controllers, and fiber optic or wireless communication systems at the intersections. These communication devices would allow each signalized intersection to be adaptive and allow them to react to changing traffic conditions, monitor traffic conditions at each intersection in real time, and continuously distribute green time equitably for all traffic movements.

Operational improvements proposed in Alternative 2 would incorporate the December 2020 Traffic Operations Analysis Report recommendations for intersection lane configurations that considered the 2045 forecasted peak traffic volumes. Dedicated bicycle lanes would be provided adjacent to dedicated right-turn lanes and auxiliary lanes. Roadway shoulder areas would be widened where necessary to the standard 8-foot width where feasible, with 4-foot-wide shoulders adjacent to dedicated right-turn lanes. Curb ramps with Americans with Disabilities Act design compliance would be constructed adjacent to intersection crosswalk areas, and the upgraded signal systems would include pedestrian push button accessibility for crossing time. Existing crosswalks would be restriped on the intersection legs that would be widened.

Adjustments to the existing drainage facilities would be modified (relocated and/or realigned, with the required forward and back slopes) where necessary to accommodate the travel lane and road shoulder improvements. Retaining walls would be constructed where necessary to retain cut slopes and minimize impacts to environmental resources. Underground and overhead utility lines in conflict with proposed intersection improvements would be relocated. Private driveways, fences, and private mailboxes within the intersection improvement areas would be relocated or set back.

Table 1.7 summarizes the elements of the signalized intersections proposed under Alternative 2. For a complete list of design elements see the scope of work descriptions in Appendix I.

Table 1.7 Alternative 2 Signalized Intersections Design Summary

Post Miles on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Signalized Intersection Elements – Alternative 2
5.22	Josselyn Canyon Road	Eastbound State Route 68 would be widened to the south to add a 12-foot-wide by 500-foot-long combination through/right-turn lane approaching Josselyn Canyon Road, preceded by a 250-foot-long taper; Through lane on eastbound State Route 68 would continue between Josselyn Canyon Road and Olmsted Road; Standard 8-foot-wide shoulders constructed throughout; Westbound State Route 68 widened to the north to add a 12-foot by 1,220-foot-long westbound auxiliary lane west of Josselyn Canyon Road, and a 720-foot-long taper back to existing State Route 68; Westbound State Route 68 approach to Josselyn left-turn lane extended by 300 feet; the 12-foot median to Olmsted would be extended and function as a two-way turn lane to facilitate southerly driveway access; Josselyn Canyon Road would be realigned to improve the angle of the intersection to be greater than 75 degrees to improve sight distance at the corners and view approaching traffic; Northbound Josselyn Canyon Road would be widened to accommodate a 125-foot-long dedicated left-turn lane and right-turn lane; Retaining wall along northbound Josselyn 4- to 12-foot-high by 100-foot-long to minimize impacts to the adjacent cut slope with Monterey pine trees; Traffic signal equipment would be replaced with adaptive signal control technology to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve movement through the intersection; ADA-compliant curb ramps at all crosswalk intersections, and all crosswalks would be restriped; Clear recovery requirement of 20 feet from edge of traveled way in the eastbound direction, and construction of a 4-to-1 ratio embankment slope; Existing drainage culverts would be extended to daylight to the reconstructed ditches as applicable.

Post Miles on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Signalized Intersection Elements – Alternative 2
5.57	Olmsted Airport Road	Eastbound State Route 68 would be widened on the south side to add a two-way left-turn lane (12 feet wide, 745 feet long) between the westbound State Route 68 Josselyn left-turn approach and eastbound State Route 68 Olmsted approach; a 12-foot wide continuous through lane would be added; Eastbound State Route 68 outside through lane approach to Olmsted would also serve as a right-turn lane onto southbound Olmsted; Existing eastbound State Route 68 left-turn lane and westbound State Route 68 left-turn lane would be extended by 275 and 230 feet, respectively; A westbound State Route 68 auxiliary through lane (990 feet long) would be added, preceded by a 250-foot-long lane taper; The westbound State Route 68 exclusive right-turn lane would be realigned and extended by 360 feet to accommodate a 6-foot-wide bike lane; a 4-foot-wide (minimum) outside shoulder would be constructed adjacent to the dedicated right-turn lane; Standard 8-foot-wide shoulders would be constructed on eastbound State Route 68 throughout the improvements with 4-foot-wide shoulders adjacent to dedicated right-turn lanes; The Olmsted Road south leg of the intersection would be modified to have a 295-foot-long dedicated left-turn lane and a combination through/right-turn lane in the northbound direction; The Olmsted Road north leg of the intersection would be modified to have a 330-foot-long dedicated left-turn lane and a combination through/right-turn lane in the southbound direction. The widening would require regrading of the Comfort Inn landscaped slope from State Route 68 up to Garden Road. Slope regrading areas would be about 12 feet wide by 140 feet long south and 22 feet wide by 168 feet long north of the entrance driveway, causing removal of up to 12 mature trees; Acquisition of permanent right-of-way from 39 identified Assessor Parcels for up to 6.8 acres; 0.06 acre of slope easement, and 0.05 acre of Temporary Construction Easement would be required; Retaining wall (4 to 10 feet high and 1,013 feet long) and concrete barrier with foundation to retain cut slope; Retaining wall (Number 2 at this intersection) 6 to 24 feet high and 2,525 feet long; Intersection signal and lighting systems would be replaced, and electrical work may require utility easements if PG&E facilities are on private property; existing electric service enclosures would be used to the extent feasible; Additional electroliers (light fixtures) may be necessary at Olmsted Road due to proposed road widening; electroliers would have a maximum height of 40 feet and design review by the Monterey Regional Airport; ADA-compliant curb ramps at all crosswalk intersections, and all crosswalks would be restriped; Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated.

Post Miles on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Signalized Intersection Elements – Alternative 2
6.81	State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard) – Monterra Ranch Road	Design on the northwest quadrant of the intersection for Alternative 2 was adjusted to avoid sensitive historical resources on the Tarpy's Roadhouse property adjacent to the State Route 68 right-of-way; Rather than a symmetrical widening of the intersection, the proposed design realigns and widens State Route 68 to the south to protect these resources. West leg of the intersection: existing 230-foot auxiliary through lane would be extended to 1,310 feet long, and a taper to conform back to the State Route 68 roadbed; The 145-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 combination auxiliary/right-turn lane would be lengthened to 600 feet, preceded by a 250-foot-long widening taper; Retaining wall (12 feet high, 1,250 feet long) along the south side of State Route 68 west of the intersection would be constructed to minimize impacts to riparian woodland; The east leg of State Route 68/State Route 218 would maintain the two eastbound continuous through lanes and the two westbound continuous through lanes, would lengthen the existing 225-foot-long westbound State Route 68 dedicated left-turn lane to 425 feet, and lengthen the bike lane to 450 feet, lengthen the dedicated right-turn lane to 450 feet, and add a 450-foot-long right-turn lane. A 4-foot-wide trapezoidal ditch would be required for the westbound widening improvements. Eastbound State Route 68 between State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive would be resurfaced; Drainage ditches would be constructed to manage roadway runoff, and run-on from adjacent hillsides onto the highway; Road shoulders with non-standard widths would be widened to 8 feet throughout, with the following exceptions: where adjacent to right-turn lanes, shoulders would be 4 feet wide; adjacent to retaining walls in cut slope areas and in front of transit stops, shoulders would be 10 feet wide; Monterra Road (south leg) would be widened to the east to accommodate a 235-foot-long dedicated southbound right-turn lane, a 6-foot-wide by 235-foot-long bike lane, a southbound through lane, southbound dual left-turn lanes 400 feet long minimum, and two northbound through lanes of which the outside lane becomes a dedicated right-turn lane at Ryan Ranch Road. Widening State Route 218 to the east would minimize impacts to the regulated floodway on the westerly side of State Route 218, and would necessitate two retaining walls: one 4 to 30 feet high by 225 feet long, and the other 4 to 32 feet high and 353 feet long; Traffic signal equipment would be replaced with adaptive signal control technology to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve movement through the intersection; ADA-compliant curb ramps at all crosswalk intersections, and all crosswalks would be restriped; Clear recovery requirement of 20 feet from edge of traveled way in the eastbound direction, and construction of a 4-to-1 ratio embankment slope; Existing drainage culverts would be extended to daylight to the reconstructed ditches as applicable, and vegetated strips would be placed to treat runoff.

Post Miles on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Signalized Intersection Elements – Alternative 2
7.08	Ragsdale Drive	The 400-foot-long auxiliary through lane on eastbound State Route 68 would be lengthened by 100 feet at the departure leg, followed by a 720-foot reduction taper; The 500-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 auxiliary through/right-turn lane would be resurfaced; standard shoulder backing and cut embankment slope constructed to provide clear recovery standard requirements; Standard 8-foot-wide shoulders would be constructed throughout, except where adjacent to retaining walls in cut conditions where the shoulders would be 10 feet wide. The westbound State Route 68 approach leg to Ragsdale Drive shoulder backing widening would require a short retaining structure to retain 3 feet of cut slope; Right-of-way acquisition from 9 Assessor's Parcels for a combined 6.75 acres of permanent right-of-way, 0.65 acre for slope easement, and 0.07 acre of Temporary Construction Easement; Retaining wall 4 to 16 feet high and 250 feet long west of State Route 218 to minimize impacts to vegetated cut slope; West of Ragsdale Drive along westbound State Route 68, a 175-foot-long concrete barrier with foundation system is proposed to retain a 3-foot cut slope; Southerly drainage ditch parallel to State Route 68 to be realigned to the south with forward slopes of 4 to 1 (horizontal to vertical) and back slopes of 2 to 1; Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Intersection signal and lighting systems would be replaced, and electrical work may require utility easements if PG&E facilities are on private property; existing electric service enclosures would be used to the extent feasible; ADA-compliant curb ramps at all crosswalk intersections, and all crosswalks would be restriped; Additional electroliers (light fixtures) may be necessary with the widened intersection; electroliers would have a maximum height of 40 feet and design review by the Monterey Regional Airport.

Post Miles on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Signalized Intersection Elements – Alternative 2
8.15	York Road	The 415-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 left-turn lane would be extended by 125 feet; Eastbound side of State Route 68 would be widened to the south to add a 12-foot-wide by 540-foot-long auxiliary through lane at the eastbound approach to the intersection of State Route 68/York Road, preceded by a 250-foot-long lane taper; Eastbound State Route 68 auxiliary through lane would continue for approximately 740 feet past the State Route 68/York Road eastbound departure. A 720-foot-long lane reduction taper would follow; Standard 8-foot-wide outside shoulders would be constructed throughout the State Route 68 widening improvements, except near retaining walls in cut conditions where the outside shoulder would be 10 feet wide and 4 feet wide adjacent to exclusive right-turn lanes; Westbound State Route 68 on the departure side to York Road would be widened to the north to add a 12-foot-wide by 1,090-foot-long westbound auxiliary through lane just west of York Road and would taper in 720 feet to conform to existing westbound State Route 68; At the westbound State Route 68/York Road approach leg, a 12-foot-wide by 600-foot-long auxiliary through lane would be constructed, preceded by a 250-foot-long widening lane taper; Northbound York Road would be widened to accommodate an 8-foot-wide sidewalk to Blue Larkspur Lane as requested by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Monterey City and County; Southbound York Road right-turn lane would be lengthened by 155 feet; Traffic signal equipment would be replaced with adaptive signal control technology to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve movement through the intersection; ADA-compliant curb ramps at all crosswalk intersections, and all crosswalks would be restriped; Improvements would provide clear recovery requirement of 20 feet from edge of traveled way and construction of 4-to-1 embankment slope; Wildlife Crossing Number 1: An 8-foot-wide by 8-foot-high reinforced concrete box would be installed at post mile 8.13 on State Route 68 under the highway; wildlife exclusionary fencing would be installed along the edge of the highway to guide wildlife to the undercrossing culvert and deter them from crossing the State Route 68 travel lanes; The existing drainage facility under York Road would be extended to accommodate the longer southbound right-turn lane and to accommodate the 8-foot-wide northbound sidewalk; Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated; Intersection signal and lighting systems would be replaced, and electrical work may require utility easements if PG&E facilities are on private property; existing electric service enclosures would be used to the extent feasible.

Post Miles on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Signalized Intersection Elements – Alternative 2
9.79	Pasadera Drive—Boots Road	The existing 330-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 left-turn lane would be lengthened by 95 feet; The existing exclusive eastbound State Route 68 right-turn lane would be converted to a combination 500-foot-long auxiliary through lane/right-turn lane, which would be preceded by a 250-foot-long standard lane widening taper; The existing 590-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 auxiliary through lane would be extended by 330 feet followed by a 720-foot long (using 60 miles per hour design speed) lane reduction taper to conform to existing eastbound State Route 68; The westbound left-turn lane would be reduced from 450 feet to 425 feet; A 700-foot-long auxiliary through lane separated by a 6-foot-wide bike lane and a 425-foot-long dedicated right-turn lane preceded by a 220-foot widening lane taper on the approach; The westbound auxiliary through lane on the departure (west) side of State Route 68 would be extended from 550 feet to 890 feet, followed by a 720-foot-long lane reduction taper; Standard 8-foot-wide outside shoulders would be constructed throughout the State Route 68 widening improvements, except for the outside shoulders, which would be 10 feet at retaining wall locations in cut condition and would be 4 feet wide adjacent to exclusive right-turn lanes; Wildlife crossing Number 2 is proposed at post mile 9.52 and would consist of a 12-foot-wide by 11-foot-high precast reinforced concrete box culvert filled with 1 foot of native soil material. A 150-foot-long by 75-foot-wide northerly drainage pond would be excavated approximately 18 feet below the existing ground elevation, and a smaller southerly drainage pond would be excavated for this wildlife crossing. Wildlife exclusionary fence would also be installed along the eastbound and westbound sides of State Route 68 up to Pasadera Drive; A westbound State Route 68 10-foot-high by 125-foot-long retaining wall in fill would be constructed just west of Pasadera Drive to minimize impacts to an adjacent wetland and riparian woodland; Wildlife crossing Number 3 is proposed at post mile 9.68 and would consist of an 8-foot-wide by 8-foot-high precast reinforced concrete box culvert. The northerly inlet of this reinforced concrete box culvert crossing would be approximately 20 feet below the original ground elevation and excavated out to allow for passage of the wildlife; Adaptive signal control technology would be the traffic signalization system constructed that adjusts the timing of the red, yellow and green light cycle times to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve traffic movement through the intersection; ADA-compliant curb ramps at all crosswalk intersections, and all crosswalks would be restriped; The roadway improvements would address the clear recovery requirement of 20 feet from edge of traveled way and construction of a 4-to-1 ratio embankment slope; Acquisition of permanent and drainage right-of-way easements from 12 identified Assessor Parcels, for a combined total of up to 3.72 acres, and 1.22 acres of drainage easement area for Wildlife Crossing Number 2 drainage pond located on the Pasadera Golf and Country Club property; Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated.

Post Miles on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Signalized Intersection Elements – Alternative 2
11.22	Laureles Grade	A 1,450-foot-long westbound auxiliary through lane would be added that would then convert to an exclusive right-turn lane onto “B” Road. Signage would direct through traffic to merge left into the westbound continuous through lane; The 20-foot-wide striped median would be reduced to 12 feet wide and taper down to no median within 720 feet to the west of Laureles Grade; State Route 68 west leg intersection lane configuration would have a 500-foot-long eastbound auxiliary through lane, a 6-foot-wide by 500-foot-long bike lane and a 500-foot-long dedicated right-turn lane; On the State Route 68 east leg, the eastbound auxiliary through lane would continue for 798 feet followed by a 720-foot-long lane reduction taper to conform to existing eastbound State Route 68; The westbound dual left-turn lanes would remain at 470 feet, and a 700-foot-long westbound auxiliary through lane would be added preceded by a 250-foot-long lane widening taper; Standard 8-foot-wide outside shoulders would be constructed throughout the State Route 68 widening improvements, except where adjacent to exclusive right-turn lanes; in those locations, the outside shoulder would be 4 feet wide; Laureles Grade (south leg of the intersection) would be modified to extend the 175-foot-long southbound auxiliary through lane to 290 feet followed by a 540-foot-long lane reduction taper. To avoid or minimize impacts to the existing park and ride lot, a 425-foot-long left-turn lane, a 5-foot-wide bike lane, and an exclusive right-turn lane would be provided. Laureles Grade would be widened on the west side (southbound) to minimize impacts to the Monterey County Regional Fire District property and the park and ride lot; Two Zero Emission Vehicle charging station systems would be installed at the park and ride lot operated by the County of Monterey on the east side of Laureles Grade. The charging systems would be Level 2, solar-powered facilities to provide charging capability for two vehicles to charge at the same time. No right-of-way acquisitions would be required. Reduction of 5 parking stalls for a total of 15 stalls at the lot. Wildlife crossing Number 4 is proposed at post mile 11.16 and would consist of an 8-foot-wide by 8-foot-high precast reinforced concrete box culvert filled with 2 feet of native soil material. Wildlife exclusionary fence would also be installed along the eastbound and westbound sides of State Route 68; An 1,800-foot-long northerly ditch with forward slopes of a 4-to-1 ratio and back slopes of a 2-to-1 ratio and up to 12 feet deep would need to be constructed to contain the roadway runoff and to provide for functionality of the wildlife crossing; A retaining wall along westbound State Route 68 10 feet high by 125 feet long in fill material would be built just west of Pasadera Drive to reduce impacts to adjacent wetland and riparian woodland; Intersection signal and lighting system would be replaced with adaptive signal control technology to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve traffic movement through the intersection; the proposed electrical work may require utility easements if PG&E facilities are on privately owned property. ADA-compliant curb ramps at all crosswalk intersections, and all crosswalks would be restriped; Acquisition of permanent and drainage right-of-way easements from 12 Assessor Parcels for a combined total of up to 7.52 acres of permanent right-of-way; Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated.

Post Miles on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Signalized Intersection Elements – Alternative 2
12.95	Corral de Tierra Road—Cypress Church Drive	These lane configurations are proposed to best accommodate the curved geometry at the intersection: a 1,070-foot-long westbound auxiliary through lane, followed by a 720-foot-long lane reduction taper, a 460-foot-long left-turn lane, and an 850-foot-long eastbound combination auxiliary through and right-turn lane. The existing right-turn lane from eastbound State Route 68 onto southbound Corral de Tierra Road would be eliminated to avoid impacting the adjacent commercial property at the southwest corner of the intersection; the two driveways immediately west of the intersection would be restricted to right-in/right-out movements. Standard 8-foot-wide outside shoulders would be constructed throughout the intersection except along retaining walls in cut slope conditions (10 feet wide); Due to the immediate north and south driveways just east of Corral De Tierra and the need to provide a continuous left-turn lane, the westbound left-turn lane would be extended to 310 feet; Widening of the eastbound State Route 68 approach would require construction of a retaining wall (4 to 12 feet high and about 640 feet long) to the west of this intersection to limit the impacts to a 60 feet and higher cut slope; The westbound State Route 68 departure widening would require the construction of a retaining wall (12 feet high by about 700 feet long) in fill condition to limit the impacts to the northerly riparian woodland and the streambed that runs parallel just west of Corral De Tierra Road; Corral De Tierra Road (south leg of the intersection) would be realigned to have a skew angle greater than the existing 65-degree angle connection to State Route 68. The lanes would include a 405-foot-long dedicated northbound left-turn lane and a northbound combination through/right-turn lane with one southbound continuous through lane; Cypress Church Drive (north leg of the intersection) would be realigned to match the Corral de Tierra Road vehicle travel lane configurations. The lanes on the north leg would be modified to include a southbound combination right/through lane, an exclusive 75-foot-long southbound left-turn lane, and a northbound continuous through lane; Wildlife Crossing Number 5: Proposed at post mile 13.18 and would include a 7-foot-high by 7-foot-wide precast reinforced concrete box filled with 1 foot of native soil material; Retaining Wall Number 3 (230 feet long and varying in height from 4 to16 feet) would be on the north side and just east of the wildlife crossing Number 5 to limit impacts to a 30-foot-high cut slope. Retaining Wall Number 4 in cut condition is proposed approximately 145 feet east of Wall Number 3 and would be about 255 feet long and from 4 to 16 feet tall to minimize impacts to the heavily vegetated hillside. Retaining Wall Number 5 (about 100 feet long by 14 feet high) is proposed in fill material on the southside and just west of San Benancio Road to limit impacts to riparian woodland and Toro Creek streambed. Adaptive signal control technology would be the traffic signalization system constructed that adjusts the timing of the red, yellow, and green light cycle times to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve traffic movement through the intersection; ADA-compliant curb ramps at all crosswalk intersections, and all crosswalks would be restriped; Road improvements would address the clear recovery requirement of 20 feet from the edge of traveled way along the eastbound direction and construction of 4-to-1 ratio embankment slope to maximum extent possible; Existing drainage culverts would be extended to daylight to the reconstructed ditches as applicable, and vegetated strips would be designed to treat runoff as applicable.

Post Miles on State Route 68	Intersection on State Route 68	Proposed Signalized Intersection Elements – Alternative 2
13.33	San Benancio Road	The State Route 68 west leg of the intersection would include two continuous State Route 68 westbound through lanes, and a 425-foot-long left-turn lane. Two continuous State Route 68 eastbound through lanes would extend from Corral De Tierra Road to the San Benancio Road eastbound approach, with a 6-foot-wide and 425-foot-long bike lane and dedicated right-turn lane; The State Route 68 east leg would have a 1,430-foot-long eastbound auxiliary through lane followed by a 720-foot-long lane reduction taper, a continuous eastbound through lane, a 535-foot-long westbound left-turn lane, a continuous westbound through lane, and a 1,155-foot-long westbound combination auxiliary through/right-turn lane preceded by a 250-foot-long lane taper. The auxiliary lane would be extended to widen the bridge for two lanes in each direction of travel; The lane configurations on the San Benancio Road south leg of the intersection are proposed to be restriped such that the 250-foot-long northbound combination left/through lane would become an exclusive left-turn lane, and the exclusive right-turn lane would become a northbound combination through/right-turn lane; Lane configurations on San Benancio Road (south leg of the intersection) are proposed to be restriped such that the 250-foot-long northbound combination left/through lane would become an exclusive left-turn lane, and the exclusive right-turn lane would become a northbound combination through/right-turn lane; Standard 8-foot-wide eastbound/westbound shoulders along State Route 68 would be constructed throughout the intersection improvements, except for 10-foot-wide shoulders adjacent to retaining walls in cut conditions; A retaining wall approximately 250 feet long and from 4 feet to 10 feet high is proposed immediately to the east of the intersection to limit impacts to the northerly vegetated cut slope that extends 20 feet and higher; State Route 68 bridge over Toro Creek would be widened to accommodate two lanes of travel in each direction along with a tapered striped median that forms the westbound left-turn lane at the State Route 68 east leg; A retaining wall about 460 feet long and from 4 to 12 feet tall is proposed along eastbound State Route 68 just east of the intersection and would connect to the widened State Route 68 Toro Creek bridge. The retaining wall would minimize impacts to the riparian woodland and Toro Creek streambed. A second retaining wall (about 225 feet long and varying in height from 4 feet to 14 feet) at the southeasterly end of the bridge would limit impacts to adjacent riparian woodland; Acquisition of permanent right-of-way from 20 identified Assessor Parcels for a combined total of up to 6.56 acres, and 0.24 acre of Temporary Construction Easement area. Drainage ditches between the Corral de Tierra/State Route 68 intersection to wildlife crossing Number 5 on the north side and south side are proposed to handle roadway runoff. The ditches would have forward and back slopes of a 4-to-1 ratio; Intersection signal and lighting system will be replaced, and new electrical services for the proposed electrical work may require utility easements if PG&E facilities are located on privately owned property; ADA-compliant curb ramps at all crosswalk intersections, and all crosswalks would be restriped; Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated.

Transportation System Management and Transportation Demand Management Alternatives

Transportation System Management strategies increase the efficiency of existing facilities; they are actions that increase the number of vehicle trips a facility can carry without increasing the number of through lanes. Examples of Transportation System Management strategies include ramp metering, auxiliary lanes, turning lanes, reversible lanes, and traffic signal coordination. Transportation System Management also promotes automobile, public, and private transit, ridesharing programs, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements as elements of a unified urban transportation system. Modal alternatives integrate multiple forms of transportation modes, such as pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, rail, and mass transit.

Transportation Design Management focuses on regional means of reducing the number of vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled, as well as increasing vehicle occupancy. It facilitates higher vehicle occupancy or reduces traffic congestion by expanding the traveler's transportation options in terms of travel method, travel time, travel route, travel costs, and the quality and convenience of the travel experience. A typical activity would be providing funds to regional agencies that are actively promoting ridesharing, maintaining rideshare databases, and providing limited rideshare services to employers and individuals.

The project area contains mostly suburban to rural land use development in portions of the County of Monterey, and cities of Monterey and Del Rey Oaks, with a population less than 200,000 combined in the immediate project vicinity. Though Transportation System Management measures alone could not satisfy the purpose and need of the project, both project Build Alternatives incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements, as described in the tables above. Alternative 2 would provide exclusive turn lanes and/or combination through/turn lanes, and auxiliary lanes, extension of lane lengths on intersection approach and departure legs, as well as upgrades to the signalization system.

Reversible Lanes

Assembly Bill 2542 amended California Streets and Highways code to require, effective January 1, 2017, that Caltrans or a regional transportation planning agency demonstrate that reversible lanes were considered when submitting a capacity-increasing project or a major street or highway lane realignment project to the California Transportation Commission for approval (California Streets and Highways Code, Section 100.015). Projects that meet these criteria must be evaluated by District Traffic Operations to determine the feasibility of including reversible lanes in the project scope.

The proposed project is not a capacity-increasing project because it would not add travel lanes on the highway to increase the vehicular capacity of mainline State Route 68. Realignments of short sections of intersection legs and lanes are included in the preliminary designs of both Build Alternatives. As examples, the entrance legs to some of the Alternative 1 roundabouts are curved to slow traffic speeds entering and exiting the roundabout. With Alternative 2, through and turn lanes are extended and/or added at the intersections to improve traffic operations (flow) entering and exiting the intersection; at select locations, local cross-streets that intersect State Route 68 are proposed to be realigned according to current design standards for improvement of traffic operations.

Reversible lanes are within the concept of Managed Lanes (refer to discussion below in Section 1.7.3) in that vehicle directional travel on the highway mainline would be reversed during peak traffic periods of the day accordingly to accommodate the predominant directional travel demand. Reversing traffic direction on travel lanes or median lanes works well when the directional split of traffic is greater than 65/35 and there is minimal disruption from intersecting street traffic. During the project scoping phase, it was determined that lane management, including reversible lanes, on the Scenic Route 68 Corridor was not recommended for further consideration because the traffic on the highway corridor has a fairly even directional split and numerous intersecting streets.

Access to Navigable Rivers

California Streets and Highways Code Section 84.5 states that during the design hearing process related to state highway projects that include the construction by Caltrans of a new bridge across a navigable river, full consideration of, and a report on, the feasibility of providing a means of public access to the navigable river for public recreational purposes shall be conducted. The proposed project would not construct a new bridge over a navigable river, and therefore, access to a navigable river for public recreational purposes would not be affected by the project and is not analyzed herein.

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would not make any intersection improvements along State Route 68, though regular maintenance of the existing facilities would continue. The No-Build Alternative would not reduce intersection congestion or vehicle collisions along State Route 68. The No-Build Alternative would not improve existing wildlife crossing conditions and would not improve connectivity of the wildlife corridor intersected by State Route 68. The No-Build Alternative provides a baseline to compare the impacts of making no change to existing conditions with the impacts associated with the viable “build” alternatives.

1.5 Comparison of Alternatives

Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County developed the range of alternatives based on project purpose and need, cost, and environmental considerations. Along with these factors, the team used the following list of guiding principles to direct the evaluation of alternatives:

- Minimization of right-of-way impacts
- Minimization of impacts to environmental resources
- Preservation of existing sense of community
- Facilitation of bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Allowance of future State Route 68 widening projects

As noted in the background provided in Section 1.1, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County evaluated current and future travel patterns between the Salinas Valley and Monterey Peninsula and feasibility of mid-term solutions in the 2017 study titled the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan. The stated goal of the plan was to identify a preferred State Route 68 corridor concept and associated infrastructure improvements that would best meet both local and regional goals, while providing the highest return on investment of limited regional transportation funding for the next 20 years.

Based on research evaluating traffic conditions, public input, and cost-benefit analysis, the plan developed and evaluated corridor concepts to determine the most suitable option for affordable mid-term operational improvements. Three corridor concepts were evaluated in the plan, including Concept 1: State Route 68 Roundabout Corridor that would convert 11 intersections to roundabouts, Concept 2: State Route 68 Widening with Roundabout Control, which would widen four segments of State Route 68 and convert nine intersections to roundabouts; and Concept 3: State Route 68 Integrated Corridor Management and Adaptive Signal Control, which would widen and channelize six intersections and add a communications system between signals along two sections of the highway, and widen the highway to four lanes for 1.15 miles from east of Toro Creek Road to the existing four-lane section between Toro Park Estates and Salinas. As a result of the intersection-specific benefit-cost analysis conducted in the Scenic Highway Plan that assessed factors including safety, travel time, air pollution emissions, habitat and other resource preservation, maintenance and capital costs, as well as a micro-simulation analysis, the study concluded that the concept of roundabouts throughout the State Route 68 corridor would be the preferred concept as it would significantly reduce travel delay and improve State Route 68 reliability.

Two of the concept alternatives were further refined and selected by the Project Development Team for evaluation in the environmental analysis

phase. Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 analyzed in this environmental document would modify the same nine intersections along State Route 68 included in Tables 1.6 and 1.7 earlier; however, they vary in the types of modifications that would be made to the intersections and their physical footprints. The two Build Alternatives differ in the locations where widening would extend beyond the existing roadway footprint to accommodate each proposed intersection modification as well the ultimate configuration of each intersection. Both alternatives include the same proposed wildlife connectivity improvements at five locations.

1.6 Identification of a Preferred Alternative

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Both of the Build Alternatives examined in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment meet the needs and purposes of the project, including reduction of vehicle delay through the project corridor. Alternative 1, roundabouts, would have greater potential to reduce the severity and long-term rate of collisions in the project area due to fewer conflict points at the project intersections. The No-Build Alternative would not meet the needs and purposes of the project.

This paragraph was added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Upon completion of the public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment all public comments were considered and, after receiving concurrence from the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, the Caltrans Project Development Team selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative because it would provide the least overall environmental impacts and real property impacts between the two Build Alternatives. Alternative 1 would have less estimated cost (construction and property acquisition) than Alternative 2 ($189,200,000 for Alternative 1 compared with $230,900,000 for Alternative 2).

This paragraph was modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Caltrans has certified that the project complies with CEQA, has prepared findings for all significant impacts identified, and has prepared a Statement of Overriding Considerations for any impacts that would not be mitigated below a level of significance. Caltrans has certified that the findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations have been considered prior to project approval.

This paragraph was modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Caltrans has filed a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse that identifies that the project will

have significant impacts, that mitigation measures were included as conditions of project approval, that findings were made, and that a Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted. Similarly, Caltrans, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, determined that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) action does not significantly impact the environment and has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

1.7 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion Prior to the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment

This section explains why certain alternatives in the early development process were not considered further. The project alternatives described below were considered but eliminated from further consideration. Additional information regarding alternative route corridors previously considered is in Section 1.1.1, Background.

1.7.1 Full Corridor Widening (Expressway)

While various state and regional planning documents have referenced the future widening of State Route 68 to four lanes, neither the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (published June 2018) nor the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's Regional Transportation Plan currently includes widening of State Route 68 in its financially constrained project lists.

Based on the concept analysis completed as part of the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, it is anticipated that, as compared to the two alternatives being considered for the State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project, environmental resources would be affected to a much greater magnitude under a full corridor widening scenario due to the larger scale project footprint that would be required to expand the current highway alignment.

Also, this alternative was not advanced as an alternative because it does not closely align with the project purpose and need, has mixed public support, and was previously estimated to cost close to $200 million, a value that would be much higher today.

The full corridor widening alternative was not advanced for further consideration, but this decision does not preclude future widening along the corridor.

1.7.2 Corral de Tierra Bypass Alternative

Previous Monterey County Planning documents included a future alignment for a two-lane bypass in the area north of the present Corral de Tierra and

San Benancio intersections on State Route 68, which are referred to as "Official Plan Lines" (OPL). Policy 39.1.1.1 (T) of the 1992 Amended Toro Area Plan proposed the two-lane bypass as an interim measure to alleviate congestion ahead of an eventual widening of State Route 68 to a four-lane highway. In 2010, Toro Area Plan Policy 39.1.1.1(T) was replaced with Policy T-2.3, which no longer includes reference to a two-lane bypass in the area north of the present Corral de Tierra and San Benancio intersections on State Route 68 as an interim measure. While the Official Plan Lines for the Corral de Tierra bypass have not formally been rescinded yet, the Official Plan Lines do not obligate the County, Caltrans, or any other entity to act to facilitate or pursue construction of the Corral de Tierra bypass. Also, Monterey County has been working to rescind older Official Plan Lines and ordinances that are no longer pertinent.

The Corral de Tierra bypass alignment, as shown in Monterey County planning documents dating back to the late 1970s, would require acquisition of private property and use of a portion of Fort Ord National Monument. The project is subject to the requirements of Section 4(f), which prevents transportation projects on federal recreation areas when there is a feasible and prudent alternative project available.

This alternative was considered as a "concept" in the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, but was not advanced for consideration. The Intersection Control Evaluation analysis conducted as part of the plan determined that the operational issues at the Corral de Tierra and San Benancio intersections can be remedied without constructing the bypass. In compliance with Section 4(f), this alternative was not pursued because other feasible and prudent alternatives are available.

The State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan also noted that the bypass would require a "significant investment" of public funds, with a preliminary estimate of over $100 million, while only providing a "spot" remedy.

Both the four-lane widening of State Route 68 and the bypass route alternative are not consistent with California's multiple Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders in place for reduction of vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gases. The State of California accordingly has implemented goals and policies for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and traffic-related air pollution and promoting multimodal transportation while balancing the needs of congestion management and safety. Specifically, Senate Bill 743 (September 2013) changed the metric for analysis of the effects of transportation projects on the environment to use methods focused on vehicle miles traveled.

1.7.3 Managed Lanes

A managed lanes alternative would add a lane in the median, which would be open to the westbound traffic in the morning peak period, closed during midday, and open to the eastbound traffic in the afternoon peak period. During the project scoping phase, it was determined that given the even directional split of traffic volumes and the high number of intersections on State Route 68, as well as high maintenance costs, this alternative does not merit further review.

1.8 Permits and Approvals Needed

Table 1.8 provides the permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications required for project construction. The table has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Table 1.8 Permitting and Approving Agencies

Agency	Permits, Licenses, Agreements, and Certifications	Status
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act Section 404 potential Nationwide Permits for the project and for pre-certified geotechnical drilling for final design	Notification to be submitted during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase
Regional Water Quality Control Board	401 Certifications for the project and for geotechnical drilling for final design	Application to be submitted during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	1602 Streambed Alteration Agreements for the project and for geotechnical drilling	Notification to be submitted during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Programmatic Biological Opinion and Take Permit for the California red-legged frog. Project Biological Opinions for the California tiger salamander and southwestern pond turtle	Application to be submitted during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	2081 Incidental take permits for the California tiger salamander for the project, for geotechnical subsurface drilling in jurisdictional waters, and for archaeological field surveys	Applications to be submitted during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase
State Historic Preservation Officer	Minor Phased Approach and Finding of Effect	Final Agreement received

Agency	Permits, Licenses, Agreements, and Certifications	Status
Monterey County Public Works	Encroachment Permits for construction within the County right-of-way and roads	To be requested during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase
Monterey County Public Works	Highway easements for highway road improvements on County lands	To be requested during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase
City of Monterey Public Works	Encroachment Permits for construction within the City right-of-way and local roads	To be requested during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase
City of Monterey Public Works	Highway easements for highway road improvements on city lands	To be requested during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management	Special Use Permit for temporary use of land during construction	To be requested during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management	Highway Easements for construction within the federal right-of-way	To be requested during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase
State Water Resources Control Board	Coverage under the State's Construction General Permit	Prior to construction and upon approval of contractor's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

Chapter 2 Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

As part of the scoping and environmental analysis done for the project, the following environmental issues were considered, but no adverse impacts were identified. Therefore, there is no further discussion of these issues in this document.

- Coastal Zone—The project would not affect coastal resources because it is not located within the coastal zone.
- Environmental Justice—This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Please note: Executive Order 12898 has been rescinded pursuant to Executive Order 14173, and Executive Order 14096 has been rescinded pursuant to Executive Order 14148. However, consideration of environmental justice was included in the analyses for the Draft Environmental Document, prior to the rescission of Executive Orders 12898 and 14096, and therefore has been retained in the Final Environmental Document for informational purposes only. A review of California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's (OEHHA) CalEnviroScreen tool was made to identify most environmentally burdened and vulnerable communities in the project area. CalEnviroScreen shows a low vulnerability score for the communities immediately adjacent to the project area. A review of U.S. Census Bureau data for other areas in Monterey County show higher percentages of minority populations and larger numbers of households below the poverty level; however, these communities are located outside of the immediate project area. No minority or low-income populations that would be adversely affected by the proposed project have been identified as determined above.
- Farmland—Although there is extensive farmland in Monterey County and close to the project area along eastern State Route 68 and in the Salinas Valley, the project would not affect farmlands. The project would occur entirely in a portion of the State Route 68 corridor where there is no land zoned for agricultural uses. There is no planned acquisition of farmland, and the project does not require easements on agricultural land.
- Timberlands—No Timber Production Zones exist within or near the project area; therefore, none will be affected. However, the project would include tree removal as discussed in Section 2.3.1.

- Wild and Scenic Rivers—There are no wild and scenic rivers located within or near the project area; therefore, none will be affected.

2.1 Human Environment

2.1.1 Existing and Future Land Use

Affected Environment

The project area includes more than 8 miles of existing State Route 68, beginning in the City of Monterey, passing through Del Rey Oaks, and ending in unincorporated Monterey County just west of the Toro Park community. State Route 68 is also close to the Monterey Peninsula Airport District, which is a special district and is not incorporated into a city or county. Land use in the project area includes residential, commercial, industrial, airport, conservation open space, and public lands. These land uses in the various communities are discussed below and shown in Figures 2.1 and 2.2.

City of Monterey

The City of Monterey is a coastal community approximately 5,382 acres in size, located adjacent to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Within the city, residential development encompasses most land, and significant commercial areas are concentrated in the downtown core as well as along the waterfront area of Cannery Row. Other significant land uses include the Presidio of Monterey, the Naval Post Graduate School and Monterey Peninsula College.

Open space and recreational areas include beaches along the city's waterfront as well as parks and golf courses in the city's upland areas, which are a huge draw to the city's tourism industry. Industrial land use in the city is clustered in its easternmost portion along the State Route 68 corridor, adjacent to the Monterey Peninsula Airport and within the Ryan Ranch. The public educational facilities, commercial businesses, and services, along with tourism trade, provide a range of jobs and economic opportunities.

The State Route 68 area within the City of Monterey is characterized by a densely wooded pine forest giving way to rolling meadows with oak woodlands and chaparral on the surrounding hillsides. These visual resources led to the designation of State Route 68 as a Scenic Highway. Figure 2.1 shows land use designations in the city.

City of Del Rey Oaks

The City of Del Rey Oaks is southeast of Seaside and has an area of approximately 319 acres. The southeast portion of Del Rey Oaks extends down State Route 218 and is bordered by State Route 68 at the State Route 218 intersection. Land use in Del Rey Oaks consists mostly of residential

development with some park and open space uses and a small amount of commercial land use largely located in the southeast portion of the city closest to State Route 68. Figure 2.1 shows land use designations in the city.

Monterey County

Monterey County is home to over 400,000 people and encompasses approximately 3,280 square miles (source: U.S. Census). The project area passes through portions of Monterey County known as the Greater Monterey Peninsula Planning Area and the Toro Planning Area and is adjacent to the Fort Ord Master Plan Area.

The Greater Monterey Peninsula Planning Area extends from the City of Monterey limits east to Laureles Grade and consists largely of rural residential and resource conservation land uses. The Greater Monterey Peninsula Planning Area is an area of exceptional scenic beauty and includes Scenic Highway corridors with surrounding areas designated as visually “sensitive’ and “highly sensitive.” “Highly sensitive” areas are intended to be preserved as open space, and potential development is restricted in “sensitive” areas.

The Fort Ord Master Plan area is generally within the former Fort Ord military base, which is adjacent to State Route 68 on the north from east of Laguna Seca Regional Park to the Toro Park Neighborhood. Fort Ord became a National Monument in 2012, and the lands closest to State Route 68 are continuously designated as “habitat management” and not intended for development. The parking area for the Fort Ord National Monument Badger Hills Trailhead is accessed from State Route 68 just west of the Toro Park neighborhood.

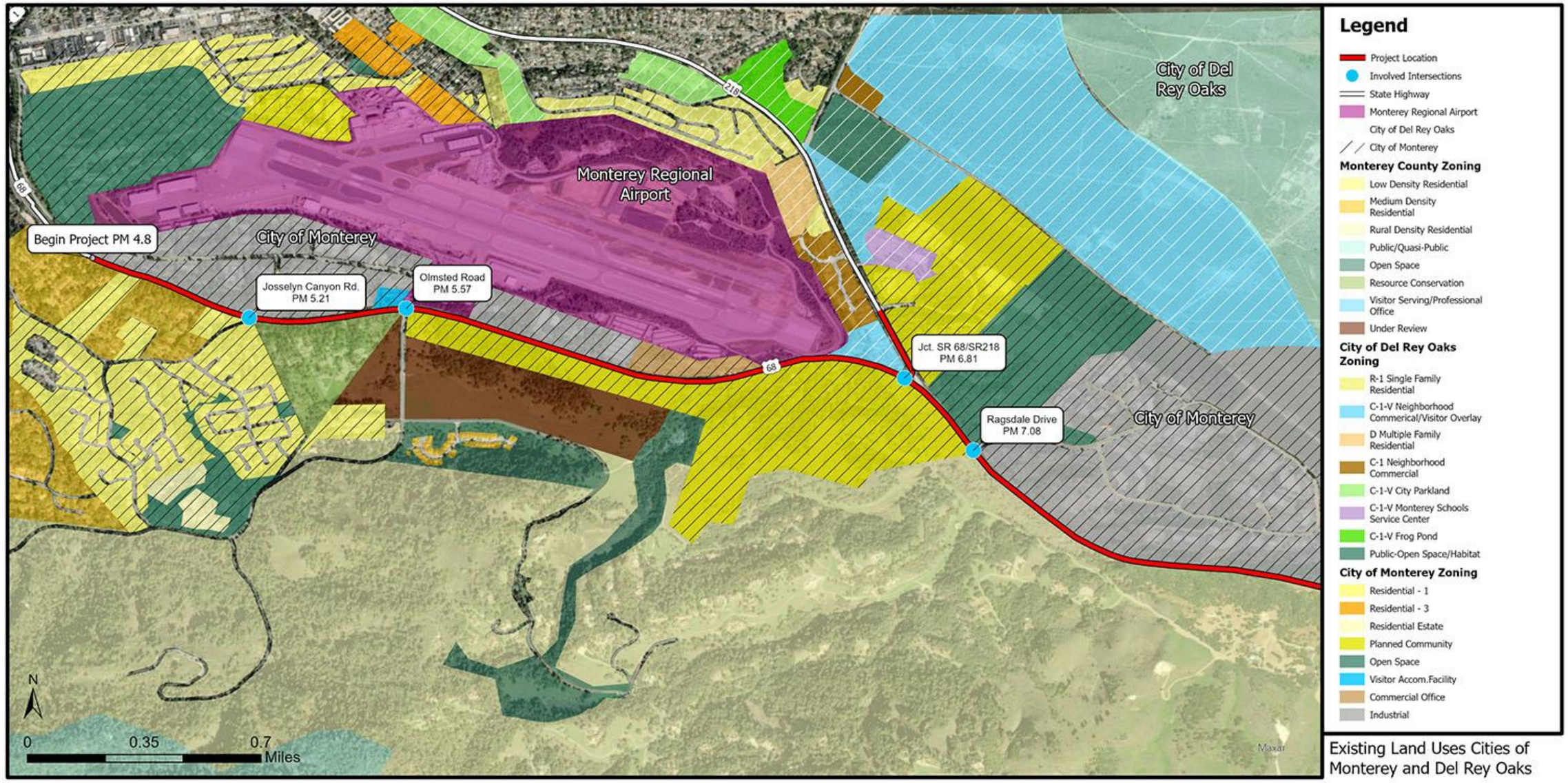
The Toro Planning Area is adjacent to State Route 68 to the south from Laureles Grade east to River Road. This area is largely composed of low-density residential and resource conservation land uses with some medium-density residential and a small amount of commercial land uses. Figure 2.2 shows land use designations in the Greater Monterey Peninsula Planning area, the Toro Planning Area, and the Fort Ord Master Plan Area.

Monterey Regional Airport District

Monterey Regional Airport sits between the cities of Monterey and Del Rey Oaks and is accessed from State Route 68 at Olmsted Road, which becomes Fred Kane Drive at the airport terminal. Beginning in the 1920s, the present-day airport site was used as a landing strip that was then deeded to the City of Monterey in the 1930s. In 1941, state legislation authorized the creation of the Monterey Peninsula Airport District. The airport district is a stand-alone public entity governed by a five-person elected Board of Directors. At the time of preparation of the October 2019 Airport Master Plan, the airport was in the process of completing a project to improve runway safety areas. Figure 2.1 shows the location of Monterey Regional Airport in relation to adjacent land uses.

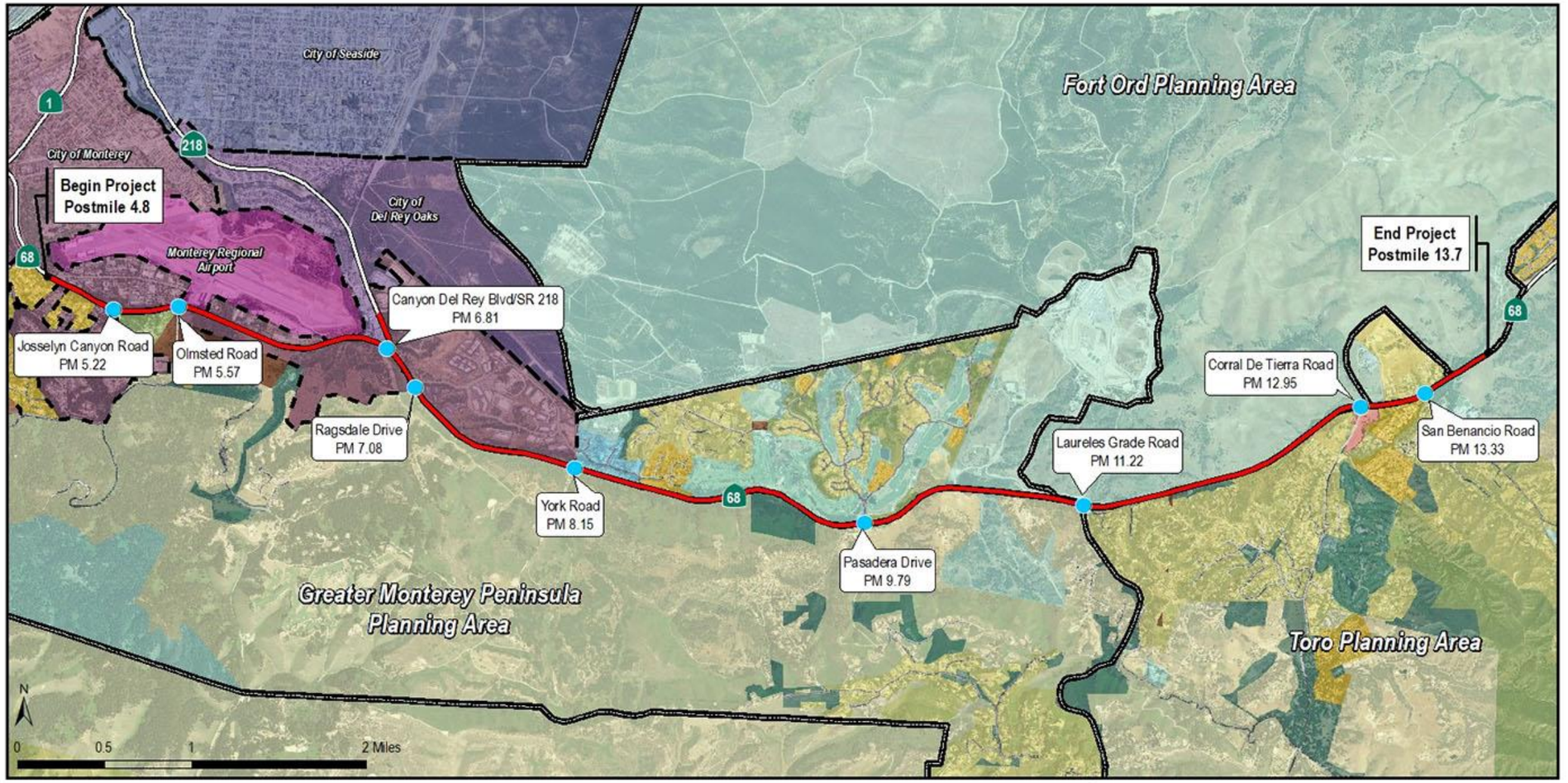
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Figure 2.1 Existing Land Uses in the Cities of Monterey and Del Rey Oaks



Existing Land Uses Cities of Monterey and Del Rey Oaks

Figure 2.2 Existing Land Uses in Monterey County Planning Areas



Existing Land Uses Monterey County

Future Land Uses

According to the Monterey County General Plan (2010) Land Use Element, future growth is encouraged within or near developed areas and employment centers, including incorporated cities and designated community areas where existing services are available, to preserve agricultural and open space lands. Top priority for development in unincorporated areas of the county is within specified community areas, rural centers, and affordable housing overlay districts, as defined by the General Plan (Policy LU-1.19). However, the County will work with the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) to direct most growth into cities with an emphasis on redevelopment and infill. The County encourages development of affordable housing projects in areas designated with an affordable housing overlay (LU-2.11). Two Affordable Housing Overlay Districts within and near the State Route 68 project area are: 1) 85 acres located in the Monterey Airport Vicinity south of State Route 68, off Olmsted Road (within project limits), and 2) 31 acres located at State Route 68 and Reservation Road (this site is approximately 3.7 miles east of the project limits).

According to the City of Monterey's General Plan (amended 2016), scenic gateways leading into the city should be protected and enhanced and where possible, human-made visual barriers should be removed or screened. A major consideration during review of development proposals within scenic corridors is their potential impact on views from scenic roadways. The city supports future growth in "mixed use neighborhoods" to allow for a mix of residential, commercial and jobs in close proximity. Within the Monterey city limits, much of the potential future development along the State Route 68 corridor is for industrial uses near Ryan Ranch industrial park or near the Monterey Regional Airport. The city recently annexed 125 acres from the former Fort Ord adjacent to Ryan Ranch. This area will allow for future industrial development (referred to as the FORA Business Park), but it may also be considered to allow for workforce housing in proximity to this major employment center. The city's Highway 68 Area Plan allows for some future development in the area across State Route 68 from the Monterey Regional Airport, commonly referred to as Tarpey Flats and Monterra. While a development application is not currently proposed for this area and is limited due to current water service restrictions, it is possible that portions of this area could be developed with a mix of residential and commercial uses in the future. Per the 2018 Monterey Airport Master Plan, a small portion of the Monterra Ranch property closest to the State Route 218 intersection and a small portion of Ryan Ranch are identified for acquisition for Monterey Airport's runway protection zone and would not be developed.

The City of Del Rey Oaks acquired 310 acres of former Fort Ord parcels zoned neighborhood commercial and intends to support development of the property. There is currently a proposal under review to develop the

easterly 53 acres of the former Fort Ord property into a 210-pad recreational vehicle resort.

Tables 2.1.1.1 and 2.1.1.2 list the currently proposed projects and recently completed projects in the regional vicinity of the project area, including unincorporated portions of the County of Monterey, the cities of Monterey, Del Rey Oaks, Salinas, Sand City, Gonzalez, Seaside, and Marina, as well as Caltrans highway projects. Information regarding the project status and environmental document type prepared for the projects is provided. The projects listed are based on best available information at this time from the jurisdictions where the projects are located.

Projects that have been cancelled, rescinded, delayed or are otherwise not likely to be approved include the fully permitted Ferrini Ranch residential development in the Toro Area near Torero Road, Laguna Sea Office Park Project, New Merrill/Wayland Tierra Master Plan, Villas De Carmelo Project, FORA Business Park Project, Monterey Canning Company Building Project, Del Rincon Apartments Project, The Projects at Main Gate, The Collection and Monterey Bay Project, Shores at Marina Project, and the Filigera Apartments Project.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

Because both Build Alternatives propose changes to existing intersections along State Route 68 and no additional access routes are proposed as part of the intersection improvements, no areas within the project limits or cumulative study area identified for future development would be made directly more accessible with implementation of either project alternative. Therefore, changes to current planned development patterns in either the adjacent cities or county planning areas, or changes to existing or future land use and/or density, are not anticipated occur as a result of either project build alternative.

Table 2.1.1.1 Proposed Development in Regional Vicinity of Project Area

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
Corral De Tierra Retail Village (Omni Resources)	County of Monterey	State Route 68/Corral De Tierra Intersection, Salinas, CA 93908. Development of a retail center and Lot Line Adjustment to modify the lot line between two existing parcels (5.6 acres and 5.38 acres in area) to create Parcel A (1.12 acres) and Parcel B (9.86 acres). Development of 10 retail buildings, a one-story grocery store, and a two-story office building.	Final EIR complete Design
Harper Canyon Subdivision	County of Monterey	North of San Benancio Road, East of Highway 68, Salinas, CA 93908. This project proposes a subdivision of 344 acres into 17 residential lots ranging in size from 5.13 acres to 23.42 acres on 164 acres with one 180-acre remainder parcel.	Final EIR; project approval overturned; Supplemental EIR being prepared Planning
East Garrison Specific Plan	County of Monterey	East Garrison, Fort Ord off Reservation Road between Davis and Blanco Roads, Marina, CA 93933. Specific Plan that accommodates development of up to 1,470 housing units, 75,000 square feet of commercial space, 100,000 square feet of studio space for community uses.	Final Subsequent EIR Construction
Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project	County of Monterey	26530 Rancho San Carlos Road, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93923. The Combined Development Permit provides for the development of the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project, includes a 9.6 million gallons per day desalination plant, terminal reservoir, and conveyance system.	Final EIR Certified Project Approved
Pebble Beach Company Project (Pebble Beach Company Development Proposal)	County of Monterey	Throughout Pebble Beach-The Lodge at Pebble Beach: 1700 17-Mile Drive -The Inn at Spanish Bay: 2700 17 Mile Drive -Spyglass Hill: 3206 Stevenson Drive -Pebble Beach Equestrian Center: 3300 Portola Road. Renovation and expansion of visitor-serving uses, creation of 90 to 100 single-family residential lots, preservation of 635 acres as forested open space. New construction at The Lodge at Pebble Beach, The Inn at Spanish Bay, Spyglass Hill, and the Pebble Beach Equestrian Center.	Final EIR complete Design

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
Paraiso Hot Springs Resort	County of Monterey	Western Terminus of Pariso Springs Road, 7 miles west of Greenfield, California, Soledad, CA 93960. Development of a resort that includes 103 hotel units, restaurants, meeting and conference rooms, associated support facilities.	Final EIR Complete Construction; delayed
River View at Las Palmas Assisted Living Senior Facility	County of Monterey	At the end of Woodridge Court, Las Palmas Ranch Subdivision, Salinas, CA 93908. Construction and operation of a senior assisted living facility and associated site improvements. Development of 13 casitas that would provide 26 units, a two-story assisted living facility that measures 43,400 square feet with 40 units, and a 38,800 square-foot memory-care facility with 39 units.	Final Supplemental EIR complete Design assumed
Rancho San Juan Butterfly Village Project	County of Monterey	North of Salinas, CA. Construction of 1,147 homes that will replace the proposed golf course with 342 acres of public parks and open space.	Programmed Project approved; design assumed
Rancho Canada Village Subdivision	County of Monterey	Carmel Valley Drive and Carmel Valley Road, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93923. Increased unit, greater affordability project. Subdivision for a total of 145 housing units, 1.5-acre community park and 8.6 acres of common areas.	Second Final EIR July 2022 Design assumed
September Ranch Project	County of Monterey	Carmel Valley Road, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93923. Subdivision of 891 acres into 94 market-rate residential lots, 15 lots or units for inclusionary housing; continuation of the existing equestrian facility open to the public on a 20.2-acre lot and 783 acres of open space.	Final EIR completed Design assumed
Carmel Rio Road Subdivision	County of Monterey	26500 Val Verde Drive, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93923. Subdivision of a 7.9-acre property to develop 31 units including 24 single family lots and one parcel with seven deed-restricted inclusionary units.	Final EIR complete Project appealed
Carmel Properties Company/Foothill Properties (Rio Ranch Marketplace)	County of Monterey	Rio Road and Carmel Center Place, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93923. Commercial development of a 3.8-acre undeveloped infill site. The project would consist of a retail marketplace development, including four buildings and two farm sheds, totaling 42,310 square feet.	Draft EIR complete Programmed

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
Rio Vista Group LLC	County of Monterey	1, 53, 55 and 57 Susan Street, Royal Oaks, North County Area Plan. Construction of four 16,286 square foot apartment buildings totaling 60 units for agricultural workforce housing and 1 manager unit.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Awaiting permit approval
Miller Clinton F. Jr. and Karen V. Trust, Aka "Miller Trust Commercial Project"	County of Monterey	235 San Juan Road, Royal Oaks. Re-subdivide 6 existing parcels into 3 parcels and a remainder parcel consisting of Lot 1: 178,695 square foot commercial building, 20,000 square foot garden center and parking; Lot 2: well and tank lot with well and storage tank for irrigation and fire flow; Lot 3: San Juan Road right-of-way conveyance to the County of Monterey.	Final EIR Design assumed
Carmel Area Wastewater District – Carmel Meadows Lift Station and Sewer Replacement Project	County of Monterey	Sewer line behind homes along Ribera Road between Calle La Cruz and Mariposa Court, Monterey, CA. A lift station and sewer replacement project consisting of a new below-grade sewage lift station and accessary utility equipment, installation of four residential scale sewage grinder pumps, and rehabilitation/replacement of approximately 1,600 linear feet of sewer line.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Awaiting permit approval
Anthony Nicola Inc.	County of Monterey	124 Gonda Street, Royal Oaks Demolition of an existing single-family dwelling and septic system and construction of 36,200 square feet of housing in 2 three-story buildings to house up to 250 agricultural employees and provide three very low-income-level inclusionary housing units.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Design assumed
Davis Road Bridge Replacement and Road Widening Project	County of Monterey	Davis Road Bridge The County of Monterey proposes to replace the existing two-lane, low-level bridge over the Salinas River with a longer bridge that meets current American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials requirements.	EIR Preconstruction
Gonzales River Road Bridge Rehabilitation Project	County of Monterey	0.2 mile east of River Road and 2 miles west of U.S. Route 10 Replacement of the superstructure of the existing two-lane Gonzales River Road Bridge over the Salinas River with a wider bridge deck that meets current American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) requirements.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Design

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
Toro Park Water System Improvement Project	County of Monterey	Monterey County Toro Regional Park, 501 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Salinas, CA 93908 Rehabilitation of an existing well; installation of approximately 1 mile of new irrigation pipeline; and upgrade of an existing booster station.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Awaiting approval
Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement Project	County of Monterey	Downstream end of the Carmel River Watershed, approximately one-half mile from the river mouth, immediately east and west of State Route 1 The proposed project consists of two interdependent project components: Floodplain Restoration and Causeway. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has granted partial funds for the Floodplain Restoration component and is the NEPA lead agency, with the California Department of Transportation acting as a cooperating agency on the review of the Causeway facilities.	Final EIR Permits received; seeking funding
Rancho Canada Sewer Replacement Project	County of Monterey	Near Via Mallorca Road and Via Petra Road The Rancho Canada Sewer Replacement Project would replace a Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) sewer main. The purpose of the project is to upsize and regrade the existing pipeline to address capacity issues to handle current flows and address surcharging. The project would involve installation of a total of 4,240 linear feet of new gravity sewer mains.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Design assumed
Carmel Valley Traffic Improvements Draft SEIR	County of Monterey	Monterey County The County of Monterey will prepare a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the Carmel Valley Master Plan. The proposed EIR will evaluate the traffic impacts of the Master Plan and refine the traffic analysis contained in the December 1991 Carmel Valley Master Plan EIR. The EIR shall also integrate the environmental effects of the Master Plan circulation and land use elements, so the transportation impacts of growth can be presented in both descriptive and economic terms.	Subsequent EIR Design assumed
Ocean View Plaza	City of Monterey	480 Cannery Row Construct a combination of buildings to include 51 residential units, 87,362 square feet of commercial use, 30,000 square feet of restaurant space, and 8,408 square feet of coastal/community use.	Final EIR Design assumed

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
Strangio Apartments	City of Monterey	600 Irving Avenue Construction of five residential units.	No document available Planning permits approved; Water allocation pending
457 Wave Street	City of Monterey	457 Wave Street Two three-story residential condominium buildings that total four dwelling units.	No document available Construction underway
Park Lane Addition	City of Monterey	200 Glenwood Circle 40 independent living apartment units.	No document available Construction underway
2200 North Fremont Street Mixed Use Building	City of Monterey	2200 North Fremont Street 40 residential units (including 8 affordable units) and 6,000 square feet of commercial space.	No document available Building permit in review
300 Cannery Row	City of Monterey	300 Cannery Row Conversion of existing building to 8 residential condominiums with 8,500 square feet of retail with offsite parking	No document available Planning permit approved; awaiting Coastal Permit
449 Alvarado Street	City of Monterey	Demolish existing structure; construct a four-story mixed-use building with 34 new apartment units and 2,376 square feet of retail space.	EIR preparation in process Planning
704 Foam Street	City of Monterey	Demolish existing structure; Construct 4 new stand-alone residential units with detached garages.	No document available Environmental review pending
2600 Garden Road	City of Monterey	Demolish existing structure; Construct 5 three-story multi-family buildings with 57 apartment units.	No document available Permits under review
2101 North Fremont	City of Monterey	Demolish existing structures; construct a three-story, 42-room hotel.	EIR underway Planning

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
Laguna Grande Trail and Vegetation Maintenance Strategy	City of Monterey	Laguna Grande Regional Park The proposed project involves updates to the Laguna Grande Regional Park Trail Maintenance Strategy. The project will implement maintenance strategies to create a more accessible, safe, and vibrant park for the surrounding community and region.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Design assumed
North Fremont Street - Casanova to Canyon Del Rey Sidewalk Gap Closure	City of Monterey	North Fremont Street to Canyon Del Rey The purpose of the project is to connect/complete the sidewalk and provide a safe pathway for pedestrian and cyclist connectivity along the north side of North Fremont Street with a Class I multi-use trail.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Construction
Del Rey Oaks Monument RV Resort	City of Del Rey Oaks	Located on the eastern portion of Del Rey Oaks' parcels of former Fort Ord land. Closest to Laguna Seca. Develop 71 RV sites and a 7,670-square-foot lodge and a 2,025-square-foot operations building on 17 acres in the first development phase. Total build-out is 210 RV sites and 13,595 square feet of structures.	Exempt from CEQA Design
Del Rey Oaks/Former Fort Ord Parcels	City of Del Rey Oaks	East of General Jim Moore Boulevard along South Boundary Road Approximately 340-acre mixed-use project	No document available Looking for developer to move forward with project
Fort Ord Recreational Trail and Greenway	City of Del Rey Oaks	Del Rey Oaks, Marina, Monterey, Seaside Multi-use trail includes approximately 28 miles of new paved trail, mostly on the inland side of State Route 1.	Final EIR completed Design
Pavement Recycling Facility Project	City of Del Rey Oaks	South Boundary Road and General Jim Moore Boulevard. MPE is seeking to relocate its existing City of Marina-based concrete and base rock recycling facility to a parcel on the former Fort Ord site in the City of Del Rey Oaks for a period of 5 years.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Planning

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
American Tin Cannery Hotel and Commercial Project	City of Pacific Grove	Ocean View Boulevard and Eardley Avenue The project would replace the existing 165,000 square feet of "factory outlet" uses with a new hotel and commercial uses. The hotel and commercial uses would provide 225 guest rooms in two primary guest wings with a restaurant and bars, meeting and gathering spaces, spa and fitness center and approximately 20,000 square feet of street retail uses.	Final EIR Design assumed
Hotel Durell Project	City of Pacific Grove	157 Grand Avenue/Central Avenue/Fountain Avenue The project would demolish an existing building and construct an approximately 76,200-square-foot hotel. The hotel would include 116 rooms, 2,000-square-foot meeting space and 3,815-square-foot restaurant	Final EIR completed Permits Pending
East Laurel Pedestrian Improvements Project	City of Salinas	East Laurel Drive and Constitution Boulevard New sidewalk, trail system and boardwalk for pedestrians and bicyclists, trail lighting, and street lighting on East Laurel Drive to Constitution Boulevard to North Sanborn Road; and on Constitution Boulevard to -375 feet south of Manchester Circle. Rehabilitation of a trail from the Monterey County East Laurel Facility Yards to the Natividad Creek Detention Basin.	Mitigated Negative Declaration completed Construction
Sanborn Road/U.S. Highway 101 Interchange and Elvee Drive Improvements	City of Salinas	Intersections of Sanborn Road/Elvee Drive and the Sanborn Road/Fairview Avenue and U.S. 101 Northbound on-ramp Construction of an approximately 890-foot extension of existing Elvee Drive that requires construction of a 49-foot-long bridge. Other improvements include signalization, construction of a U.S. Highway 101 ramp meter, modification of existing travel lane configuration, reconstruction of approximately 1,400 feet of Elvee Drive.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Construction
Gonzales Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion	City of Gonzales	400 Short Road, Gonzales, CA Construction of another pond and adding larger pumps to the facility.	EIR Planning

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
Pending Expansion of City Boundary	City of Gonzales	Fanoe Ranch on East Side of Highway 101. Between Fanoe Road and Iverson Road. Development of 1700 housing units, an elementary school, shops, and open space on 400 acres	No Document Planning
Monterey Bay Shores coastal eco-resort	Sand City	West of Highway 1 The project includes 184 hotel rooms, 184 condominium units and visitor facilities, including restaurants, spa, swimming pools, and a conference center on 39 acres.	FEIR approved Construction
South of Tioga development	Sand City	California and Tioga Avenues Approximate 10-acre site intended for 216-room hotel and 356-unit residential development.	FEIR approved Construction
West End Storm Water Improvement Project - Catalina Street	Sand City	Catalina Street and Contra Costa Street Sand City is currently working with Proposition 1 grants to prepare plans and implement stormwater improvements on both Catalina Street and Contra Costa Street. Contra Costa Street is a primary entrance street into the West End District of the city.	Exemption Under construction
Sand City West End Parking Plan	Sand City	Sand City West End District Analyzes parking supply and demand; identifies potential parking opportunities in public and private locations; proposes potential parking layouts; outlines financing, management programs, and strategies to create more efficient parking; suggests revisions to existing parking regulations to address common issues; and presents an action plan for implementation.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Planning
Sand City Sustainable Transportation Plan	Sand City	Sand City The Sustainable Transportation Plan proposes conceptual improvements within and adjacent to Sand City to improve circulation for pedestrians, bicyclists, and the mobility-challenged, and improve access to transit. The Sustainable Transportation Plan will guide future investments in non-motorized transportation facilities. No final improvement designs have been prepared at this time; the improvements shown in the Sustainable Transportation Plan are conceptual.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Planning

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
Campus Town Specific Plan (Seaside Campus Town in Fort Ord)	City of Seaside	Between 1st and 7th Avenue, Lightfighter Drive, Colonel Durham and Gigling Road. 1485 housing units; 250 hotel rooms; 75 youth hostel beds; 150,000 square feet of retail space, dining, and entertainment uses; and 50,000 square feet of office, flex, makerspace, and light industrial uses; as well as park/recreational areas.	Final EIR completed Design assumed
Seaside Senior Living Project	City of Seaside	550 Monterey Road, Seaside, CA Two buildings that will house an Assisted Living facility, a Memory Care facility, and an Assisted Living Co-Housing facility on the 5.47-acre project site. Includes 17,958 square feet of open space, 61,856 square feet of landscaping, and 92 parking spaces.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Completed Construction
The Ascent Project at Terrace and Broadway	City of Seaside	Corner of Broadway Avenue and Terrace Street. Ten-building workforce rental housing project that consists of 105 units of mixed-use one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom units and townhouses. Includes 14 affordable units and 4,000 square feet of retail space.	EIR Construction
Parker Flats Apartments Project	City of Seaside	Located at 4386 – 4387 Parker Flats Cut Off Road Conversion of an existing abandoned military nursing barracks on the former Fort Ord site into residential apartments with 42 dwelling units, including two one-bedroom units, 29 two-bedroom units, and 11 three-bedroom units.	Exemption Pre-planning
The Seaside Resort (Seaside Golf Course Resort)	City of Seaside	General Jim Moore Boulevard/McClure Way Hotel project to develop 275 rooms, 175 timeshare units, and 125 custom residential units.	EIR Construction
Freeman Stadium Facilities Renovation Project at CSU Monterey Bay	City of Seaside	2nd Avenue, Divarty Street, former Fort Ord The Monterey Bay Football Club is proposing to renovate, use, and maintain the existing Freeman Stadium and Field House at CSU Monterey Bay as a shared campus-United Soccer League facility.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Preconstruction

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
New Fort Ord Courthouse	City of Seaside	South side of Divarty Street, between 1st and 2nd Avenues, Seaside New 7-courtroom courthouse of about 83,000 square feet. Secured parking for judicial officers and about 280 surface parking spaces for jurors and the public. Solar power generation capability. Acquisition of 3.4 acres would be required.	EIR Planning
Veteran's Transition Center Supportive Housing (Lightfighter Village)	City of Marina	229-239 Hayes Circle Marina, CA Demolition of the existing four on-site vacant duplex structures and construction of a 54,480-square-foot, three-story, 71-unit apartment complex organized into a main building and a family wing, connected via a covered walkway. Located on 2.4 acres, the project would have a residential density of 30 units per acre.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Under construction
Seacrest Apartments	City of Marina	3108 Seacrest Avenue, Marina, CA Construction of 3-story, multi-family 10-unit apartment building.	Exemption Permits pending
Marina Downtown Vitalization Specific Plan	City of Marina	Expands the space for multiple use and permits 2,400 new units.	Mitigated Negative Declaration May Design assumed
Marina Station Specific Plan	City of Marina	Del Monte Boulevard/Marina Greens Drive, Marina, CA Mixed-use development on 325 acres.	Final EIR Design assumed
05-1J880	Caltrans	On State Route 68 from post miles 0.2 to 15.7. Drainage improvements, including culvert replacements at 25 locations, replacement lighting near post mile 4.14, and installation of two traffic count stations.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Design
05-1N160	Caltrans	0.28 mile south of the South Marina Overhead to the State Route 1/156 Junction Preserve 22.183 LM of Class 2 pavement, pave gore areas, replace drainage, replace TMS elements and upgrade guardrail to MASH standards.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Planning
05-1P63.0	Caltrans	On State Route 68 at post mile 3.5, and 15.9. Replace culvert. Repair sinkhole. Repair soundwall. Restore pavement, traffic control.	Exemption Construction

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
05-1R300	Caltrans	On State Route 68 from post mile 10.8 to 22.02 Preserve 35.862 LM of Class II pavement, drainage restoration, upgrade curb ramps, replace sign panels, upgrade guardrail.	No document available Scoping/Planning
05-1N850	Caltrans	On State Route 1 from San Luis Avenue intersection to the Sloat Avenue Undercrossing Pavement preservation, sign rehab, guardrail, and median barrier upgrades.	No document available Planning
05-1J460	Caltrans	From 0.5 mile east of SFB Morse Drive to Scenic Drive Overcrossing and from 0.2 miles east of Skyline Forest Drive to 0.1 mile west of the community hospital entrance Superelevation correction, shoulder widening and rumble strips.	CE/CE Construction
05-1H650	Caltrans	8 miles northwest from Salinas, 10 miles southwest from Watsonville Improve multimodal travel along State Route 183 through the community of Castroville in Monterey County from post miles R8.8 to 9.97.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Design
05-1H691	Caltrans	North of the Crazy Horse Canyon Road/Echo Valley Road overcrossing to the northernmost intersection with Dunbarton Road. Improvement of 15 drainage system locations along US Route 101.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Design
05-31601	Caltrans	Intersection of Highway 156 and Castroville Boulevard Construction of three roundabouts as Phase I of the State Route 156 Interchange project to replace the existing Castroville Boulevard signalized intersection. The roundabouts will connect State Route 156 with Castroville Boulevard. The project will also provide a new Class 1 mixed-use bicycle and pedestrian path, driveways, and on- and off-ramps associated with the three new roundabout structures.	EIR Design

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
MST SURF! Busway and Bus Rapid Transit Project	Transportation Agency for Monterey County/ Caltrans Oversight	MST's Marina Transit Exchange at Reservation Road and De Forest Road, and Contra Costa Street and Orange Avenue in Sand City Implement bus rapid transit between the cities of Monterey, Marina, Sand City, Seaside, and Salinas in Monterey County, California, including a 6-mile dedicated busway along a former rail right-of-way parallel to California Highway 1, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Design

Table 2.1.1.2 Built-Out Development

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
Pebble Beach Company Inclusionary Housing	County of Monterey	Near the intersection of New Congress Road and SFB Morse Drive. Address: 31 Congress Court, Pebble Beach, CA 93953 The Combined Development Permit allows for construction of 24 affordable housing units, and a manager's building.	Final EIR complete Built out
Spreckels Industrial Park LLC (Tanimura and Antle Agricultural Employee Housing Project)	County of Monterey	121 Spreckels Boulevard, Salinas CA 93908 100-unit agricultural employee housing complex that includes two-bedroom apartment units and related facilities. The project site encompasses approximately 4.5 acres.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Built out
Monterey Motorsports Vehicle Storage	City of Monterey	2969 Monterey-Salinas Highway 88-unit commercial condominium vehicle storage facility. Construction of four vehicle storage buildings.	Mitigated Negative Declaration Built out

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
Del Monte Beach Re-Subdivision	City Monterey	Cross Streets: Beach Way, Roberts Avenue, Spray Avenue Merge and re-subdivide 48 existing lots into a maximum of 12 single-family residential lots and two open space lots; merge and re-subdivide 12 existing lots into a maximum of 8 residential townhouse lots, common area and open space.	Final EIR Built out
595 Munras	City of Monterey	595 Munras Avenue 5,600 square feet of commercial space and 10 residential units (including two affordable units).	Mitigated Negative Declaration Built out
Montage Health Medical Building	City of Monterey	2 Upper Ragsdale Drive, Bldg. C. 21,500 square-foot medical office building over enclosed 40-stall parking garage. No Environmental Documentation.	No document available Built out
Catalina Loft Mixed-Use Development	Sand City	400 block fronting Catalina Street between Ortiz Avenue and Elder Avenue A mixed use (residential and commercial) project, will include 8 residential units and 7 commercial units on a 15,000 square foot property	Construction Built out
Mosaic Apartments	City of Marina	225 Cypress Avenue, Marina, CA Construction of 4-story multi-family 12-unit apartment building.	Exemption Built out
Schulman Townhomes	City of Marina	3110 Seacrest Avenue Construction of 7 townhomes.	Exemption Built out
Sea Haven	City of Marina	California Avenue, Imjin Parkway, Reservation Road in Marina, CA Redeveloping former Ford Ord Army Base, the Sea Haven project removed 828 abandoned housing units and will replace it with 1,050 new townhouse, cottage, and single-family residential housing units. The community will include 35 acres of parks, greenbelts, and open space.	Final EIR Built out

Project	Jurisdiction	Address and Proposed Use	Environmental Document and Project Status
05-44800	Transportation Agency for Monterey County/ Caltrans	Just west of Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula entrance to State Route 1/68 A Transportation Agency for Monterey County widening and intersection improvements project. Caltrans oversight.	EIR Built out

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, the existing conditions would remain and no impacts to existing or future land uses would occur. Traffic delay and safety issues at the signalized intersections along State Route 68 would not be alleviated, and wildlife connectivity would not be improved.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No measures would be required.

2.1.2 Consistency with State, Regional and Local Plans and Programs

Affected Environment

The topic of future improvements to State Route 68 has long been included in various planning documents for the region. Caltrans' State Route 68 Transportation Concept Report (2013) documents heavy congestion on the route between post mile 5.2 and post mile 13.1 during peak hours. In 2017, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County prepared the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan to identify and evaluate potential mid-term solutions to improve operations at intersections along State Route 68. This document was supported by initiation of the State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project.

A policy consistency analysis was completed by reviewing the applicable policies from the various agencies with jurisdiction within the region. The table in Appendix D includes a list of applicable state, regional, and local plans, and programs, the goals and policies of each plan, and whether the proposed Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project is consistent with each. Applicable state, regional, and local plans and programs are summarized according to the California Environmental Quality Act standards; any inconsistencies are discussed in the Environmental Consequences section below.

Monterey County General Plan (2010)

The Monterey County General Plan is the main planning document for the county. The 2010 General Plan contains eight elements (land use, circulation, conservation and open space, safety, public services, agriculture, economic development, and housing) and includes general plans and policies for the entire county. In addition, specific planning area/master plans have been developed and offer more defined policies and goals for each specific area and element. The 2010 General Plan and associated area/master plans represent the county's vision for preserving and improving quality of life and county resources for its residents and visitors. Different portions of State Route 68 are located within the Toro Planning Area, the Greater Monterey Peninsula Planning Area, and the Fort Ord Master Plan.

While the Land Use Element of the County's General Plan does not specifically discuss State Route 68, it does state that growth shall occur in those areas with adequate transportation facilities. The Land Use Element

also discusses lighting, states that all exterior lighting shall be unobtrusive, and requires a reduction in long-range visibility and reducing off-site glare.

The Circulation Element provides policy direction for the transportation systems that serve the unincorporated lands of Monterey County and describes how the County intends to serve transportation needs for the next 20 years as the county's population grows. The specific goals and policies that would apply to State Route 68 are listed in the table in Appendix D and generally include the following:

- The acceptable level of service for county roads and intersections is D.
- Goals to protect air quality, reduce noise, reduce consumption of fossil fuels, and minimize acquisition of land for roadway construction.
- Transportation alternatives such as bicycles, carpools, public transit shall be encouraged and accommodated within and outside the public right-of-way.
- All new road and interior circulation systems shall be designed, developed, and maintained according to adopted County standards or allowed through specific agreements and plans.
- Direction regarding cooperation with the regional transportation agencies and Caltrans to maintain roadways, intersections bikeways, and pedestrian facilities.
- Guidelines for Scenic Highway Corridors that promote undergrounding utilities, architecture and landscape controls, and use of native plants for landscaping.
- Special scenic treatment and design of officially designated State Scenic Highways applying to highway directional signs, guardrails and fences, lighting and illumination, provision of scenic outlooks, road lanes, frontage roads, vegetation, grading, and highway structures.
- Construction or expansion of roadways within major transportation corridors shall consider improved bike routes.

The proposed project would support most goals and policies outlined in the Circulation Element of the General Plan, with the exception of certain goals surrounding the expansion of public transit, which is not part of the proposed project (see Appendix D).

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan does not replace existing state and federal laws and regulations, rather it ensures cooperation in protecting scenic resources, mineral resources, soils, marine and river resources, biological resources, archaeological resources, paleontological resources, tribal cultural sites (including sacred places and burial sites), energy resources, and air quality. The specific goals outlined in the Conservation and Open Space Element are congruent with the California

Environmental Quality Act requirements that are evaluated in the Draft (and this Final) Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. As required by the General Plan, Caltrans will coordinate and comply with the requirements of other public agencies, such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State Historic Preservation Officer, Regional Air and Water Quality Control Boards, and any other appropriate regulating agencies as determined by Caltrans.

Apart from Policy OS-1.2, the proposed project is consistent with the goals and policies of the Conservation and Open Space Element of Monterey County's General Plan, with the proposed Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures incorporated. Policy OS-1.2 of the Conservation Element of the Monterey County General Plan is discussed in the Environmental Consequences section below.

Monterey County – Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan (2010)

The Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan is to be used in conjunction with Monterey County's 2010 General Plan and offers more specific guidelines relevant to the portion of State Route 68 that is within the Greater Monterey Peninsula planning area.

The Land Use Element of the Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan designates State Route 68 as a Scenic Highway Corridor and also designates locations within the planning area, north and south of State Route 68, as visually "sensitive" and/or "highly sensitive" to regulate development within the scenic corridor. Most of the proposed intersection improvements are within areas designated visually "sensitive" or "highly sensitive" areas. The Conservation and Open Space Element provides requirements to reduce potential impacts within visually sensitive areas and includes the following directives that apply to State Route 68:

- Development of roads shall be sited in a manner that minimizes visible effects to the greatest extent possible.
- New direct access to State Route 68 from single-family residences is prohibited.
- Landscape screening and other techniques shall be used to achieve maximum protection of the visual resource, using locally native plant and tree species consistent with surrounding native vegetation.
- New development shall maintain the visual character of the area using appropriate siting, design, materials, and landscaping.
- Any earth movement shall be mitigated in such a manner that permanent scarring is not created.
- Tree removal shall be minimized; if removed, replacement shall occur.

- Architectural review of projects is required to ensure visual compatibility with surrounding area.
- Removal of native oak, Monterey pine, and redwood trees minimized.
- A 100-foot setback from all wetlands shall apply.
- Critical habitat areas preserved as open space.
- Measures to protect wetlands shall be employed.

Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures will be implemented for visual/aesthetics, biological resources, and natural communities as outlined in the corresponding sections of this document to ensure consistency with these requirements. Where feasible, a 100-foot setback will be implemented around wetlands. Where alterations in wetland setbacks are necessary, a wetland restoration and enhancement plan will be developed to address temporary and permanent impacts to wetlands. Therefore, both Build Alternatives of the proposed project would include measures that will ensure consistency with the protections afforded by the Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan.

The Circulation Element states that improvement of State Route 68 intersections, construction of alternate passing lanes, public transit roadway improvements, and improved bicycle safety measures shall be given priority for funding. The proposed State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project meets the goals of this plan by improving State Route 68 intersections and improving efficiency throughout the corridor. Both project Build Alternatives include some proposed pedestrian and bike lane improvements at the intersection locations.

Monterey County – Toro Area Plan (2010)

The Toro Area Plan is part of the Monterey County 2010 General Plan and encompasses the area on the south side of State Route 68 to the east of Laureles Grade. A goal of the plan's Circulation Element is to alleviate traffic congestion while maintaining the scenic beauty of State Route 68. The Toro Area Plan also has goals to coordinate with Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County to construct a four-lane facility between the Toro interchange and State Route 218, and to construct bus stops, pull-outs, and shelters where needed. The plan includes recommendations to pursue State Route 68 intersection improvements, alternate passing lane construction, public transit roadway improvements, and improved bicycle safety measures as soon as funding becomes available. The plan also prohibits creation of new direct access points from single-family residences onto State Route 68.

The Toro Area Plan includes goals for conservation and open space, with stipulations for areas designated as visually sensitive so that development in those areas will be conducted in a manner that will enhance the scenic value of the area. Land use, architectural, and landscaping controls shall be applied to preserve Toro's visually sensitive areas, specifically at the Laureles Grade

scenic vista. Undergrounding of utilities is encouraged in these areas, and lighting should preserve the quality of darkness and shall be unobtrusive and consistent in intensity throughout the Toro area.

The proposed project is consistent with conservation and open space goals of the Toro Area Plan because: 1) utilities will be undergrounded at the intersections; 2) bus stops, pull-outs, and shelter facilities will be improved; 3) new lighting will be designed to be focused downward to maintain the dark sky appearance, while also providing enough light to enhance safety; and 4) landscaping and visual treatments will be designed to maintain the natural character of the scenic highway.

The proposed project alternatives do not meet the goal of creating a four-lane facility throughout the State Route 68 corridor, as discussed below under Environmental Consequences. However, both Build Alternatives are consistent with all other goals and policies of the Toro Area Plan, as shown in Appendix D.

Monterey County – Fort Ord Master Plan (2010)

The Fort Ord Master Plan incorporates objectives, programs, and policies to be consistent with the Fort Ord Reuse Plan and is also a part of the Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan and the Monterey County General Plan.

The Circulation Element of the Fort Ord Master Plan includes objectives to manage congestion and de-emphasize the need for vehicle travel to and within the former Fort Ord, and to develop transportation systems that support the planned use of development patterns. State Route 68 provides access to Fort Ord recreational areas at the Badger Hills Trailhead, which is at the southern portion of the Fort Ord National Monument. The proposed intersection improvements will help to achieve the plan's objective of managing congestion, thereby improving safe access to Fort Ord from State Route 68.

Of the nine proposed intersection improvement locations, only two of the project locations are directly adjacent to Fort Ord property: the State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road intersection and the State Route 68/San Benancio Road intersection. At the Corral de Tierra Road intersection, some acquisition from the Fort Ord National Monument is anticipated for both Alternatives 1 and 2. At the San Benancio Road intersection, some acquisition from the Fort Ord National Monument is anticipated for Alternative 2 only.

Policies and objectives outlined in the Conservation Element of the Fort Ord Master Plan generally outline policies for erosion control, preserving wildlife habitat, special-status species protection, measures for stormwater pollution prevention, preservation of oak woodlands, protection of wetlands and riparian areas, and identification and protection of cultural resources.

Specifically, the Conservation Element states that the County shall coordinate with Caltrans in the design of State Route 68 to assess the feasibility of avoiding the riparian forest within the alignment. The Recreation and Open Space Element specifies that if riparian forest removal is unavoidable, Caltrans shall compensate at a 2-to-1 ratio of newly created habitat to lost habitat or at a 4-to-1 acreage ratio of enhanced habitat to lost habitat; restoration could occur in other areas of El Toro Creek. Of the two project locations adjacent to Fort Ord, both locations have the potential of impacting riparian areas. If riparian impacts occur, impacts would be offset by onsite restoration at a ratio of at least 2-to-1 to ensure consistency with this policy.

The Recreation and Open Space Element includes policies addressing street lighting, stating that lighting of outdoor areas shall be minimized and carefully controlled to maintain habitat quality for wildlife in undeveloped natural lands. In addition, street lighting shall be as unobtrusive as practicable and shall be consistent in intensity throughout development areas adjacent to undeveloped natural lands. With the proposed avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures identified in this document, both Build Alternatives would be designed to ensure consistency with these policies.

Fort Ord Reuse Plan (1997)

The Fort Ord Reuse Plan was developed by the Fort Ord Reuse Authority. The plan was adopted in 1997 for the purposes of designating land uses, objectives, programs, and policies because of the base closure of Fort Ord. Most of the applicable policies and programs contained in the Fort Ord Reuse Plan were also adopted into Monterey County's 2010 Fort Ord Master Plan. The Reuse Plan also included a Habitat Management Plan for the protection and conservation of natural resources.

The Fort Ord Reuse Plan emphasized the importance of State Route 68 as a major transportation route for the community and a major travel corridor between the Monterey Peninsula and Salinas. The Fort Ord Reuse Plan Circulation Concept noted that State Route 68 experienced congestion and that Caltrans was considering improvements to the existing highway or a potential new alignment north of the existing alignment referred to as the Fort Ord bypass. The 2018 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan notes that due to cost and environmental constraints, the Fort Ord bypass alignment is not being pursued.

City of Monterey General Plan (Amended 2016)

Five of the nine proposed State Route 68 intersection improvement locations in the project are within the City of Monterey and subject to the City of Monterey General Plan. These five intersections are Josselyn Canyon Road, Olmsted Road, State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard), Ragsdale Drive, and York Road. The City of Monterey General Plan notes that State Route 68 is a congested highway and currently exceeds capacity. The City of

Monterey has a policy to coordinate with Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County to identify improvements and funding for improvements to State Route 68 to meet the City's level of service standards.

The overarching goal of the City's Circulation Element is to create a multimodal-oriented city where alternative forms of transportation are encouraged. Programs include providing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access, bikeways, paths, and pedestrian infrastructure. The City of Monterey is proposing bicycle lanes for portions of Josselyn Canyon Road, Olmsted Road, and York Road, including where these roads intersect with State Route 68. The proposed intersection improvements for both Build Alternatives provide bicycle access through the intersections and would be consistent with these policies.

The City's Urban Design Element emphasizes the importance of preserving the visual character of the scenic highway and states that the following measures should be implemented along State Route 68:

- Protect and enhance scenic entrances.
- Scenic corridors should be preserved and enhanced to the maximum extent possible in the design and construction of scenic entrances.
- Highway construction grading should not take place outside the roadway right-of-way.
- Roadway lighting and signing should be minimized, of low-profile design, and designed to enhance the scenic character of the corridor.
- Reverse the visual degradation of scenic forests.
- Avoid further illumination along Ryan Ranch and Garden Road Business Park area.
- Screen buildings close to the highway with native vegetation, such as coast live oak.
- Maintain the scenic corridor.
- Preserve the visual character of wooded canyons, and protect existing cypress, Monterey pine, and coast live oak trees in urban and historic contexts; replant when removal is necessary, and retain the health of the stands.

The City of Monterey General Plan states that efforts to widen State Route 68 to four lanes or a new bypass alignment through Fort Ord are planned. As previously stated, the 2018 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan notes that due to cost and environmental constraints, the Fort Ord bypass has not been pursued. The proposed State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project does not meet the goal of constructing a new bypass alignment nor does it propose the full widening of State Route 68 to a four-lane highway.

The four-lane highway concept appears to be carried over from earlier planning documents, and more recent plans from the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, such as the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan and the Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan, state that these alternatives are no longer being considered due to financial and environmental constraints. It is important to note, however, that the proposed Corridor Improvements project would also not preclude these alternatives in the future. [City of Monterey Highway 68 Area Plan (Amended 2016)]

City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan (1997)

The Circulation Element of the City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan states that the City will coordinate and assist the Transportation Authority of Monterey County and Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments in providing funding for an efficient regional transportation network. The City further states that it has shared jurisdiction with Caltrans for the State Route 68/State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard) intersection in monitoring whether installation of signals or addition of turn lanes is warranted. The plan states that at this intersection, commercially zoned areas shall include standards for: visual appearances, landscaping, screening of storage and trash, building bulk, height, exterior treatment, in relationship to State Route 68 and Canyon Del Rey Boulevard. The plan also states that this intersection is part of the adopted Monterey County Congestion Management Program network, and the level of service standard for this intersection is level of service E. The plan makes particular reference to the Stonehouse Historic Building at the Canyon Del Rey intersection and notes that this historic resource should be protected and that any improvements to operations or alignments of State Route 68 should not impact this historic resource. Goals and Policies of the Open Space/Conservation Element state that the natural, cultural, visual, and historic resources, and wildlife habitat should be protected.

State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan

The goal of the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan is to identify a preferred State Route 68 corridor concept and associated infrastructure improvements that would best meet both the local and regional goals, while providing the highest return on investment of limited regional transportation funding for the next 20 years. Analyses were conducted on the status of the current operational conditions of State Route 68, and it was determined that State Route 68 suffers from unreliable travel times, congestion, collisions, and extensive wildlife movement across the corridor, and that there is strong public support for improving State Route 68 while preserving the scenic nature of the corridor. An extensive public outreach effort for this plan included public workshops, community and stakeholder meetings, online engagement, and media.

The State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan considered three concepts for improving conditions along State Route 68. The plan determined that the

preferred concept was to convert 11 intersections to roundabouts, construct wildlife connectivity improvements at six locations, install additional signs and lighting elements, and restrict left turns out of side streets and driveways.

It is important to note that the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan specifically does not recommend constructing the previously planned Fort Ord bypass. This is because the establishment of the Fort Ord National Monument in 2012 greatly reduced the feasibility of constructing a new State Route 68 alignment through that area. In addition, the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan mentions that some planning documents reference the future widening of State Route 68 to a four-lane facility from the City of Monterey to the City of Salinas. However, this concept is not considered to be a viable option in various other planning documents, such as the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments' Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's Regional Transportation Plan, which states that the full widening of State Route 68 is financially constrained. As a result, the full widening concept was not advanced further by the plan. However, the proposed State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project would not preclude a full widening of State Route 68 in the future.

Monterey Regional Airport Master Plan (2018)

The Monterey Regional Airport Master Plan provides short-term, intermediate, and long-term development goals of the airport over a 20-year planning horizon. The plan includes a section titled "Access to the Airport," noting that terminal access is located on Olmsted Road, which is accessed from State Route 68. The Monterey Regional Airport Master Plan supports the need for improvements along the State Route 68 corridor and specifically identifies concern for improved operations at the State Route 68/Olmsted Road intersection. The Monterey Regional Airport Master Plan references the 2014 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan and states that the proposed improvements to the State Route 68 corridor will improve access to the airport.

Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan (2018)

The Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is prepared every four years and provides a basis for allocation of funding to transportation projects. The plan is prepared by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County in coordination with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan prepared by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), which is the federal Metropolitan Planning Organization for the three-county Monterey Bay region. Both the Regional Transportation Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan outline the agencies' priorities for meeting transportation needs within the constraints of the anticipated funding forecast of the 22-year planning horizon of the document.

The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan discusses consideration and implementation of roundabouts at intersections as an important strategy for

achieving the goals of the 2018 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan for the following reasons: 1) roundabouts allow for free movement of vehicles and reduce vehicle emissions; 2) roundabout intersections are proven to be safer; and 3) roundabouts incorporate pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly accommodations that make these types of intersections safer and easier to navigate for all users. An intersection control evaluation was recommended for State Route 68 to determine whether roundabouts are a cost-effective strategy.

Both the 2014 and 2018 Regional Transportation Plans include a specific discussion on the Salinas-Monterey corridor, which includes two commute routes from Salinas to the Monterey Peninsula, one being State Route 68. The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan discussion identifies State Route 68 as a regionally significant roadway and includes two separate projects, which include: 1) widen existing roadway to four lanes between existing four-lane segment at Toro Park and Corral de Tierra Road; and 2) construct safety, congestion relief, and wildlife connectivity projects along State Route 68 from Blanco Road to State Route 1. The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan also notes that due to funding and environmental constraints, a Fort Ord bypass or full corridor widening is not currently being considered.

The project is consistent with the 2018 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan, which includes the State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project in Appendix C, the 2018 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan Projects List, as project number MON-CTXX-CT.

Monterey Bay 2040: Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (AMBAG, 2018)

The Monterey Bay 2040: Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) plans how the Monterey Bay area (including Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties) will meet its transportation needs for the 25-year period from 2015 to 2040. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy defines goals and policy objectives that guide the planning effort and outlines the transportation investments balancing the entire region's transportation needs. The region cannot afford to fund all needed highway improvements, but State Route 68 is identified as a regionally significant highway project included in the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Active Transportation Plan for Monterey County (2018)

The Active Transportation Plan for Monterey County includes policies for maximizing the transportation system to promote walking and bicycle travel, including development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, improved access and safety provisions, and improved linkages to bikeways and recreational trails. The plan proposes a Class 2 bike route along the length of State Route 68. A Class 2 facility consists of a bike lane that has a painted strip to the

right of mixed-vehicle flow lanes. Both Build Alternatives of the proposed State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project propose active transportation improvements at the intersections, including bike lanes and pedestrian facilities that would support the goal of eventually creating a Class 2 facility along the entire length of State Route 68.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

Both Build Alternatives for the proposed State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project are consistent with most of the state, regional, and local plans and programs discussed above and shown in the consistency analysis table in Appendix D. This section discusses the environmental consequences from the project where it was determined that it would not be consistent with state, regional, and local plans and programs.

Both Build Alternatives would maintain the existing transit stops within the project limits on State Route 68; however, neither project build alternative, would add or expand public transit service or facilities. Thus, the project would be inconsistent with Monterey County General Plan Circulation Element Goal C-3, Policy C-3.5 as well as other policies in the County General Plan Conservation Element, the County's Toro Area Plan, and the City of Monterey General Plan Traffic and Transportation Element (see Appendix D). Currently, Monterey-Salinas Transit does not run many buses on State Route 68 due to reduced demand and unpredictability in service delays. It is expected that once the State Route 68 improvements are completed, service times will be more reliable and Monterey-Salinas Transit would consider increasing transit service for that route, pending demand.

Neither project build alternative would construct a four-lane facility, as identified by the City of Monterey General Plan and the Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan. Because various other planning documents do not recommend the four-lane facility at this time, this inconsistency is not considered to be major since the goals and policies of local and regional plans differ with respect to the four-lane concept. In addition, the project would not preclude the pursuance of a four-lane facility in the future.

Though the project does not propose a four-lane facility, it is consistent with the other aspects of the aforementioned planning documents since it would improve the flow of traffic on State Route 68 and improve pedestrian/bike facilities at the intersections where improvements are proposed. In addition, under Alternative 2, auxiliary lanes and widening are proposed in some portions of the corridor to accommodate the intersection improvements extending turning lanes. The proposed project does meet the goal of improving congestion since the intersection improvements would improve the flow of traffic as evaluated in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report, prepared

by Caltrans, dated September 2020 (for more information see Section 2.1.8, Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities).

Neither of the Build Alternatives would be consistent with Policy OS-1.2 of the Open Space Element of Monterey County's General Plan, which states that "development in designated visually sensitive areas shall be subordinate to the natural features of the area." The proposed retaining walls may be extensive and tall in some areas, which may lead to an adverse visual impact. Potential visual impacts from the proposed alternatives are evaluated in the Visual/Aesthetics section of this document (see Section 2.1.9), which includes a discussion on the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

Both Build Alternatives would be inconsistent with the City of Monterey General Plan's Urban Design Element, Policy h.2, which states that highway construction grading should not take place outside the roadway right-of-way. Acquisition of right-of-way would be required for both Build Alternatives to construct the project. While the project may not be consistent with Policy h.2, it would not result in a major impact for the following reasons: 1) any acquisition of right-of-way will follow the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition for Federal and Federally Assisted Programs; 2) the minimum possible amount of right-of-way would be acquired to construct the proposed project; and 3) once any additional right-of-way is acquired, it would no longer be outside the roadway right-of-way.

Monterey County's Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan, Supplemental Policy GMP-3.6 requires a 100-foot setback from wetlands for any development. If a 100-foot setback is not possible at all work locations, a restoration and enhancement plan would be prepared. Also, the project would implement standard measures, best management practices, and Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures to protect wetland features (see Section 2.3.2). Compensatory mitigation for impacts to wetland, stream, streambank, and riparian aquatic resources would be implemented onsite at a 1-to-1 ratio (acreage) for temporary impacts and a 3-to-1 ratio (acreage) for permanent impacts. If sufficient area is not available onsite, additional mitigation for permanent impacts would be completed offsite at an existing mitigation bank or in coordination with a local land conservancy or restoration group.

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would be inconsistent with the Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan, the Monterey Bay 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and the Monterey County Toro Area Plan, which call for improvements along State Route 68 to address safety, congestion relief, and wildlife connectivity.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

For both Build Alternatives, conflicts with state, regional, and local plans and programs are anticipated for visual resources. Avoidance, minimization,

and/or mitigation measures will be required for visual resources (see Section 2.1.10), biological resources (see Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.3) and wetlands (see Section 2.3.2) and will be implemented for the preferred alternative, Alternative 1.

2.1.3 Parks and Recreational Facilities

Regulatory Setting

The Park Preservation Act (California Public Resources Code Sections 5400-5409) prohibits local and state agencies from acquiring any property that is in use as a public park at the time of acquisition unless the acquiring agency pays sufficient compensation or land, or both, to enable the operator of the park to replace the park land and any park facilities on that land.

Affected Environment

The information and analysis in this section are largely based on the Section 4(f) De Minimis and No Use Determinations contained in Appendix A. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified in federal law at 49 United States Code (USC) 303, declares that "it is the policy of the United States Government that special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites." In accordance with the Federal Highway Administration's Section 4(f) Policy Paper (July 12, 2012, pp 23-24), a park, recreational area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge is defined for purposes of Section 4(f) analysis as when the land has been officially designated as such by a federal, state, or local agency and officials with jurisdiction over the land determine that its primary purpose is a park, recreational area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge. A property's primary purpose is its primary function and how it is intended to be managed. The Section 4(f) statute states that a property must be a significant public park, recreational area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge to be considered in Section 4(f) evaluations; significance means that the property serves an important role in meeting the objectives for parks, recreational areas, and/or refuges of the public agency or community authority with jurisdiction over the property.

Public parks and recreational facilities within the State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project area and the greater Monterey Peninsula area include neighborhood and community parks, regional parks, state parks, open spaces, trails, and national monument lands. Parks and recreational areas in the project vicinity are listed in Table 2.1.3.1 and shown in Figure 2.3.

There are a number of parks and recreational facilities nearby, but outside of the project area. These include Garland Ranch Regional Park managed by Monterey Peninsula Reginal Parks District at the southerly side of Laureles Grade at Carmel Valley Road. This park offers hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails. The Badger Hills Trailhead, outside of the project area immediately

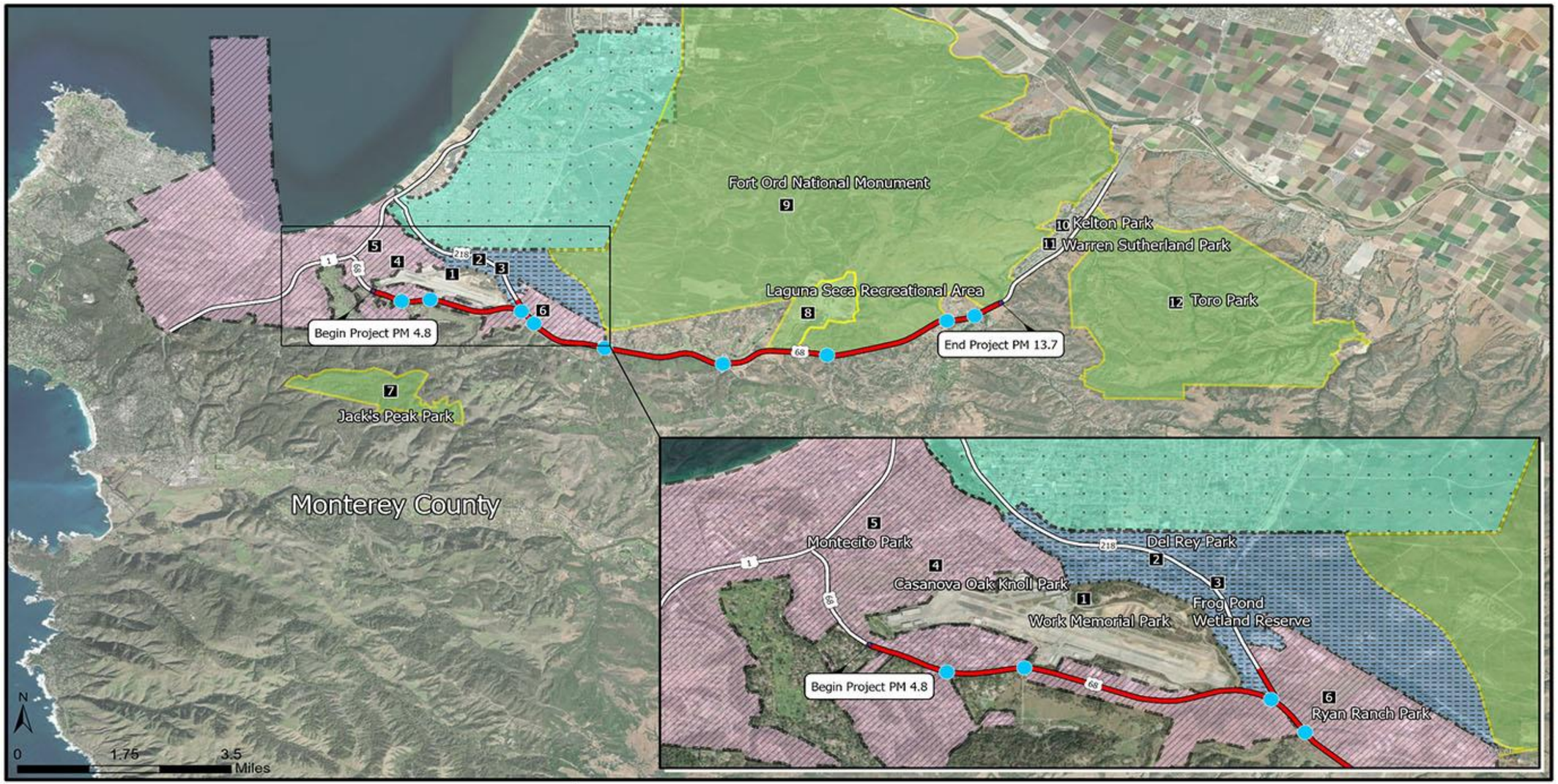
to the east, provides recreational access to the southern portion of the Fort Ord National Monument, which is managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Toro County Park, farther east of the project area, offers picnic areas, playgrounds, hiking and horseback riding trails, ball fields and volleyball courts.

Table 2.1.3.1 Public Parks and Recreational Facilities in Project Vicinity

Map Reference Number on Figure 2.3	Park/Recreational Facility Name	Location	Responsible Jurisdiction
1	Work Memorial Park	Canyon Del Rey Boulevard, Del Rey Oaks	City of Del Rey Oaks
2	Del Rey Park	Canyon Del Rey Boulevard, Del Rey Oaks	City of Del Rey Oaks
3	Frog Pond Wetland Preserve	Canyon Del Rey Boulevard, Del Rey Oaks	Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District
4	Casanova Oak Knoll Park	735 Ramona Avenue, Monterey	City of Monterey
5	Montecito Park	220 Montecito Avenue, Monterey	City of Monterey
6	Ryan Ranch Park and Disc Golf Course	10 Park Road, Monterey, Parcel Number 259-031-003	City of Monterey
7	Jacks Peak Park	25020 Jacks Peak Park Road, Monterey	Monterey County Public Works, Facilities and Parks
8	Laguna Seca Recreation Area	1025 Monterey-Salinas Highway 68	Monterey County, Public Works, Facilities and Parks
9	Fort Ord National Monument – Badger Hills Trailhead	692-696 Monterey Salinas Highway 68, Salinas	Bureau of Land Management
10	Kelton Park	Portola Drive, Salinas	Monterey County
11	Warren Sutherland Park	Portola Drive, Salinas	Monterey County
12	Toro County Park	501 Monterey-Salinas Highway 68, Salinas	Monterey County, Public Works, Facilities and Parks

North and west of the immediate project area are four city parks; two in the City of Del Rey Oaks: Work Memorial Park and Del Rey Park; and two in the City Monterey: Casanova Knoll Park and Montecito Park. Also, nearby but outside the project area is Frog Pond Wetland Preserve, managed by the Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District, which provides a refuge for wildlife, as well as open space with walking trails. Outside of the immediate project area, on the Monterey Peninsula and within the jurisdictions along the coast, are many other city parks, local and state parks, and public beaches. These recreational resources outside of the immediate project impact area would not be part of the affected environment under Section 4(f).

Figure 2.3 Parks and Recreation Areas in the Project Vicinity



Public Parks and Recreation Facilities in Project Vicinity

There are no officially designated wildlife or waterfowl refuges within the project study area, according to the Section 4(f) De Minimis and No Use Determinations in Appendix A.

The recreational properties considered to be public recreational lands protected under Section 4(f) that would be affected by the proposed project Build Alternatives include:

- Ryan Ranch Park in the City of Monterey, north of and adjacent to State Route 68 between the intersections of State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive (Assessor's Parcel Number 259-031-003)
- Fort Ord National Monument, north of and adjacent to State Route 68 at Corral de Tierra Road (Assessor's Parcel Number 031-011-014)
- Laguna Seca Recreation Area, north of and adjacent to State Route 68 at Laureles Grade (Assessor's Parcel Number 173-011-025)
- County of Monterey Assessor's Parcel Number 031-1331-002 (recreational-habitat management property), north of State Route 68 and Laureles Grade

The Ryan Ranch Park in the City of Monterey sits on a 75-acre parcel (Assessor's Parcel Map 259-031-003) along the north side of State Route 68 between the intersections of State Route 218/State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68. The park contains an active recreational use Ryan Ranch Disc Golf Course, which has 31 holes over most of the parcel. Course facilities include disc golf "tees" on permanent tee pads (dirt, grass, or rubber mats), and baskets (disc targets). Fairways and baskets can be rearranged to create various course layouts.

The Fort Ord National Monument property occupies most of the former Fort Ord Army facility along the north side of State Route 68 between Reservation Road near the city of Salinas and General Jim Moore Boulevard near the city of Seaside. The National Monument was established in April 2012 through *Proclamation 8803 – Establishment of the Fort Ord National Monument*, which identifies the land's values for large contiguous open space (habitat types of oak woodland, chaparral, streamside corridors, grasslands, and seasonal pools), recreational uses (trail system for hiking, biking, and equestrian riding), scientific research, outdoor education, and historical and cultural significance.

About one-half of the 14,651-acre National Monument property is managed by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (7,205 acres), and the remaining half (7,446 acres) by the Department of the Army. The portion managed by the Army is closed to public use and has munitions hazards from unexploded ordnance from the land's former military use. The portion managed by the Bureau of Land Management borders the north side of State Route 68 for about 5 miles from east of the Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection

and east to Reservation Road, including the project intersections at Corral de Tierra Road and San Benancio Road. The Bureau of Land Management-managed area consists of large contiguous open space.

The Laguna Seca Recreation Area in unincorporated Monterey County along State Route 68 within the project area is a large regional park managed by the County of Monterey Public Works, Facilities and Parks department, offering camping and picnicking facilities. It is home to the WeatherTech Laguna Seca Raceway. County parcel 173-011-025 is part of the recreational area property and is immediately adjacent to State Route 68, west of Laureles Grade.

The County of Monterey parcel number 031-131-002 is adjacent to and west of the Fort Ord National Monument property, and part of the lands included in the county's Fort Ord Master Plan (Chapter 9.E of the 2010 Monterey County General Plan). The county property covers over 247 acres and is designated as habitat management for land use, which is intended for environmental education activities, ecological restoration, and passive recreational uses such as hiking, horse riding, and picnicking. The Fort Ord Base Reuse Plan designates this property as open space/recreation.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

Real property would be required for right-of-way to construct either of the build alternative designs at the intersections of State Route 218/State Route 68, State Route 68/Ragsdale Drive, State Route 68/Laureles Grade, and State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road.

Table 2.1.3.2 summarizes the anticipated amounts of permanent partial property acquisitions that would be required from park and recreational lands at the four intersections. Information in the table for Alternative 1 at County recreational (habitat management) parcel 031-131-002 and Fort Ord National Monument (parcel 031-011-014) has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment to reflect the updated (hybrid) roundabout design modifications at the Laureles Grade and Corral de Tierra Road locations.

Table 2.1.3.2 Park and Recreation Lands Property Acquisition

Park or Recreation Land	Location	Permanent Acquisition (Acres)	Temporary Use Area (Acres)	Project Alternative
Ryan Ranch Park and Disc Golf Course (Parcel 259-031-003)	State Route 218 to Ragsdale/State Route 68, north side	4.20 (2.26 acres for roundabout features and 1.94 acres for landform grading)	None	Alternative 1
Ryan Ranch Park and Disc Golf Course (Parcel 259-031-003)	State Route 218 to Ragsdale/State Route 68, north side	1.94 (1.39 acres for intersection improvements and 0.55 acre for landform grading)	None	Alternative 2
Laguna Seca Recreation Area (Parcel 173-011-025)	Laureles Grade/ State Route 68, north side	None	None	Alternative 1
Laguna Seca Recreation Area (Parcel 173-011-025)	Laureles Grade/ State Route 68, north side	0.96	None	Alternative 2
County Recreation (Parcel 031-131-002)	Laureles Grade/ State Route 68, north side	1.77	None	Alternative 1
County Recreation (Parcel 031-131-002)	Laureles Grade/ State Route 68, north side	3.31	None	Alternative 2
Fort Ord National Monument (Parcel 031-011-014)	Corral de Tierra/ State Route 68, north side	0.67	0.12	Alternative 1
Fort Ord National Monument (Parcel 031-011-014)	Corral de Tierra/ State Route 68, north side	1.97	Less than 0.10	Alternative 2

Ryan Ranch Park and Disc Golf Course

Alternative 1, Roundabouts. The proposed roundabouts at the intersections of State Route 218/State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68 would have a combined permanent impact of about 4.20 acres that would be required for acquisition on the Ryan Ranch Park property and portions of the active use disc golf course, as shown in Table 2.1.3.2. The additional right-of-way would be needed for construction of the roundabout features, and realignment of State Route 68 at the eastern leg of the intersection with State Route 218 to enter the roundabout, which would bow toward the park property. The right-of-way expansion would also be necessary for construction of drainage infrastructure, retaining wall elements, and several landform grading areas for engineered slopes.

One of the landform grading areas closest to State Route 218 would be constructed instead of a tall (over 40-feet-high) retaining wall that would

otherwise be required. That proposed landform grading area would impact the disc golf basket at fairway number 13 and a small portion of the course in that area, based on the "Bottom Course Layout" shown on the park's course website (https://udisc.com/courses/ryan-ranch-tsYS/map). The roundabout design includes two other landform grading areas on the north side of State Route 68 between State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive; these three landform grading areas would impact the steeper slope areas of the park property.

The disc golf course fairways, including the baskets, are movable by design as noted previously (Professional Disc Golf Association Course Design information: https://pdga.com/course-development/). Disc golf tee pads are generally more fixed features of a course and, therefore, usually not relocated for course changes. Therefore, to minimize impacts to course facilities, the proposed roundabout at Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68 includes a retaining wall at the northwest quadrant of the intersection, which would avoid impacting the 12th tee pad on the course. No other course facilities, tee pads or other permanent fixtures of the course would be affected by the roundabout designs for the intersections at State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive. The acquisition of parkland and the need to relocate the disc basket would result in a "use" under Section 4(f). Minimization Measure PR-1 would require the relocation of the disc basket to be performed in a manner that would not disrupt active play on the course. Implementation of this measure, in combination with the avoidance design component of the retaining wall in the northwest corner of Ragsdale Drive included in the proposed roundabout at that intersection, is anticipated to not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes of the park property, under Alternative 1.

Alternative 2, Signalized Intersections. The design for Alternative 2 at State Route 218/State Route 68 would also include a landform grading area northeast of the intersection in lieu of a retaining wall along the north side of State Route 68 and east side of State Route 218. The landform grading footprint would be slightly smaller than the landform grading area for the Alternative 1 roundabout design at the same location and is not anticipated to require relocation of the disc golf basket at fairway number 13. The total permanent right-of-way acquisition at the park property for Alternative 2 for these two intersections would be just less than 2 acres in comparison to 3 acres for the Alternative 1 roundabout. In addition, the design for the roundabout would realign the State Route 68 east leg of the State Route 218/State Route 68 intersection to bow toward the northeast to slow traffic entering the roundabout, which would shift the landform grading area onto more of the park property. Alternative 2 would not require the other landform grading areas in the steeper slope areas of the park property adjacent to the north side of State Route 68 or along the west side of Ragsdale Drive that the roundabout designs would require. The tee pad for fairway number 12 would not be impacted. Therefore, the Alternative 2 signalized intersections at State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive intersections would not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes of the park.

Neither build alternative would require temporary construction easements on the park property.

The permanent uses of the Ryan Ranch Park property for both Build Alternatives would be considered de minimis, under Section 4(f).

Fort Ord National Monument

Alternative 1, Roundabouts. Information in this section has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project Build Alternatives would require linear permanent use areas through right-of-way acquisition adjacent to the north side of State Route 68 and along the western edge of Cypress Church Drive (the north leg of Corral de Tierra Road) for the proposed intersection improvements. Alternative 1 (Roundabout) would require an amount of permanent property use of about two-thirds of an acre on the property for a proposed fill embankment (ratio of 4 to 1, horizontal to vertical) to minimize impacts to the adjacent slope and sensitive resources. Just over one-tenth of an acre of temporary construction easement area is anticipated for the property based on preliminary design for the roundabout.

Alternative 2, Signalized Intersections. Alternative 2, the Signals and Lane Channelization design, would require a total of just under 2 acres of the monument property for permanent use, primarily due to the proposed lengthy westbound auxiliary through travel lane and reduction taper, and widening of the west leg (State Route 68 west of Corral de Tierra Road) to accommodate the lane configurations and standard shoulder widths. Widening of the west leg would require an approximately 720-foot-long retaining wall along the north side of State Route 68 to minimize the impacts to a riparian woodland/streambed that runs parallel to State Route 68. These design elements would necessitate some additional encroachment along the perimeter of the National Monument property compared to the roundabout design.

There are no active trails or other recreational uses in the peripheral areas of the National Monument property that would be used for permanent highway and cross-street improvements at the intersection of State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive. The permanent acquisition areas would be on the edge of the property adjacent to State Route 68 highway and Cypress Church Drive roadways, and their use would not impair the activities, features, or attributes of the recreational value of the National Monument property that is protected under Section 4(f). Alternative 2 is anticipated to require less than one-tenth of an acre of temporary construction easement on the Fort Ord National Monument property.

The permanent and temporary uses of the Fort Ord National Monument property are therefore considered de minimis, under Section 4(f).

Laguna Seca Recreation Area Parcel 173-011-025

Alternative 1, Roundabouts. Alternative 1 would require no permanent use of this county parcel and therefore would have no use under Section 4(f). No temporary construction easements are anticipated for this property for the roundabout design.

Alternative 2, Signalized Intersections. Alternative 2 is estimated to require just under 1 acre of the southern periphery of the parcel along the north side of State Route 68. The permanent use of this parcel with Alternative 2 would be along the southern edge of the property adjacent to State Route 68 for the proposed intersection improvements, including an added westbound auxiliary lane on State Route 68 that would connect to a right-turn lane onto B Road, which provides access to the Laguna Seca recreational facilities. An existing drainage ditch on the north side of State Route 68 would be reconstructed to hydraulic design standards to contain highway runoff and enable functionality of the proposed wildlife crossing culvert at post mile 11.16 west of Laureles Grade.

Portions of the existing alignments of B Road and A Road at the south end of this property adjacent to State Route 68 would potentially be impacted by the highway widening for Alternative 2 at the Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection and segments of the highway on either side. B Road and A Road are on the Laguna Seca Recreation Area and provide access from State Route 68 to the recreational area facilities; therefore, they are features of the Section 4(f) resource. Affected portions of these access roads may require realignment or reconfiguration to restore connectivity to the recreational area facilities. During road realignment/reconstruction, a temporary detour would be implemented to maintain access to the recreational area facilities. A Transportation Management Plan would be implemented for the project that would prescribe specific traffic management procedures at the project locations to enable continued access to properties during the project construction phases. Therefore, the use of this parcel would not adversely affect the qualities, attributes, or features of the Laguna Seca Recreation Area that provide protection under Section 4(f) as a public recreational resource.

County Recreational Parcel 031-131-002

Alternative 1, Roundabouts. Information in this section has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Alternative 1, the roundabout at Laureles Grade/State Route 68, would require 1.77 acres of permanent right-of-way from this county parcel for proposed drainage and retaining wall improvements. No temporary construction easements are anticipated to be required on this property.

Alternative 2, Signalized Intersections. Alternative 2 at Laureles Grade/State Route 68 would require 3.3 acres of permanent use of this county property for intersection improvements, including the addition of an auxiliary lane and shoulder widening, and construction of a drainage ditch with forward and back

slopes to contain runoff and enable the proposed wildlife crossing culvert to function. As with the roundabout alternative, no temporary construction easements are anticipated on this property.

The portions of this parcel adjacent to State Route 68 that would have permanent use for the proposed intersection improvements from both Build Alternatives are along the perimeter of the property and do not contain any recreational features, attributes or activities that would be adversely affected; therefore, it is anticipated that the project would not adversely affect the qualities, attributes, or features of the National Monument that provide protection under Section 4(f) as a public recreational resource.

Compensation will be provided to the public agencies that manage the recreational resources affected permanently or temporarily by either of the Build Alternatives. Caltrans Division of Right of Way and Land Surveys will coordinate with the County of Monterey County, management of the Laguna Seca Recreation Area, and the Bureau of Land Management to provide compensation as required under the Park Preservation Act.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, no intersection improvements would be made, and no acquisition of park or recreational facility property would be required.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following minimization measure will be implemented for Alternative 1 to minimize impacts to activities to the Ryan Ranch Park and Disc Golf Course during construction:

PR-1. Ryan Ranch Park and Disc Golf Course Activities During Construction. Relocation of a disc basket or modification of other course features during construction as a result of permanent partial right-of-way acquisition for the project would be performed in a manner that does not disrupt active play of disc golf, and the fairway course will remain open to players. Coordination efforts will continue with park officials throughout project development phases.

2.1.4 Growth

Please note: Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA Implementing Regulations that were contained in 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500 et seq. have been removed. Included in the removal was Section 1508.8 that defined indirect impacts, including growth inducement. However, consideration of growth impacts was included in the analyses for the draft environmental document, prior to the removal of the Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and therefore has been retained in the final environmental document for informational purposes only.

Regulatory Setting

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, which established the steps necessary to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, require evaluation of the potential environmental effects of all proposed federal activities and programs. This provision includes a requirement to examine indirect effects, which may occur in areas beyond the immediate influence of a proposed action and at some time in the future. Indirect impacts may include changes in land use, economic vitality, and population density, which are all elements of growth.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) also requires the analysis of a project's potential to induce growth. The CEQA guidelines (Section 15126.2[d]) require that environmental documents "...discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment...."

Affected Environment

The information in this section is based on the Community Impact Assessment prepared for the project (dated October 2023) and follows the First Cut Screening guidelines provided in the Caltrans' Guidance for Preparers of Growth-Related, Indirect Impact Analysis (May 2006).

Project Study Area Population Growth Rates

Based on information from the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments' 2022 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, in 2015, there were approximately 760,000 people within their jurisdiction, which includes the counties of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz. The population in this region is expected to reach around 870,000 people by 2045 and is forecast to grow by approximately 110,000 people between 2015 and 2045. Project area growth estimates, based on the 2022 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, are listed in Table 2.1.4.1.

Table 2.1.4.1 Project Area Growth

Region	2015 Population	2045 Population (Estimated)	Estimated Growth (Percent Increase)	Compound Annual Growth Rate
Monterey County	430,000	490,000	60,000 (13.95)	0.43 percent
City of Monterey	28,000	29,600	1,600 (5.71)	0.20 percent
City of Del Rey Oaks	1,600	2,600	1,000 (62.5)	1.88 percent
City of Salinas	158,000	177,000	19,000 (12.03)	0.35 percent

The Total Population Growth Over Planning Horizon presented in the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's 2022 Regional Transportation Plan

reflects the data presented in 2022 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments) and its population growth forecast.

Based on the Caltrans 2022 Long-Term Socio-Economic Forecast for Monterey County, the population is expected to grow slowly due to the aging population and declining birth rate. In 2022, the population of Monterey County was estimated at around 440,000 and is forecast to surpass 450,000 by 2027, at an annual average growth rate of approximately 0.5 percent per year from 2022 to 2027. Between 2022 and 2027, the number of households and job growth in Monterey County are anticipated to rise as a result of population growth.

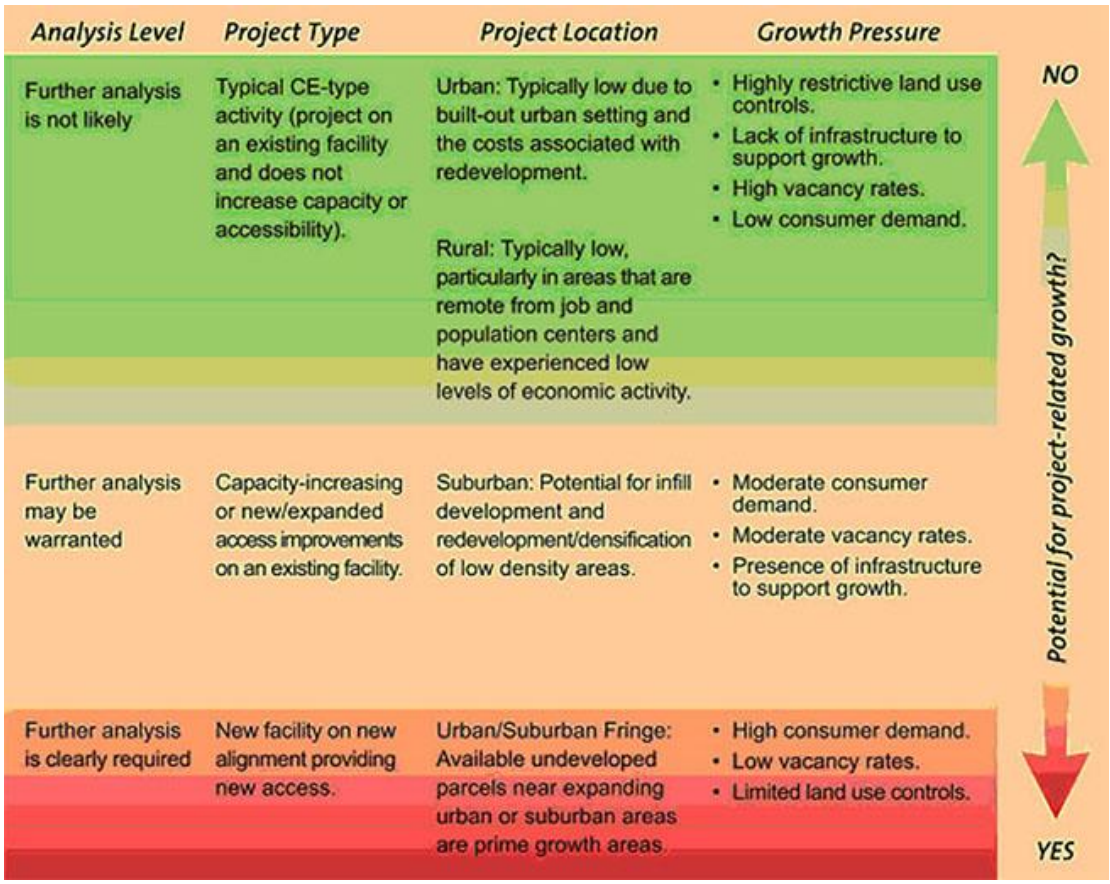
First-Cut Screening Methodology

According to Caltrans' guidance document titled Guidance for Preparers of Growth-Related, Indirect Impact Analysis (May 2006), the first step in determining whether a project could potentially influence growth and development is to perform a "first-cut screening." This process evaluates the potential for growth-related effects and whether further analysis is required by addressing the following questions:

- How, if at all, does the project potentially change accessibility?
- How, if at all, does the project type, location, and growth pressure potentially influence growth?
- Is project-related growth reasonably foreseeable as defined by NEPA (under NEPA, indirect impacts need only be evaluated if they are reasonably foreseeable as opposed to remote and speculative)?
- If there is project-related growth, if at all, will that affect resources of concern?

Figure 2.1.4.1, Analysis Considerations Related to Determining Potential for Project-Related Growth, shows the relationship between project type, location, and growth pressure and the potential for project-related growth in the study area.

Figure 2.1.4.1 Analysis Considerations of Determining Potential for Project-Related Growth



Source: California Department of Transportation, Guidance for Preparers of Growth-Related, Indirect Impact Analyses (May 2006), pages 5-8, Figure 5-2.

Environmental Consequences

The potential growth-related impacts of the project are discussed in this section. Project impacts have been considered within the context of the first-cut screening approach to assessing the potential growth-influencing effects of the project and whether any further analysis is necessary.

Build Alternatives

How, if at All, Does the Project Potentially Change Accessibility?

The project has been developed to accommodate existing traffic conditions and future traffic growth already planned in accordance with regional and local plans and policies. Both Build Alternatives of the proposed project would involve improving existing intersections on State Route 68 and would not add or remove intersections, travel routes, or access in the region. In addition, the project would not add or remove capacity on the State Route 68 corridor or on any other travel routes. The project would not open up previously inaccessible areas for future development or close currently accessible areas to prevent

planned development. Though the project would improve multimodal access at the intersections, it would not address all multimodal deficiencies along the corridor. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to alter existing accessibility in the region.

How, if at All, Does the Project Type, Project Location, and Growth Pressure Potentially Influence Growth?

The project type is primarily traffic improvements on an existing corridor. The proposed intersection improvements under the two Build Alternatives are intended to reduce traffic delays and congestion along the State Route 68 corridor while also enhancing existing conditions for the traveling public. The project is on State Route 68, which is an interregional route that connects the coastal regions and interior regions of Monterey County. The project lies between the City of Monterey to the west and the City of Salinas to the east. The project site is in a valley, and the State Route 68 corridor closely follows the valley floor. Based on the local Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Regional Transportation Plan for the project area, it is anticipated that the projected growth in the region would occur regardless of the project. In addition, it is anticipated that most of the projected growth in the region would be concentrated around city centers, with little-to-no projected growth along the State Route 68 corridor within the project limits. Based on the above discussed forecast growth around nearby city centers, the growth pressure within the study area is considered low to moderate.

Is Project-Related Growth Reasonably Foreseeable As Defined by the National Environmental Policy Act?

It is anticipated that low-to-moderate growth within the study area would occur regardless of the project. The purpose of the project is to improve intersection operations, multimodal accessibility improvements along the State Route 68 corridor, reduce existing traffic delay during peak traffic periods in the project corridor, and reduce the rate and severity of collisions between vehicles, and between vehicles and wildlife. Also, the proposed improvements would accommodate future traffic conditions that are anticipated to be the result of future growth in the region. The project would not add lanes or capacity through the corridor, and therefore is not anticipated to result in foreseeable project-related growth.

If There Is Project-Related Growth, How, if at All, Will That Affect Resources of Concern?

The project is not anticipated to result in project-related growth or contribute to the existing predicted growth in the region because the proposed improvements would not add capacity over the corridor limits. No further analysis related to growth is required for the project.

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would not make any changes to the project area. Traffic congestion would likely continue to increase over time as planned growth occurred, which would result in the decreased operational efficiency of the corridor.

Cumulative Impacts Related to Growth

The Build Alternatives would not result in growth-inducing impacts, so the project would not contribute to a cumulative effect resulting in induced growth in the region.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Since the project would not result in growth-related impacts, no measures would be required.

2.1.5 Community Character and Cohesion

Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, established that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings (42 U.S. Code 4331[b][2]). The Federal Highway Administration in its implementation of NEPA (23 U.S. Code 109[h]) directs that final decisions on projects are to be made in the best overall public interest. This requires taking into account adverse environmental impacts, such as destruction or disruption of human-made resources, community cohesion, and the availability of public facilities and services.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an economic or social change by itself is not to be considered a significant effect on the environment. However, if a social or economic change is related to a physical change, then social or economic change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant. Since this project would result in physical change to the environment, it is appropriate to consider changes to community character and cohesion in assessing the significance of the project's effects.

Affected Environment

Information for this section comes from the project's Community Impact Assessment (September 2023).

Community character encompasses many attributes, including social and economic characteristics, and assets that make a community unique and that establish a sense of place for its residents. Community cohesion is the degree to which residents have a sense of belonging to their neighborhood, a

level of commitment to the community, or a strong attachment to neighbors, groups, and institutions, usually due to continued association over time.

Dominant land uses along the project corridor are residential, open space, recreational, and commercial. Properties along the eastern 4-mile segment of the project, between State Route 1 and York Road, are within incorporated areas that are designated as urban, according to the 2020 U.S. Census. Lands along the remaining 9-mile segment of the State Route 68 project corridor are in unincorporated areas and considered rural.

The project's study area pertinent to community character and cohesion is within a suburban area of northern Monterey County covered by the postal zip codes 93908, 93940, and 93955. As shown in Figure 2.1.5.1, the study area includes all or part of the following 2020 U.S. Census tracts: 107.02, 132, 133, 134, 141.09, and 141.10. The demographic indicators discussed below tend to correlate with a higher degree of community cohesion and are used to determine the degree of community cohesion in the study area and census tracts.

Neighborhoods and Residential Communities

Identified neighborhood and communities along the project corridor include Ambler Park, Baronet Estates, Casanova Oak Knoll, Creekside, Corral de Tierra, Deer Flats, Fisherman Flats, Laguna Seca, Pasadera, Ryan Ranch, San Benancio, Sierra Village, Toro Park Estates, and Villa Del Monte.

Neighborhoods and communities within the unincorporated study area are roughly based on housing developments, or on roads that provide access. The housing developments are mostly single-family homes, with high owner occupancy. Often, the residents of these housing developments are part of a homeowner association or neighborhood association, with some being gated communities with limited public access and accessible only by private roads. There are other locally perceived communities and neighborhoods spread out in the study area, most of them located in more rural areas with limited access routes. These communities are situated in a more rural environment, with most of the area filled with detached single-family residential housing and plenty of open space and recreational areas.

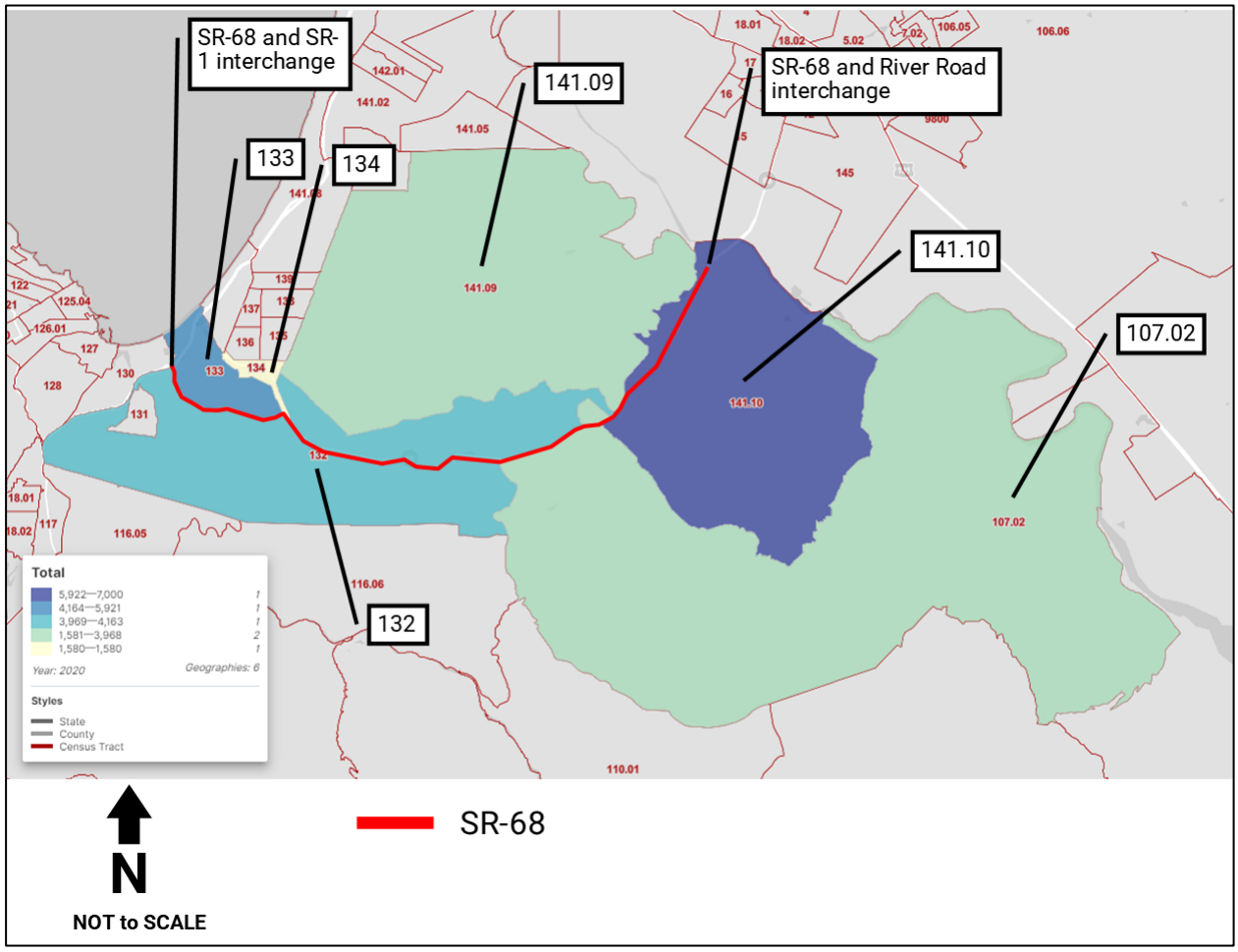
The hilly geography found within the study area creates natural breaks in community cohesion and, in some areas, creates pockets of isolated communities and neighborhoods. However, there is a shared notion of community cohesion for those who live in and around the State Route 68 corridor stemming from a sense of unique isolation.

Within the incorporated areas, there are very few businesses or shops in the surrounding area that offer basic necessities and are located along the project corridor. Two commercial shopping centers serve area residents. One is at the intersection of State Route 68 and State Route 218 on the western end; the other is at the intersection of State Route 68 and Corral de Tierra Road on

the eastern end. Most residents have to travel to one of the nearby cities of Monterey or Salinas for more extensive shopping, business, and service needs. The unincorporated communities within the study area rely on State Route 68 as the main corridor to provide access to and from their neighborhoods due to the lack of alternative routes.

The urban portions of the study area within and near the incorporated cities of Monterey and Del Rey Oaks enjoy access to a greater mix of services, shops, and restaurants. Also, the urban environment provides a variety of routes and multiple access points to local and regional sites of interest. Therefore, these urban communities and their neighborhoods are less reliant on State Route 68 for access.

Figure 2.1.5.1 U.S. Census Tract Map



Demographic Information

In general, homogeneity of the population contributes to higher levels of community cohesion. Communities that are ethnically homogeneous often speak the same language, hold similar beliefs, and share a common culture

and, therefore, are more likely to engage in social interaction on a routine basis. As presented in Table 2.1.5.1, the demographics of the study area indicate that it is predominantly a white and affluent population with low poverty rates. Table 2.1.5.2 provides demographic data for Monterey County, and the cities of Del Rey Oaks, Monterey, and Salinas.

The Hispanic population is the second largest in the study area but is relatively low when compared to the overall Hispanic population of the county. There is a relatively low presence of non-white, ethnic, or mixed-race populations within the study area when compared with that of the county. The expectation is that community cohesion within the project study area is moderate to strong.

The data in the demographic categories presented in both Tables 2.1.5.1 and 2.1.5.2 represent individual portions of the populations in each table, and also provide information in addition to race and ethnicity. Therefore, the data in each column of the tables are not intended to combine to a total of 100 percent. Also, the demographic of Hispanic or Latino is categorized by the U.S. Census Bureau as an ethnicity rather than a race.

Table 2.1.5.1 Project Study Area Census Tract Demographics

Demographic	Census Tract 107.02	Census Tract 132	Census Tract 133	Census Tract 134	Census Tract 141.09	Census Tract 141.10
Total Population	3,338	4,062	6,375	1,616	3,609	6,605
White (percent)	86.1	82.7	59.8	79.6	50.1	78.5
African American (percent)	0	0.9	3.2	1.4	5.7	0.2
American Indian and Alaskan Native (percent)	0	1.5	2,4	2.5	0.3	0
Asian (percent)	6.3	7.2	6.6	7.3	7.4	10.1
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (percent)	0	0	0	0.2	5.7	0
Two or More Races (percent)	5.1	6.0	7.2	7.0	18.8	8.2
Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity (percent)	9.1	9.6	29.0	11.7	35.4	16.1

Table 2.1.5.2 City and County Census Demographics

Demographic	County of Monterey	City of Del Rey Oaks	City of Monterey	City of Salinas
Total Population	438,953	1,616	30,014	163,004
White (percent)	43.3	79.6	71.9	27.7
African American (percent)	2.5	1.4	3.7	1.4
American Indian and Alaskan Native (percent)	0.7	2.5	0.9	0.9
Asian (percent)	5.8	7.3	7.3	5.8
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (percent)	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.0
Two or More Races (percent)	8.8	7.0	7.9	8.5
Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity (percent)	59.7	11.7	19.0	79.8
Median Household Income ($)	$66,676	$90,795	$77,562	$58,598

Housing

Communities with a high percentage of owner-occupied residences are typically more cohesive because their populations tend to be less mobile. Because they have a financial stake in their community, homeowners often take a greater interest in what is happening in their community than renters do. This means they often have a stronger sense of belonging to their community.

The median housing price and owner-occupied homes found within the study area are greater than the median prices found in the county overall and the surrounding cities. There are fewer households with renters in the study area than in the County of Monterey and surrounding cities.

Within the study area, most housing units are owner-occupied, typically single-family detached homes on dedicated property lots. Most of the housing units are part of a larger housing development, or rural density subdivisions, and a few of these housing units are renter-occupied. The average median price of owner-occupied housing units within the study area is approximately $858,700. Most of the rental properties within the study area are within the urban environments found in the City of Monterey and the City of Del Rey Oaks. Most rental properties are found around the Monterey Regional Airport and along the northern sides of Fort Ord National Monument. Physical space is available

within the study area for additional housing developments; however, there are existing local policies and regulations that seek to preserve as much open space as possible for conservation and recreational use.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 5-year American Communities Survey, the following characteristics are predominant along the State Route 68 corridor project area:

- An average of 69 percent of dwellings are single-family residences.
- An average of 70 percent of dwellings are owner-occupied.
- An average of 50 percent of residents have lived in their owner-occupied residences for 20 years or more.
- An average of 50 percent of households include one or more persons over the age of 60.

The characteristics listed above for the State Route 68 corridor project area further support the expectation that cohesion within most of the individual communities along State Route 68 is moderate to strong.

Community Facilities and Services

Accessibility of community facilities and services enhances the quality of life in the community and contributes to the sense of community cohesion. Community facilities and services identified within the project study area are listed below.

Churches

- Monterey Assembly of God, 317 Virgin Avenue, Monterey, CA 93940
- Saint John's Chapel, 1490 Mark Thomas Drive, Monterey, CA 93940
- Church of Oaks Congregational, 841 Rosita Road, Del Rey Oaks, CA 93940
- Living Hope Church of the Nazarene, 1375 Josselyn Canyon Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- Believers Church International, 2400 Garden Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- Shoreline Church, 2500 Garden Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- Calvary Monterey, 3001 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Monterey, CA 93940
- Stone Harbor Church, 203 Calle Del Oaks, Del Rey Oaks, CA 93940
- York Chapel, 9501 York Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- Cypress Community Church, 681 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Salinas, CA 93908

Schools

- Monterey Peninsula College, 980 Fremont Street, Monterey, CA 93940
- Naval Postgraduate School, 1 University Circle, Monterey, CA 93940
- Santa Catalina School, 1500 Mark Thomas Drive, Monterey, CA 93940
- La Mesa Elementary School, 1 La Mesa Way, Monterey, CA 93940
- Bay View Academy – Lower Campus, 222 Casa Verde Way, Monterey, CA 93940
- Monterey Bay Charter School K-2 – Foothill Campus, 1700 Via Casoli, Monterey, CA 93940
- Del Rey Woods Elementary School, 1281 Plumas Avenue, Seaside, CA 93955
- Peninsula Adventist School, 1025 Mescal Street, Seaside, CA 93955
- York School, 9501 York Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- San Benancio Middle School, 43 San Benancio Road, Salinas, CA 93908
- Toro Park School, 22500 Portola Drive, Salinas, CA 93908
- Shoreline Preschool, 22732 Portola Drive, Salinas, CA 93908

Community Facilities

- La Mesa Village Community Center, 1200 Fechteler Drive, Monterey, CA 93940
- Festa do Divino Espirito Santo Portuguese Hall of Monterey, 950 Casanova Avenue, Monterey, CA 93940
- Monterey County Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairground Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- Monterey Regional Airport, 200 Fred Kane Drive, Monterey, CA 93940

Medical Facilities

- Stanford Medicine Children's Health Pediatrics – Monterey, 1900 Garden Road, Suite 110, Monterey, CA 93940
- Montage Medical Group – Cardiology, 30 Garden Court, Suite B, Monterey, CA 93940
- Montage Medical Group – Ryan Ranch, 2 Upper Ragsdale Drive, Building A, Monterey, CA 93940
- Monterey Bay Eye Center, 21 Upper Ragsdale Drive, Suite 200, Monterey, CA 93940
- AriaMed Quick Clinic, 10 Harris Court, Suite A2, Monterey, CA 93940

- Athena Occupational Medicine, 10 Harris Court, Suite A, Monterey, CA, 93940
- Apria Healthcare, 1 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Monterey, CA 93940
- Salinas Valley Health Clinic Primecare – Monterey, 5 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Suite 100, Monterey, CA 93940

Government Facilities

- U.S. Postal Service, 151 North Street, Monterey, CA 93940
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, San Benito-Monterey Unit, 2221 Garden Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- California State Parks Monterey District Headquarters, 2211 Garden Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- Federal Aviation Administration – Monterey, 2475 Henderson Way, Monterey, CA 93940
- Del Rey Oaks City Hall, 650 Canyon Del Rey Boulevard, Del Rey Oaks, CA 93940
- Monterey-Salinas Transit Administration Office, 19 Upper Ragsdale Drive, Suite 200, Monterey, CA 93940
- City of Monterey – Street and Utilities, 27 Ryan Ranch Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- City of Monterey – Trees and Urban Forestry, 23 Ryan Ranch Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), 24580 Silver Cloud Court, Monterey CA, 93940
- Monterey Bay Air Resource District, 24580 Silver Cloud Court, Monterey, CA 93940

Fire Department

- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, San Benito-Monterey Unit, 2221 Garden Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- Monterey Fire Department, City of Monterey, 401 Dela Vina Avenue, Monterey, CA 93940
- Monterey County Regional Fire District, Toro Station, 19900 Portola Drive, Salinas, CA 93908
- Laureles Station, 31 Laureles Grade, Salinas, CA 93908

Law Enforcement

- Monterey County Sheriff's Department – City of Monterey, 1200 Aguajito Road, Monterey, CA 93940

- Del Rey Oaks Police Department, 650 Canyon Del Rey Boulevard, Del Rey Oaks, CA 93940
- Monterey Regional Airport Police, 300 Fred Kane Drive #200, Monterey, CA 93940

Paramedic

- American Medical Response, 2511 Garden Road, Suite 104, Monterey, CA 93940

Utilities

- Central Coast Community Energy, 70 Garden Court #300, Monterey, CA 93940
- Monterey City Disposal Service, 10 Ryan Ranch Road, Monterey, CA 93940
- Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, 5 Harris Court, Building G, Monterey, CA 93940
- Monterey One Water, 5 Harris Court, Monterey, CA 93940
- California American Water, 25219 Casiano Drive, Salinas, CA 93908
- California American Water, 92 Paseo De Vaqueros, Salinas, CA 93908

For the region, electrical and gas services are provided by Pacific Gas and Electric Company. Wired and wireless communication and television services are provided by a variety of local and national providers.

The large number of community facilities and services that are available within the project study area indicates moderate to strong community character and cohesion.

Access, Public Transit, and Public Parking

State Route 68 serves as the main access for the study area and as the only access for multiple homes and businesses. Communities in the study area depend on the project corridor as their main route to and from the area. It serves as one of only two ways to enter and exit the Monterey Peninsula, with the other being State Route 1 that follows the coast. Bicycle and pedestrian access is not prohibited on the highway, but there is little infrastructure to support bicycle and pedestrian use. Most bicycle and pedestrian access is limited to the highway shoulders. There are no sidewalks along the route within the project limits. There are at-grade pedestrian crossings at several intersections along the highway.

Circulation patterns on State Route 68 consist of interregional and local traffic. Based on traffic studies conducted for the project, interregional traffic accounted for approximately 40 percent and local traffic accounted for

approximately 60 percent of total trips on the highway. Interregional traffic uses the project corridor as an access route between the interior and coastal regions of California. Interregional traffic is a mix of regional commuters, commercial transport and visiting tourists. The westbound interregional traffic originates from U.S. Route 101 and/or the City of Salinas; the eastbound interregional traffic originates from State Route 1 and/or the City of Monterey.

The project corridor provides the main thoroughfare for travelers between the coastal cities and the interior cities in Monterey County. On a daily basis, State Route 68 is well used by travelers due to its relatively direct access between the City of Monterey and the City of Salinas. Local traffic uses and depends on State Route 68 to access homes, shops, and work. Communities and businesses along the corridor are relatively isolated, so many of the residents and commuters depend on the project corridor to provide the most direct access into and out of the region. This limits larger community cohesion, but the sense of isolation contributes to greater cohesion within the individual neighborhoods.

Commuter Patterns

An analysis of commuter patterns within the study area was conducted in the project's Community Impact Assessment using the 2020 U.S. Census OnTheMap web tool. The U.S. Census OnTheMap is a web-based mapping and reporting application that shows where workers are employed and where they live. The tool is able to generate summary reports for selected locations.

The summary report for the project area indicates that there is a higher number of people who enter the study area for work when compared to the number of people who leave the study area for work. There is a relatively small number of people who live and work entirely within the study area. An estimated 14,400 people are employed within the study area, and approximately 92.5 percent live outside of the study area. An estimated 7,707 people live in the study area, and approximately 86 percent are employed outside of the study area. An estimated 1,082 people are living and employed within the study area and make up the remaining 7.5 percent.

The summary report indicates that most of the people who work in the study area originate from either the Salinas area or the Monterey area. Approximately 16 percent of the estimated 14,400 people who work in the study area live in or around Salinas. Approximately 16 percent of the estimated 14,400 people who work in the study area live in or around Monterey.

The summary report also indicates that most of the people who leave the study area for work end up in either the Monterey area or the Salinas area. An estimated 7,746 people who live in the study area work outside of the study area. Approximately 16.8 percent of the people living in the study area work around Salinas. Approximately 20.6 percent of the people living in the study area work around Monterey.

Because the project is a corridor project, the Community Impact Assessment investigated the commuter patterns between the City of Salinas and the City of Monterey, as these two cities are the largest urban centers located at either end of the corridor. Based on the analysis conducted for the City of Salinas, an estimated 58,629 people in the city are employed. Approximately 41.1 percent are employed in the city, and 4.1 percent are employed in Monterey city. Therefore, the data suggest that those who live in Salinas primarily work in Salinas. Based on the analysis conducted for the City of Monterey, an estimated 9,908 people in the city are employed. Approximately 26.9 percent are employed in the city, and 9.5 percent are employed in Salinas city. Data suggest that most of the people who live in Monterey work elsewhere.

Based on the Monterey-Salinas Transit Map, there are no public transit routes that use the entire State Route 68 corridor. The only bus route that runs along the project corridor is a connection line between the Monterey Transit Plaza and the Ryan Ranch Business Park, which includes a stop at the Monterey Regional Airport. This bus route is regularly serviced every hour on weekdays and weekends.

There are no parking facilities along the highway; all existing parking facilities along the project corridor lie off the highway. There is a Park and Ride lot at the east side of Laureles Grade, south of State Route 68 and operated by Monterey County. The existing Park and Ride lot has a capacity for 20 vehicles.

Economic Conditions

The most prominent economic industries within the study area are professional, management, education, and health. The presence of these industries is relatively high when compared with those in the county. The economic industries with the least presence within the study area are agriculture and wholesale when compared with those found in the county. The remaining economic industries within the study area are relatively comparable with those of the county.

The economic industry of the study area is predominantly associated with professional positions that would typically require a high degree of education and expertise. Another economic industry that is abundant in the study area is the recreational industry, as there are several recreational venues within the State Route 68 corridor. The economy of the study area lacks industries that require large-scale production or storage, such as agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and wholesale. This is partially due to the topography of the corridor but also to the presence of conservation and recreational open spaces along the corridor.

The income levels and earnings within the study area are relatively higher when compared to values for the county. In addition, the population that is below the poverty level within the study area is also relatively low, less than 10 percent in

all but one census tract. Within the study area, a high number of the labor force is employed, and most of those who are employed are also commuting.

Within the study area, there is a high number of employed workers who are also high income earners. When comparing incomes, levels within the study area are considerably higher than those in the county. The high employment level and high income are likely associated with the presence of strong economic industries within the study area that are able to support numerous staff with higher pay.

Based on information from the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration, the sales and use tax in Monterey County is 7.75 percent, while the sales and use tax for cities in Monterey County ranges from 8.75 percent to 9.25 percent. Sales and use tax for Monterey County is approximately average for the state, but cities in Monterey County have some of the highest tax rates in the state.

Information on real estate taxes is based on data available from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2021 American Communities Survey 5-Year Estimates Detail Tables.

Median real estate taxes paid:

- Census tract 107.02 - $8,256
- Census tract 132 - $9,180
- Census tract 133 - $4,311
- Census tract 134 - $4,568
- Census tract 141.09 - greater than $10,000 (Fort Ord)
- Census tract 141.10 - $6,676

Based on the Monterey County Auditor-Controller Office's Property Tax Highlights for fiscal year 2022-2023, revenues from property taxes have grown by 8.3 percent since the 2021-2022 fiscal year, with a total assessed value of approximately $84 billion in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

The Build Alternatives are not anticipated to drastically affect the character of the surrounding neighborhoods or communities. The Build Alternatives would not change or influence existing social connections or community cohesions because the project would not divide or connect existing neighborhoods or communities as a result of intersection improvements. Some improvements at the intersections have the potential to increase the presence of urban features in the predominantly rural environment found along the State Route 68 corridor. However, the Build Alternatives would incorporate visual and

landscaping designs that would reduce the noticeability of newly built urban features and best fit the existing character of the corridor. Therefore, the Build Alternatives are not anticipated to affect the character and cohesion of the neighborhoods and residential communities within the project study area.

Ethnicity

The proposed improvements to the intersections on State Route 68 associated with both Build Alternatives would not alter the ethnicity of the neighborhoods and communities within the project study area. The Build Alternatives would involve improvements to the corridor that are anticipated to benefit all residents and travelers on the State Route 68 corridor.

Housing

The proposed improvements to the intersections on State Route 68 associated with both Build Alternatives would not add capacity to the travel lanes that could otherwise contribute to facilitation of economic development and population growth in the study area that would in turn influence housing development. Any change in housing trends, housing prices, or housing developments in the region would more likely be influenced by local policies and shifting trends in the larger economic environment. Therefore, implementation of the Build Alternatives is not anticipated to alter housing trends in the region.

Community Facilities and Services

Based on preliminary project design information, it is anticipated that the project would have adverse effects on one of the community facilities identified within the study area. Though the project would require additional right-of-way or easements from parcels adjacent to State Route 68, no other community facilities are anticipated to be adversely affected by the project. More detailed information about real property acquisition is provided in Section 2.1.6.

At the intersection of State Route 68 and Josselyn Canyon Road, the southwestern corner is occupied by the Living Hope Church of the Nazarene, at 1375 Josselyn Canyon Road. The church property is approximately 2 acres, with hills along the western and southern edges: Josselyn Canyon Road rising to the hills on the eastern edge, and State Route 68 along its northern edge. It is anticipated implementation of the Build Alternatives at the intersection of State Route 68 and Josselyn Canyon Road would result in temporary and permanent impacts on the church property.

Temporary impacts would result from construction activities. Noise and dust generated by construction work would have the potential to disrupt church operations, events, and/or activities. In addition, temporary traffic control implemented during construction could delay access to the church property. However, the Build Alternatives would include measures to minimize

disturbances associated with construction work. Noise-related impacts are discussed in Section 2.2.7, Noise.

As detailed in Section 2.1.10, Visual/Aesthetics, prescriptive clearing and grubbing techniques would be used to preserve as much existing vegetation and trees as possible during construction, and all areas disturbed by project construction would be revegetated with native plant species. Section 2.2.5, Hazardous Waste and Materials, discusses how soils with aerially deposited lead would be handled and disposed of in accordance with the 2016 Aerially Deposited Lead Agreement between Caltrans and the Department of Toxic Substances Control. Also, the Construction Contractor would be required to develop and implement a Lead Compliance Plan during construction to ensure the health and safety of workers and the environment. Standard Special Provisions for removal of nonhazardous pavement markings would be determined during the project design phase to ensure proper removal, handling, and disposal of any generated traffic striping waste at a permitted disposal facility.

The construction contract for the project would include a Standard Special Provision requiring the proper management and disposal of treated wood waste. California Department of Toxic Substances Control guidance for the Management of Treated Wood Waste would be included as part of the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates package to ensure compliance with current Department of Toxic Substances Control regulations. Standard construction dust and emissions minimization practices and procedures would be implemented during project construction, as noted in Section 2.2.6, Air Quality. Also, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would help protect air quality by requiring water pollution control measures that cross-correlate with dust emission minimization, such as covering soil stockpiles, watering haul roads, and watering excavation and grading areas.

A public outreach plan and Transportation Management plan will be developed during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to minimize construction traffic impacts (see Section 2.1.9, Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities).

Permanent impacts would result from property acquisition. Construction of either of the two Build Alternatives would require partial acquisition of the church property. Partial acquisition would occur on the edges of the parcel, adjacent to State Route 68 and Josselyn Canyon Road. The partial property acquisition would be required to accommodate the new intersection design, which includes alignment adjustments, wider shoulders, and bike and pedestrian facilities. Additional discussion on the property acquisition on the church property is presented in Section 2.1.6, Relocation and Real Property Acquisitions. Any property acquisition required for the project would be processed in accordance the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real

Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, which is detailed in Appendix C, Summary of Relocation Benefits.

Build Alternative 1 would require 0.41 acre of new permanent right-of-way from the church property. Build Alternative 2 is expected to require 0.82 acre of new permanent right-of-way.

For both Build Alternatives, the partial property acquisition is anticipated to reduce the number of existing parking spaces on the property. Currently, the church can accommodate approximately 86 parking spaces. Alternative 1 has the potential to remove 27 to 31 parking spaces on the northeastern corner of the property. Alternative 2 has the potential to remove 39 to 50 parking spaces on the northeastern corner and on the northern side of the property. For both Build Alternatives, none of the existing buildings or structures on the property are anticipated to be directly impacted as a result of the partial property acquisition based on preliminary project designs. There are no other properties or spaces available within walking distance from the church that could be used by the church to offset the loss of parking spaces on the property.

Both Build Alternatives have the potential to adversely affect church activities and operations, particularly during peak activity periods as a result of the reduction in parking area, with Alternative 2 having a more substantial effect (estimated 56 percent with Alternative 2, and 36 percent loss of existing parking area with Alternative 1). The reduction in parking area would reduce vehicle capacity on the property, which in turn may hinder and discourage church visitation. There are no proposed plans to relocate the church, but it would be at the church property owner or operator's discretion to request the project sponsors to relocate the church to a more suitable location.

Access, Public Transit, and Public Parking

Both Build Alternatives would improve intersections along State Route 68 and result in beneficial impacts to access along the project corridor. The Build Alternatives would not alter existing public transit operations. There is the potential for the existing public transit operations within the corridor to improve after intersection improvements are completed as a result of reduced traffic congestion. However, this project is not anticipated to have considerable effects on existing public transit plans or operations along the corridor.

The Build Alternatives would install two electric vehicle charging stations in the existing Park and Ride lot on Laureles Grade. The stations would be solar-powered Level 2 chargers and provide charging capability for two electric vehicles simultaneously. Up to three of the existing parking spaces in the southern portions of the Park and Ride lot would be converted for the charging stations. The existing space at the Park and Ride lot would also be restriped to accommodate 15 parking spaces, with two spaces available for electric vehicle charging. Construction of the charging stations and modifications to the Park and Ride lot would be conducted by Caltrans, and

an encroachment permit would be obtained from Monterey County. No additional right-of-way would be required for this work. Construction of the new charging stations would require temporary closures of the Park and Ride lot. It is anticipated that these new electric vehicle charging stations would encourage the use of electric vehicles by the community, commuters, and visitors. Though considered adverse, construction impacts would be limited in scope and temporary. After construction, both Build Alternatives are not anticipated to have adverse effects on existing public transit plans or operations along the corridor.

Commuter Patterns

As previously noted, commuter traffic on State Route 68 between the cities of Salinas and Monterey is composed of about 4 percent originating from Salinas and almost 10 percent originating from Monterey. The amount of commuter traffic is likely higher if additional employment destinations served by State Route 68 were accounted for, such as Carmel, Seaside, and Pacific Grove. Implementation of the Build Alternatives is not anticipated to alter existing commuter patterns in the corridor or in the region. The destinations for commuters are not anticipated to change as a result of the project. The proposed intersection improvements have the potential to reduce traffic delay along the State Route 68 corridor but are not anticipated to alter current or future commuter patterns because the project would have little or no influence on existing destinations for commuters or influence where people live or work in the region. Though there is the potential that project construction could temporarily influence commuter route decisions, it is anticipated that after the project is completed, commuter patterns are not likely to change if conditions surrounding the corridor remain relatively the same. Therefore, the Build Alternatives are not anticipated to alter long-term commuter patterns in the region.

Economic Conditions

Both Build Alternatives would improve intersection operations and would not alter existing corridor capacity or alter access to and from the corridor. The project is not anticipated to influence existing or future economic conditions in the region. The proposed improvements would not alter existing trends in the region's economic, employment, business, or fiscal conditions. Therefore, the Build Alternatives would not affect the economic conditions of the region.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made and retaining walls and other structures associated with the Build Alternatives would not be constructed. No changes to the visual nature of the intersections would occur. Intersection queues would not be reduced, and delays to residents and community members would persist and worsen over time. The ability of residents to move between communities and to access commercial services along the State Route 68 corridor would be further impeded in the future.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Because the Build Alternatives would not have adverse long-term effects on community character and cohesion, no avoidance or minimization measures are proposed.

2.1.6 Relocations and Real Property Acquisition

Regulatory Setting

The Caltrans Relocation Assistance Program is based on the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (Uniform Act), and Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations Part 24. The purpose of the Relocation Assistance Program is to ensure that persons displaced as a result of a transportation project are treated fairly, consistently, and equitably so that such persons will not suffer disproportionate injuries as a result of projects designed for the benefit of the public as a whole. See Appendix C for a summary of the Relocation Assistance Program.

All relocation services and benefits are administered without regard to race, color, national origin, persons with disabilities, religion, age, or sex. See Appendix B for a copy of the Caltrans Title VI Policy Statement.

Affected Environment

The information in this section is based on the Community Impact Assessment report (September 2023) and estimated property right-of-way requirements for the preliminary designs of the Build Alternatives. The Build Alternatives would require additional right-of-way (property acquisition) from multiple properties adjacent to State Route 68 around the nine project intersections, based on preliminary designs. The number of properties and their land use types anticipated to be affected by one or the other of the two Build Alternatives at the project intersections are listed in Table 2.1.6.1.

Most properties potentially affected are residential or of miscellaneous land use designation. Properties identified as the miscellaneous land use type are according to Assessor’s Parcel Map data for specific properties and may be either vacant or a use that is undefined, or not within the use categories used in the Assessor’s tax rolls. The project area does not have neighborhoods, public facilities or demographic elements that would require special relocation considerations.

Table 2.1.6.1 Properties Potentially Affected by Build Alternatives

Intersection at State Route 68 and Property Land Use Type	Alternatives 1 and/or 2: Number of Properties with Partial Acquisition
Josselyn Canyon Road: Residential	15
Josselyn Canyon Road: Commercial	5
Josselyn Canyon Road: Industrial	1
Josselyn Canyon Road: Miscellaneous	4
Josselyn Canyon Road: Total Number of Properties	25
Olmsted Road: Residential	5
Olmsted Road: Commercial	1
Olmsted Road: Industrial	3
Olmsted Road: Miscellaneous	5
Olmsted Road: Total Number of Properties	14
State Route 218: Residential	0
State Route 218: Commercial	0
State Route 218: Industrial	0
State Route 218: Miscellaneous	5
State Route 218: Total Number of Properties	5
Ragsdale Drive: Residential	0
Ragsdale Drive: Commercial	0
Ragsdale Drive: Industrial	0
Ragsdale Drive:	5
Ragsdale Drive: Total Number of Properties	5
York Road: Residential	1
York Road: Commercial	0
York Road: Industrial	0
York Road: Miscellaneous	5
York Road: Total Number of Properties	6
Pasadera Drive-Boots Road: Residential	8
Pasadera Drive-Boots Road: Commercial	0
Pasadera Drive-Boots Road: Industrial	0
Pasadera Drive-Boots Road: Miscellaneous or Vacant	2
Pasadera Drive-Boots Road: Total Number of Properties	10
Laureles Grade: Residential	7
Laureles Grade: Commercial	1
Laureles Grade: Industrial	0
Laureles Grade: Miscellaneous	4
Laureles Grade: Total Number of Properties	12
Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive: Residential	10
Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive: Commercial	3
Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive: Industrial	0
Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive: Miscellaneous	1
Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive: Total Number of Properties	14
San Benancio Road: Residential	3
San Benancio Road: Commercial	0
San Benancio Road: Industrial	0
San Benancio Road: Miscellaneous	4
San Benancio Road: Total Number of Properties	7

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

Partial acquisitions of some of the adjacent properties around each of the nine project intersections would be required for permanent use by both Build Alternatives to construct the intersection improvement components as proposed and described in Chapter 1. The circular configuration of roundabouts typically occupies more space than a signalized intersection, requiring a larger amount right-of-way from corner properties at the intersection. This right-of-way requirement at the intersection is offset by the much-reduced need for additional right-of-way along the roadway links between intersections. This holds true for the project where Alternative 1 (roundabouts) would require additional right-of-way immediately at the intersection, and Alternative 2 (intersection modifications) would require some additional right-of-way from properties at the intersections but would also require right-of-way from properties along the highway segments farther from intersection nodes to accommodate expansions of turn lanes and auxiliary lanes.

In addition to right-of-way requirements from some adjacent properties for the design features of either roundabouts or lane expansions and shared pathways, landform grading areas are included in the preliminary designs of both Build Alternatives at selected locations as an alternative to constructing only retaining walls for slope stabilization. The landform grading areas would be landscaped after construction and would require long-term maintenance by Caltrans, which necessitates a slope easement for those areas on the affected parcels, which is considered a permanent right-of-way element.

Where feasible, adjustments to the preliminary designs were made around the project intersections to further reduce property impacts on surrounding properties. As a result, most of the partial acquisitions for both Build Alternatives are not anticipated to affect continued use of the subject properties impacted and there are no structures located within the partial acquisition areas. However, the project would have potentially major impacts to the uses and functions at one property near the intersection of Josselyn Canyon Road/State Route 68; this property is the site of the Living Hope of the Nazarene Church. Further discussion of this property impact is addressed below for that intersection location.

Property acquisition would be identified and processed with affected property owners as part of the Right of Way phase of the project, which follows the selection of the preferred alternative, and the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase finalizes the design details for the selected Build Alternative. Any right-of-way required from adjacent properties outside of the existing state highway right-of-way would be in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Caltrans Right of Way agents will coordinate with affected property owners to address concerns, property loss, and compensation as result of the

project. Compensation will be provided for any property acquisitions, including relocation assistance as required by law.

The following discussion describes, for each of the two Build Alternatives, the numbers and types of properties that would be affected with acquisition of land slivers along State Route 68 and/or the intersecting local cross-street. Permanent slope easements would also be required at certain locations to support landform grading in place of, or in addition to, retaining wall structures. A full list of each property that would be affected by partial right-of-way acquisitions, slope easements, and/or temporary construction easements for both Build Alternatives is included in Appendix J. The quantities of property acquisition provided herein are approximate based on preliminary design plans and will be further refined during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project.

Josselyn Canyon Road/State Route 68

Alternative 1: Table 2.1.6.2 shows the anticipated permanent partial property acquisitions associated with Alternative 1, Roundabouts, at the Josselyn Canyon Road/State Route 68 intersection. The preliminary design of the Alternative 1 roundabout at this intersection is anticipated to need partial permanent acquisitions from six parcels, for a combined total of about 1.20 acres. The properties include four residential, one commercial, one industrial and one miscellaneous use (church) property. One residential parcel would have a requirement for acquisition for less than two-tenths of an acre for a permanent slope easement. None of the parcels adjacent to the Josselyn Canyon Road intersection are anticipated to be needed for temporary construction easements, according to the preliminary design.

Most of the partial acquisitions are not anticipated to affect continued use, functional access, or existing conditions of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. However, both Build Alternatives would impact the Living Hope Church of the Nazarene property (APN 013-271-002) at 1375 Josselyn Canyon Road on the southwest corner of the intersection at Josselyn Canyon Road. Josselyn Canyon Road is proposed to be realigned to the west under both Build Alternatives to correct the angle at which the road intersects State Route 68. The realignment of the road, adjustments to eastbound State Route 68, and reconstruction of an existing drainage ditch along the south side of State Route 68 would necessitate acquisition of portions of the church property, and specifically impact the existing parking areas requiring removal of parking spaces. The existing church parking areas have capacity for about 86 parking spaces. Alternative 1 (roundabout) would remove about three-tenths (0.31) of an acre from the 2.12-acre church property. The acquisition area would potentially affect up to about 31 parking spaces, out of existing capacity for about 86 existing spaces, or 36 percent of the existing parking areas. The potential acquisition area would not affect any of the existing buildings or structures on the property. The data in Table

2.1.6.2 have been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Table 2.1.6.2 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Josselyn Canyon Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Parcel Size (Acres)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	013-271-002	Miscellaneous	2.12	0.31	14.6	Living Hope Church
2	013-312-004	Industrial	7.23	0.42	5.8	Office
3	013-312-006	Commercial	6.92	0.28	4.0	Office
4	101-231-013	Residential	1.05	0.11	10.4	No Notes
5	101-231-016	Residential	12	0.06	0.6	No Notes
6	101-241-051	Residential	9.4	0.02	0.21	0.18 acre of the total for landform grading/slope easement
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	1.20	Not applicable	No Notes

Alternative 2: Table 2.1.6.3 provides the anticipated permanent partial property acquisitions associated with Alternative 2 at the Josselyn Canyon Road/State Route 68 intersection. Alternative 2 is anticipated to require partial acquisitions from 25 separate parcels adjacent to State Route 68 and Josselyn Canyon Road, totaling about 4 acres of permanent acquisition area. Fifteen of these parcels are residential, five are commercial, four are miscellaneous category use properties (including the Living Hope Church of the Nazarene), and one is industrial use property. Most of the properties affected by partial acquisitions are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas.

Alternative 2 is anticipated to remove about 0.82 acre of the Living Hope Church of the Nazarene property, affecting the existing parking areas similarly to Alternative 1. The right-of-way acquisition amount would be larger with Alternative 2 than Alternative 1, mainly because of the widening required for the travel lane configuration proposed on eastbound State Route 68. Based on preliminary plans for the proposed project and estimated parking areas on the church property, this alternative would affect up to about 50 of the existing parking spaces (out of 86 spaces), or about 58 percent of the currently available parking area.

Table 2.1.6.3 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Josselyn Canyon Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Parcel Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	013-271-002	Miscellaneous	2.12	0.82	38.6	Church
2	013-312-004	Industrial	7.23	0.37	5.1	Office
3	013-312-006	Commercial	6.92	0.36	5.2	Office
4	013-312-007	Commercial	0.6	0.05	8.3	Office
5	013-312-008	Miscellaneous	1.79	0.16	8.9	Recreational
6	013-312-009	Commercial	1.5	0.13	8.6	Office
7	013-312-010	Commercial	1.66	0.11	6.6	Office
8	013-312-015	Commercial	5.74	0.28	4.8	Offices
9	013-351-004	Miscellaneous	1.6	0.28	17.5	Undeveloped
10	101-201-004	Residential	1.34	0.02	1.4	No Notes
11	101-201-017	Residential	1.0	0.04	4	No Notes
12	101-201-030	Residential	1.27	0.05	3.9	No Notes
13	101-201-032	Residential	1.24	0.04	3.2	No Notes
14	101-211-009	Residential	1.13	0.03	2.6	No Notes
15	101-211-017	Residential	1.11	0.02	1.8	No Notes
16	101-211-018	Residential	1.07	0.01	0.9	No Notes
17	101-211-033	Residential	0.8	0.02	2.5	No Notes
18	101-211-034	Residential	1.02	0.05	4.9	No Notes
19	101-221-001	Residential	1.21	0.11	9.0	No Notes
20	101-221-011	Miscellaneous	0.4	0.004	1.0	Undeveloped
21	101-221-014	Residential	1.79	0.05	2.7	No Notes
22	101-231-001	Residential	4.32	0.48	11.1	No Notes
23	101-231-013	Residential	1.05	0.16	15.2	No Notes
24	101-231-016	Residential	12	0.19	1.5	No Notes
25	101-241-051	Residential	9.4	0.14	1.5	0.06 acre of the total for landform grading/slope easement
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	3.97	Not applicable	No Notes

The Living Hope Church of the Nazarene shares the property with several other religious organizations, and services are held on Saturdays, Sundays and some holidays, with Sundays having the most activity. Educational activities are also held on weekdays. The property is overlain by a 100-foot setback and concurrent easement, which was established when State Route 68 was designated as a Scenic Highway, according to communications between the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and church representatives. Therefore, the parking area within the setback/easement is considered existing and non-conforming.

Both of the Build Alternatives have the potential to adversely affect church activities and operations, particularly during peak activity periods as a result of partial acquisition of the estimated reduction in parking area, with Alternative 2 having a more substantial effect (estimated 56 percent with Alternative 2, and 36 percent loss of existing parking area with Alternative 1). The reduction in parking area would reduce vehicle capacity on the property, which in turn may hinder and discourage church visitation. There are no proposed plans to relocate the church; however, it would be at the church property owner or operator's discretion to request the project sponsors to relocate the church to a more suitable location.

In summary, the Build Alternatives would require partial acquisition of the church property, with Alternative 1 requiring an estimated three-tenths of an acre, and Alternative 2 acquiring eight-tenths of an acre, both considerably reducing the amount of parking area. After selection of the preferred alternative for the project, the intersection design would be refined during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase and any new proposed right-of-way affecting the church property would be assessed with the objective of minimizing or avoiding, to the extent feasible, any major impacts to the functionality of the uses and operations of the property.

Olmsted Road

Alternative 1 at Olmsted Road would need to make partial acquisitions from five separate parcels, totaling 1.95 acres. One commercial, two industrial, and two miscellaneous use parcels are affected. All partial acquisitions are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses. No parcels would be temporarily impacted during construction. Table 2.1.6.4 provides the anticipated permanent partial property acquisitions associated with Alternative 1 at Olmsted Road.

Table 2.1.6.4 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Olmsted Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	013-221-020	Miscellaneous	477.33	1.09	0.2	Monterey Regional Airport
2	013-322-007	Commercial	2.5	0.22	8.8	Hotel
3	101-231-005	Miscellaneous	1.73	0.21	12.1	Vacant
4	259-011-027	Industrial	28	0.32	1.1	Undeveloped
5	259-011-064	Industrial	14.65	0.11	0.7	Undeveloped
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	1.95	Not applicable	No Notes

Alternative 2 at Olmsted Road is anticipated to require partial acquisitions from 13 parcels totaling about 4.9 acres. Five of these properties are residential, one is commercial, five are miscellaneous uses (airport, church, vacant uses), and one is industrial property. Small portions of two properties (about 0.05 acre total)—one industrial designation and one commercial property—northwest of Olmsted Road would be temporarily impacted during construction (not shown on the table). All partial acquisitions are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses. Table 2.1.6.5 provides the anticipated permanent partial property acquisitions associated with Alternative 2 at Olmsted Road.

In summary, no partial acquisitions of properties with either Build Alternative would affect continued use of the properties around the Olmsted Road intersection, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses.

Table 2.1.6.5 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Olmsted Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	013-221-015	Miscellaneous	4.35	0.25	5.7	Vacant
2	013-221-020	Miscellaneous	477.33	1.13	0.2	Monterey Regional Airport
3	013-322-007	Commercial	2.5	0.23	9.2	Hotel
4	013-222-008	Residential	5.64	0.34	6.0	No Notes

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
5	014-322-004	Miscellaneous	6.29	0.16	2.5	Church
6	101-231-002	Residential	3.79	0.27	7.1	No Notes
7	101-231-003	Miscellaneous	1.16	0.22	18.9	Detached Building
8	101-231-004	Residential	0.52	0.13	25.0	No Notes
9	101-231-005	Miscellaneous	1.73	0.38	21.9	Vacant
10	101-231-006	Residential	0.78	0.03	3.8	No Notes
11	101-231-007	Residential	1.97	0.02	1.0	No Notes
12	259-011-027	Industrial	28.0	1.67	6.0	Undeveloped
13	259-011-064	Industrial	14.65	0.06	0.4	Undeveloped
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	4.90	Not applicable	No Notes

State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard) and Ragsdale Drive Intersections

Due to the close proximity of the intersections of State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard) and Ragsdale Drive on State Route 68, the analysis of right-of-way acquisition is discussed for these two intersections together; acquisition data for the two intersections are presented separately in Tables 2.1.6.6 through 2.1.6.9.

Alternative 1 at the State Route 218 intersection with State Route 68 would necessitate partial acquisitions from five separate parcels for a total of about 2.70 acres of acquisition (see Table 2.1.6.6). The information in Table 2.1.6.6 has been updated since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The affected parcels include two airport-commercial uses, a City of Monterey public park (Ryan Ranch Park), an office-commercial property, and one miscellaneous-vacant land parcel. The latter vacant parcel would also have a temporary construction easement of 0.38 acre.

Table 2.1.6.6 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at State Route 218

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	012-601-033	Miscellaneous	0.78	0.03	3.8	Retail
2	012-601-034	Miscellaneous	0.7	0.05	7.1	Retail
3	259-011-082	Miscellaneous	47	0.06	0.1	Public Works; 0.25 acre landform grading/ slope easement
4	259-031-003	Public Recreation (Ryan Ranch Park)	74.45	1.06	1.42	1.36 acres for landform grading/ slope easement
5	259-091-010	Miscellaneous	83.95	1.50	1.79	Vacant
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	2.70	Not applicable	No Notes

The preliminary design for the roundabout at State Route 218 and State Route 68 includes several landform grading areas along the north side of State Route 68 between State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive. The largest of the proposed landform grading areas at this intersection would be in the northeast corner of the intersection at State Route 218 and State Route 68. This landform grading would require a permanent slope easement for maintenance of the slope, potentially impacting a portion of the Ryan Ranch Park and the disc golf course facility. The property impact for these uses is not anticipated to severely impair the activities, functions, or attributes of the recreational use of the park, as addressed in Section 2.1.3, Parks and Recreation, and in the Section 4(f) evaluation contained in Appendix A. All partial acquisitions are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses.

As shown in Table 2.1.6.7, Alternative 2 at State Route 218 would necessitate estimated partial acquisitions from four parcels totaling about 3 acres. These parcels include two residential properties, the Ryan Ranch Park, and another City of Monterey parcel designated miscellaneous use. The partial acquisitions are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses. Refer to further discussion below regarding the Ryan Ranch Park.

At the intersection of State Route 218/State Route 68, the preliminary design for the expanded intersection lanes under Alternative 2 (signals and lane channelization design) was modified to shift the alignment of State Route 68 slightly south so that sensitive cultural resource elements on the adjacent Tarpy's Roadhouse property near the highway could be avoided. See Section 2.1.11, Cultural Resources, and the Section 4(f) evaluation in Appendix A for more discussion.

Table 2.1.6.7 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at State Route 218

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	259-011-082	Residential	47	0.69	1.4	No Notes
2	259-031-003	Public Recreation (Ryan Ranch Park)	74.54	1.94	2.6	Total includes 0.55 acre for landform grading/slope easement
3	259-071-008	City Miscellaneous	0.82	0.20	24.0	City of Monterey
4	259-031-082	Residential	18.98	0.10	0.05	No Notes
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	2.93	Not applicable	No Notes

Alternative 1 at the Ragsdale Drive intersection would require permanent acquisition from five properties for a total of 2.88 acres of acquisition as shown in Table 2.1.6.8; land uses of these parcels include the Ryan Ranch Park, office park, and vacant properties. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses. Information in Table 2.1.6.8 has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Table 2.1.6.8 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Ragsdale Drive

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	259-031-003	Public Recreation (Ryan Ranch Park)	74.54	1.20	1.6	0.58 acre of landform grading/slope easement
2	259-031-082	Miscellaneous	18.98	0.52	2.74	Office Park
3	259-071-008	Miscellaneous	0.82	0.66	80.5	Vacant

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
4	259-091-010	Miscellaneous	83.95	0.22	0.26	Vacant
5	259-092-073	Miscellaneous	17.99	0.28	1.56	Vacant
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	2.88	Not applicable	No Notes

Alternative 2 at Ragsdale Drive intersection with State Route 68 is anticipated to require permanent property acquisition from four vacant parcels, one of which is designated industrial land use, and the remainder are miscellaneous designations. The permanent acquisitions from the parcels are estimated to total just over 4.5 acres. See Table 2.1.6.9.

Table 2.1.6.9 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Ragsdale Drive

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	259-011-027	Industrial	28.0	0.03	0.11	Vacant
2	259-011-071	Miscellaneous	8.0	0.94	11.7	Vacant
3	259-091-010	Miscellaneous	83.95	3.13	3.73	Vacant
4	259-092-073	Miscellaneous	17.99	0.58	3.2	Vacant
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	4.68	Not applicable	No Notes

The City of Monterey Ryan Ranch Park property (Assessor's Parcel Number 259-031-003) is just under 75 acres on the north side of State Route 68 between State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive. Permanent acquisition from the park property would be necessary for roundabout features, including a curved realignment of the east leg of State Route 68 toward the park property on the north, construction of landform grading to function in place of a retaining wall in the northeast quadrant of the intersection (State Route 218/State Route 68), and two additional landform grading/slope easements along State Route 68 between State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive. As noted at the beginning of this section, the landform grading areas would require permanent slope easements for Caltrans to maintain.

The amount of acquired property from the park parcel for these design features varies between the two Build Alternatives. For the two intersections of State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive at State Route 68, Alternative 1 would require 3.09 acres from the park property, 1.48 acres for roundabout roadway

design features, and 1.61 acres for slope easement (a combination of the data for Parcel 259-031-003 in Tables 2.1.6.6 and 2.1.6.8). Alternative 2 would require a total of 1.94 acres of permanent right-of-way from the park property, 1.39 acres for intersection features and just over one-half an acre (0.55) for slope easements area. The permanent acquisition areas estimated for either of the Build Alternatives would not severely impair the activities, functions, or attributes of the recreational use of the park, as further addressed in Section 2.1.3, Parks and Recreation, and in the Section 4(f) evaluation contained in Appendix A.

York Road

The Alternative 1 roundabout at York Road is estimated to need partial acquisitions from five parcels, totaling about 1.13 acres (see Table 2.1.6.10). The parcels include one multi-family residential, one City of Monterey industrial, and three County of Monterey parcels designated miscellaneous and zoned Resource Conservation. All partial acquisitions are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses. Four of the five parcels would be temporarily impacted during construction on a combined total of about 1.24 acres.

Table 2.1.6.10 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at York Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	173-071-042	Miscellaneous	8.32	0.44	5.2	Vacant
2	259-031-062	Miscellaneous	8.25	0.07	0.8	Vacant
3	259-181-008	Miscellaneous	6.01	0.35	5.8	Offices
4	259-211-014	Miscellaneous	1.98	0.13	6.5	Vacant
5	259-231-027	Miscellaneous	2.08	0.14	6.7	Vacant
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	1.13	Not applicable	No Notes

Alternative 2 at York Road would require partial acquisitions from six separate parcels totaling 4.75 acres, as shown in Table 2.1.6.11. Two of the parcels are residential, one is City of Monterey Industrial, and three are County of Monterey properties designated Miscellaneous use and zoned Resource Conservation. All partial acquisitions are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses. Five

of the parcels would be temporarily impacted during construction, for a total of just under 1.2 acres of disturbance.

Table 2.1.6.11 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at York Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	173-071-042	Miscellaneous	8.32	1.42	16.8	Vacant
2	173-122-005	Residential	0.57	0.04	7.0	Office Park
3	259-031-062	Miscellaneous	8.25	0.70	8.4	Vacant
4	259-181-008	Miscellaneous	6.01	0.90	14.9	Medical Offices
5	259-211-014	Miscellaneous	1.98	0.80	40.4	Vacant
6	259-231-027	Miscellaneous	2.08	0.89	42.8	Vacant
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	4.75	Not applicable	No Notes

In summary, Alternative 2 would require an estimated larger amount of permanent property from several adjacent parcels than Alternative 1 at York Road intersection, but neither alternative is anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses.

Pasadera Drive-Boots Road

The Alternative 1 roundabout at Pasadera Drive/Boots Road is anticipated to require partial acquisitions from five separate parcels for a combined total of just over 1 acre (see Table 2.1.6.12). The property owner name in the table for parcel 173-072-041 has been updated (in Notes column) per comments received during public review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Three of these parcels are residential, one is undeveloped (vacant), and one is recreational (golf course). Three properties would potentially be affected by temporary construction activities, for a combined total of 0.11 acre. Areas for permanent drainage easements would be necessary from six properties, for a total of 1.42 acres. Some of the properties would be affected by more than one type of acquisition: partial permanent, temporary construction, and/or permanent drainage easement. None of the partial acquisitions are anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses.

Table 2.1.6.12 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Pasadera Drive-Boots Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	173-062-004	Residential	8.0	0.24	3.0	No Notes
2	173-062-005	Residential	1.04	0.02	1.9	No Notes
3	173-062-006	Residential	0.91	0.06	6.5	No Notes
4	173-071-056	Vacant	25.62	0.30	1.1	Laguna Seca Golf Ranch
5	173-072-041	Miscellaneous - Recreation	59.19	0.38	0.6	Pasadera/ Concert Golf LLC
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	1.01	Not applicable	No Notes

Alternative 2 at the Pasadera Drive/Boots Road intersection would require partial acquisitions from 10 parcels totaling about 3.71 acres. Four of these properties are residential, three are residential vacant, four are miscellaneous (vacant), and one is recreational (golf club). All partial acquisitions are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses. Permanent drainage easement areas would be necessary from six of the parcels, for a combined total easement area of 1.22 acres. No temporary construction easements would be required at Pasadera Drive for this alternative. See Table 2.1.6.13. The property owner name for parcel 173-072-041 has been updated per public comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Table 2.1.6.13 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Pasadera Drive-Boots Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	173-062-002	Residential	4.71	0.18	3.8	No Notes
2	173-062-003	Residential	4.9	0.21	4.2	No Notes
3	173-062-004	Residential	8.0	0.04	0.5	No Notes

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
4	173-062-005	Residential	1.04	0.04	3.8	No Notes
5	173-]062-006	Residential	0.91	0.41	45.0	Easement
6	173-062-007	Residential	4.73	0.01	0.2	No Notes
7	173-062-010	Residential	10.3	0.04	0.3	No Notes
8	173-071-056	Vacant	25.62	1.17	4.5	Laguna Seca Golf Ranch
9	173-072-041	Miscellaneous	59.19	1.53	2.5	Pasadera/ Concert Golf LLC
10	416-193-013	Residential	14.11	0.10	0.7	No Notes
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	3.71	Not applicable	No Notes

In summary, at the Pasadera Drive-Boots Road intersection at State Route 68, Alternative 2 is estimated to require a larger amount of permanent property from several adjacent parcels than Alternative 1, but neither alternative is anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses.

Laureles Grade

The information below for Alternative 1 at this project location has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Alternative 1 roundabout at the Laureles Grade intersection is anticipated to require partial acquisitions from several parcels, totaling about 2.5 acres. The parcels include one single-family residential property, one vacant residential property, and a county parcel designated for Habitat Management and recreational uses. Section 2.1.3 Parks and Recreational Facilities discusses the project's effects on that property and other Section 4(f) properties within the project's area of potential impacts.

A minor amount (about 2 percent) of the County Fire District property at the southeast corner of Laureles Grade at State Route 68 would be required for the roundabout alternative intersection improvements. A temporary construction easement of 0.08 acre would also be necessary at this parcel for the roundabout alternative.

All partial permanent acquisitions at Laureles Grade under Alternative 1 are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are

located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses. The information in Table 2.1.6.14 below has been updated since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The proposed hybrid roundabout at the Laureles Grade intersection is anticipated to require about a half of an acre less permanent property acquisition among four parcels than the single-lane roundabout design, with a reduced amount of acquisition at two properties and no acquisition at one parcel. Small portions of two parcels, one on the southwest side of the intersection and the Fire Station property on the southeast side as noted above, would be required for temporary construction easements, for a total of 0.16 acre between the two properties. See Table 2.1.6.14 and Appendix J.

Table 2.1.6.14 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Laureles Grade

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	031-131-002	Miscellaneous	247.0	1.77	0.7	County of Monterey
2	173-011-022	Residential	18.27	0.67	3.7	Roman Catholic Bishop of Monterey County
3	173-031-016	Miscellaneous	1.20	0.03	2.5	County Fire Station
4	173-031-018	Residential	1.57	None	None	No Notes
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	2.47	Not applicable	No Notes

Alternative 2 would require partial acquisitions from 13 separate parcels totaling 7.52 acres. About half of these properties are designated residential properties, several of which are vacant; one property is designated commercial – medical (county animal shelter), and two are County of Monterey properties: one containing the access roads to the Laguna Seca Recreation Area and the other containing natural resource land on the former Fort Ord military base. All partial acquisitions are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses. A small (0.18 acre) temporary construction easement is anticipated on the County Fire District parcel. No permanent drainage easements would be required under Alternative 2 at this intersection. See Table 2.1.6.15.

Table 2.1.6.15 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Laureles Grade

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	031-131-002	Miscellaneous	247.0	3.31	1.3	Fort Ord National Monument
2	173-011-003	Residential	5.56	0.09	1..6	Animal Shelter
3	173-011-005	Residential	6.0	0.04	0.6	No Notes
4	173-011-022	Residential	18.27	2.2	12.0	No Notes
5	173-011-025	Miscellaneous	27.41	0.96	3.5	Laguna Seca Recreation Area
6	173-011-027	Commercial	26.62	0.29	1.0	Animal Shelter
7	173-021-013	Residential	1.65	0.01	0.6	No Notes
8	173-021-015	Residential	1.38	0.02	1.2	No Notes
9	173-021-016	Miscellaneous	1.46	0.02	1.3	Residential
10	173-021-018	Miscellaneous	0.84	0.34	25.2	Vacant
11	173-031-016	Miscellaneous	1.2	0.03	2.5	County Fire Station
12	173-031-018	Residential	1.57	0.23	14.6	No Noes
13	173.031-019	Residential	1.02	0.01	0.9	No Notes
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	7.52	Not applicable	No Notes

In summary, at the Laureles Grade intersection at State Route 68, Alternative 2 is estimated to require over three times the amount of permanent property from several adjacent parcels compared to Alternative 1. However, neither alternative is anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses.

Corral De Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive

The information in this paragraph for Alternative 1 at this project location has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Alternative 1 (roundabouts) would require partial permanent acquisitions at the Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive intersection from five parcels for a combined total of about 1.31 acres. In the northwest quadrant of the intersection is the Fort Ord National

Monument property managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. Two parcels in the southwest quadrant are active commercial use properties, including an active service station and a flowers and deli business, the Cypress Community Church, plus three residential properties in the northeast quadrant, and two vacant commercial properties in the southeast quadrant.

The information in this paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. All partial acquisitions with Alternative 1 preliminary design are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses. The permanent right-of-way acquisition estimated to impact the Fort Ord National Monument parcel would be along the perimeter of the parcel and roadways, and would not substantially affect the recreational activities, objects and values for which the monument is managed, as discussed in Section 2.1.3, Parks and Recreational Facilities, and in Appendix A, Section 4(f) De Minimis Determination.

The proposed hybrid roundabout at the Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive intersection is anticipated to require about 1.31 acres of permanent right-of-way combined from five properties. One parcel would be temporarily impacted during construction at the Corral de Tierra Road intersection under Alternative 1, for a combined total of about 0.12 acre. Refer to Table 2.1.6.16 and Appendix J.

Table 2.1.6.16 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at Corral de Tierra Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	031-011-014	Miscellaneous	724.5	0.67	0.09	Fort Ord National Monument
2	161-251-011	Miscellaneous	5.32	0.35	6.6	Cypress Community Church
3	161-571-002	Commercial	0.68	0.16	23.5	Undeveloped
4	161-571-003	Commercial	5.42	0.12	0.02	Undeveloped
5	161-641-019	Commercial	0.04	0.01	14.4	Service Station
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	1.31	Not applicable	No Notes

Alternative 2 at the Corral de Tierra Road intersection at State Route 68 would require partial acquisitions from 13 parcels for a combined total of about 4 acres. Nine of these properties are residential, two are commercial (service station and Cypress Community Church), and one is the U.S. government-managed Fort Ord National Monument. Alternative 2 would have 1.97 acres of permanent property acquisition along the periphery of the monument property, compared with less than one-half acre of permanent right-of-way acquisition with Alternative 1, the roundabout. Though the property impact with the expanded signals design would be larger, the functions of the monument property would not be substantively affected by the acquisition areas, as discussed in Sections 2.1.1, Land Use, and 2.1.3, Parks and Recreational Facilities, and the Section 4(f) analysis in Appendix A.

All partial acquisitions are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses. Three parcels would be temporarily impacted during construction. See Table 2.1.6.17 and Appendix J

Table 2.1.6.17 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at Corral de Tierra Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	031-011-014	Miscellaneous	724.5	1.97	0.2	Fort Ord National Monument
2	161-251-002	Residential	47.42	0.05	0.1	No Notes
3	161-251-011	Miscellaneous	5.32	0.36	6.7	Cypress Community Church
4	161-251-015	Residential	1.7	0.15	8.8	No Notes
5	161-251-016	Residential	1.65	0.15	9.0	No Notes
6	161-251-018	Residential	2.85	0.41	14.3	No Notes
7	161-251-019	Residential	2.01	0.21	10.4	No Notes
8	161-571-001	Residential	15.56	0.22	1.4	No Notes
9	161-571-002	Commercial	0.68	0.07	10.2	Vacant
10	161-571-003	Commercial	5.42	0.38	7.0	Undeveloped
11	161-641-014	Residential	10.94	0.02	0.1	No Notes
12	161-641-019	Commercial	0.04	0.002	5.0	Service Station

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
13	161-641-025	Residential	5.05	0.02	0.4	No Notes
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	4.01	Not applicable	No Notes

The design of Alternative 2 was modified during the preliminary design to avoid impacts to the existing service station at the southwest corner of the intersection. The Alternative 2 design at the Corral de Tierra Road intersection initially intended for the eastbound direction on the west leg of the intersection to include a left-turn pocket lane, two through lanes and a right-turn pocket lane, the latter to turn south onto Corral de Tierra Road. This wider intersection leg with these lanes and two westbound through lanes and other design elements would have required encroachment onto the commercial gas station services property immediately adjacent to the southwest corner of the intersection (2 Corral de Tierra Road, Unit A, Assessor's Parcel Number 161-641-019). That encroachment would have impacted the existing gas station pumps and other facilities of the service station, and therefore would have required a full acquisition of the gas station parcel and required relocation of the business. The design for Alternative 2 was revised to change the second eastbound through lane to a combination through/right-turn lane, which enabled the project to shift the lanes and the sidewalk away from the gas station property. As a result, Alternative 2 would require acquisition of a small sliver of the gas station property (about 92 square feet) at the corner of the intersection.

The Alternative 1 roundabout design is estimated to require a very small amount of acquisition of the gas station property as well, about 0.01 acre, or 250 square feet as shown in Table 2.1.6.16. No acquisition is anticipated for the commercial parcel adjacent to the gas station (161-641-018) for either Build Alternative. The two existing driveways on the south side of State Route 68 at the two commercial properties would be retained, with controlled access of right-turn in/right-turn out movements.

The information below has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The vacant commercially zoned properties at the southeast corner of Corral de Tierra Road and State Route 68 intersection (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 161-571-002 and 161-571-003) are planned for future development. Access from State Route 68 directly onto the parcel at the immediate southeast corner of the intersection (161-571-002) would be prohibited in accordance with highway design standards for traffic safety and the close proximity to the intersection. However, access from State Route 68 would be allowed farther east of the intersection onto parcel 161-571-003 as well as from the east side of Corral

de Tierra Road. Alternative 2 would require about 0.45 acre for drainage improvements (trapezoidal ditch design criteria) between the proposed sidewalk and catch line. This estimated right-of-way need for the Build Alternatives can inform potential land development and site planning of the adjacent parcels.

In summary, at the Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive intersection at State Route 68, Alternative 2 is estimated to require about 4 acres of permanent right-of-way compared to 1.31 acres for Alternative 1. However, neither alternative is anticipated to substantively affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses.

San Benancio Road

The information below for Alternative 1 at this project location has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Eight properties adjacent to the San Benancio Road at State Route 68 intersection are anticipated to require partial acquisition for Alternative 1, for a combined total of about 0.84 acre, as shown in Table 2.6.1.18 and Appendix J. Six of the parcels have a residential designation, one of which is undeveloped. Two parcels have miscellaneous designation and are undeveloped. No structures are located within acquisition areas. The partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses.

Table 2.1.6.18 Alternative 1 Property Acquisition at San Benancio Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	161-011-084	Residential	284.0	0.21	0.07	Undeveloped
2	161-251-018	Residential	2.85	0.23	8.0	No Notes
3	161-251-019	Residential	2.01	0.04	2.0	No Notes
4	161-251-020	Residential	2.90	0.01	0.34	No Notes
5	161-251-024	Residential	17.89	0.11	0.6	No Notes
6	161-541-001	Miscellaneous/ Vacant	5.01	0.13	2.6	Undeveloped
7	161-061-003	Residential	1.07	0.09	8.4	No Notes
8	161-061-015	Miscellaneous	0.14	0.02	14.3	Undeveloped
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	0.84	Not applicable	No Notes

Alternative 2 at the San Benancio Road intersection with State Route 68 is anticipated to require partial property acquisition from seven parcels, for a combined total of 2.74 acres. Most of the potentially affected properties are largely undeveloped, and some have homes in the rear of the parcel, away from the highway. See Table 2.1.6.19.

Table 2.1.6.19 Alternative 2 Property Acquisition at San Benancio Road

Parcel Count	Assessor's Parcel Number	Land Use Type	Existing Size (Acre)	Anticipated Acquisition (Acre)	Percentage of Acquisition	Notes
1	161-011-084	Residential	284.0	1.74	0.6	Undeveloped
2	161-061-003	Residential	1.07	0.29	27.1	Single Family
3	161-061-015	Miscellaneous	0.14	0.06	42.8	Undeveloped
4	161-251-008	Residential	1.77	0.02	1.1	Single Family
5	161-541-001	Miscellaneous	5.01	0.43	8.5	One residence in rear of property, rest undeveloped
6	161-541-002	Miscellaneous	0.18	0.08	44.4	One residence in rear of property, rest undeveloped
7	161-541-003	Miscellaneous	4.85	0.12	2.4	One residence in rear of property, rest undeveloped
Total	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	2.74	Not applicable	No Notes

As with Alternative 1 at this intersection, no structures are located within acquisition areas and the partial acquisitions would not displace any residents or businesses.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made as proposed, and no associated partial, full, or temporary property acquisitions would be required.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

RRPA-1. Right of Way Acquisitions and Relocations. Final design of the preferred alternative will further refine the right-of-way needs for the roundabout improvements, and any necessary partial property acquisitions. For those properties where acquisition cannot be avoided, all property

acquisition activities will be conducted in accordance with the regulatory requirements of the Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Owners of the affected parcels will be fully informed of their rights, and objective and fair property appraisals would be conducted. Offers will be prepared based on appraised fair market values. Should any property owners request that their property be purchased in its entirety to relocate their business or property occupancy, Caltrans Right of Way agents would coordinate with the property owner(s) in accordance with Caltrans' Relocation Assistance Program. Appendix C explains the program and provides a summary of relocation benefits, as this procedure is a regulatory requirement.

All driveways that would be affected by the project would be reconstructed to conform to the new roadway profile, and all mailboxes that would require temporary removal for construction would be replaced upon completion of construction activities in those locations. The proposed edge of pavement would conform to all asphalt concrete driveways.

2.1.7 Equity

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Please note: two federal Executive Orders pertaining to analysis of the effects of federal activities on environmental justice have been rescinded since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Executive Orders 12898 (1994) and 14096 (2023) were rescinded by Executive Orders 14173 and 14148, respectively in 2025. However, consideration of environmental justice was included in the analysis of equity in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment prior to the recission of Executive Orders 12898 and 14096, and therefore has been retained in this final environmental document for informational purposes only.

Affected Environment

Information and analysis in this section is based on the Community Impact Assessment report (October 2023). The California Office of Environmental Health and Hazard Assessment's CalEnviroScreen is an online modeling tool that is used to help identify environmental justice communities that are most affected by many sources of pollution and where people are often vulnerable to pollution's effects. Based on the review of the study area using the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 online modeling tool, census tracts 107.2, 132, 134, and 141.10 each had a low score of less than 10; census tract 133 had a low score of 20; and census tract 141.09 had a medium score of 51. Information from the CalEnviroScreen modeling tool indicates that there is relatively low potential for disadvantaged communities to be present within the study area.

The California Environmental Protection Agency's Senate Bill 535 Disadvantaged Communities online map is a tool that is used to help identify

communities disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution and with population characteristics that make them more sensitive to pollution. Based on a review of the California Environmental Protection Agency's Senate Bill 535 Disadvantaged Communities (2022 update) online map, the data did not identify any disadvantaged communities within the study area or within the following census tracts: 107.02, 132, 133, 134, 141.09, and 141.10.

The EJScreen is an environmental justice mapping and screening tool created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that is used to help identify areas with people of color and/or low population, potential environmental quality issues, and a combination of environmental and demographic indicators that can identify environmental justice issues. Based on a review of available environmental justice indexes presented in the Environmental Protection Agency EJScreen online tool, there is little to no indication of underserved populations within the study area. There is a low potential for underserved population issues within census tract 141.09, but no underserved population issues were identified within the following census tracts: 107.02, 132, 133, 134, and 141.10. The EJScreen online tool is also able to generate an EJScreen Community Report that summarizes environmental justice issues identified within a selected area. The study area was selected for the EJScreen Community Report, and the resulting report found no underserved populations present within the study area.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

Since there is no indication that underserved populations are present within the study area, the Build Alternatives would not adversely affect any underserved populations. Also, if approved, the proposed Build Alternatives would include improvements to bike and pedestrian facilities at intersections, and it is anticipated that these facility improvements would encourage multimodal travel and future development along the corridor. Multimodal improvements would improve access for members of any underserved populations potentially using the project corridor Therefore, the project is not anticipated to adversely affect underserved populations in the region.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made and retaining walls and other structures associated with the Build Alternatives would not be constructed. No changes to the visual nature of the intersections would occur. Intersection queues would not be reduced, and delays to residents and community members would persist and worsen over time. The ability of residents to move between communities and to access commercial services along the State Route 68 corridor would be further impeded in the future. Since there is no indication that underserved populations are present within the study area, the No-Build Alternative would not adversely affect any underserved populations.

Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

Since implementation of the project would not have adverse effects on underserved populations, no avoidance or minimization measures are proposed.

2.1.8 Utilities and Emergency Services

Affected Environment

Several utilities are located along the project corridor and within the project's impact areas and may be in conflict with the proposed project improvements. Power and natural gas services in the project are provided by Pacific Gas and Electric. Other utility services in the project area include AT&T telecommunication lines and Comcast cable television lines. Most of the power, telecommunication, and cable television lines within the project site are located overhead and are suspended from poles. However, some of these utilities have been relocated underground in compliance with Scenic Highway regulations. The gas lines within the project site are also underground.

Domestic water service in the project study area is provided by California American Water, Alco Water Service, and California Water Service, and by private well in some unincorporated areas of Monterey County. Wastewater collection and treatment services are provided by Monterey One Water, Salinas Industrial wastewater, and through septic systems in some unincorporated areas of Monterey County. Flood control and maintenance are provided by the Monterey County Water Resources Agency. Refer to Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 for discussions on floodplain and storm water.

Police and traffic law enforcement in the study area is provided by the Cities of Monterey and Del Rey Oaks, the Monterey County Sheriff's Department, and the California Highway Patrol. No law enforcement facilities are located immediately adjacent to the project area. The Monterey County Sheriff's Department facility nearest to the project site is the Coastal Station at 1200 Aguajito Road in the City of Monterey, 1 mile from the eastern project limits. The City of Del Rey Police Department headquarters facility is 1 mile north of the project site at 650 Canyon Del Rey Boulevard in the City of Del Rey. The City of Monterey Police Department is at 580 Pacific Street in the City of Monterey, 2 miles west of the project site. The California Highway Patrol station nearest to the project site is 7 miles to the northeast, at 960 East Blanco Road in the City of Salinas.

Fire protection in the project area is provided by the Monterey County Regional Fire District, the City of Monterey Fire Department, and the City of Del Rey Oaks Fire Department. A Monterey County Regional Fire District station sits within the project area at the intersection of State Route 68 and Laureles Grade. The CalFire San Benito-Monterey Unit Headquarters is at 2221 Garden Road, 3,000 feet northwest of the intersection of State Route 68 and Olmsted Road. Commercial emergency transportation and ambulance services for the

project area are provided by American Medical Response, Central Coast Ambulance, Freedom Medical Transportation, and River of Life Transportation.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

The discussion in this section has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Build Alternatives would require permanent relocation of utilities that would be in conflict with the proposed project, including water, natural gas, electrical, cable, and telecommunications. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, Pacific Gas and Electric Company electric, Comcast Television) would be relocated underground (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations. Existing underground lines, including natural gas, sewer, and water lines in conflict with project improvements, would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the state highway right-of-way as feasible.

Potholing would be conducted as soon as feasible and would be done in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to positively identify the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s). Estimates of utilities potentially in conflict with the Build Alternatives, are shown in Table 2.1.8.1. The information in the table has been updated since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment to reflect the hybrid roundabout design of Alternative 1. The hybrid roundabout would have similar amounts of required relocations of utility lines and poles as Alternative 1, some slightly more and some less. Based on preliminary estimates, implementation of Build Alternative 2 would require more linear feet of utility relocation than the implementation of Build Alternative 1.

Table 2.1.8.1 Utilities in Conflict with the Build Alternatives

Utility Facility Relocation	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Overhead power lines	12,597 linear feet	26,104 linear feet
Overhead power poles	65	132
Overhead telecommunication lines	6,400 linear feet	12,546 linear feet
Overhead cable television lines	3,199 linear feet	5,185 linear feet
Underground power lines	1,188 linear feet	2,004 linear feet
Underground telecommunication lines	8,895 linear feet	11,257 linear feet
Underground cable television lines	3,655 linear feet	6,968 linear feet
Underground gas lines	16,958 linear feet	33,638 linear feet
Underground water lines	4,285 linear feet	4,645 linear feet
Underground sewer lines	3,353 linear feet	3,175 linear feet

Caltrans would coordinate with utility operators to ensure that all utilities within the roadway right-of-way would be relocated before and during construction. Caltrans has included funds, where necessary, to provide for the state share of utility relocation and would work closely with the utility providers to facilitate relocation. No permanent or long-term effects to utilities would occur.

Construction of the Build Alternatives would generate a minimal amount of wastewater. The main source of wastewater would be associated with sanitary waste generated by construction workers. Portable waste facilities would be provided for use by all workers, and sanitary waste generated from the use of these facilities would be disposed of by an approved contractor at an approved disposal site. No long-term generation of wastewater would occur since the proposed improvements are for roadway infrastructure.

Any water required for construction work would be brought to the project site as needed by the project's construction contractor. The installation of landscaping would require watering until it is fully established. This would be done through either water trucks or a utility agreement with the local water provider.

Temporary construction impacts on emergency services are expected to be minor because emergency services would still be allowed to access the project area during construction. The Resident Engineer for the project would notify and coordinate with regional emergency service providers regarding construction-related activities to ensure that project activities would not restrict or prevent access within the project area. Access for fire/paramedic and other emergency service vehicles through the project limits would be enabled through controlled work zones by the project's construction contractor.

The construction contractor would also ensure that emergency service access to all interconnecting roadways and routes in the project area would not be blocked by construction activities. The project would include Caltrans Standard Specifications and Standard Special Provisions pertaining to actions and strategies that would help maintain a safe environment for construction workers and the traveling public. Emergency access to all interconnecting roadways and routes within the project area would be maintained during construction. Specifically, the Caltrans Construction Manual requires, whether permanent or temporary, restoration of access as soon as possible without waiting for the work to be completed past all the nearby access points. Per the Caltrans Construction Manual (2019, Section 3-702A), the project's construction contractor would provide for the convenience of the public and public traffic. Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 7-1.03, "Public Convenience," requires that operations present the least possible obstruction and inconvenience to the public. The "least possible obstruction and inconvenience" would always depend on a judgment. Ultimately, the construction contractor for the project would use good construction industry practice, comply with specifications, and not materially diminish the degree of convenience and free passage through the area that existed before construction.

As a result of reductions to current intersection delays and improved travel time reliability through the corridor, improved access for emergency services is anticipated to occur under both Build Alternatives. Alternative 1 would include a roundabout design that provides sufficient lane width to allow for other vehicles to move aside for emergency vehicles passing through the intersection. Curbs in the roundabouts would be designed to be traversable by emergency vehicles. Alternative 2 would include signal prioritization features that would alter the signal to provide priority access for emergency vehicles through signalized intersections. During the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project, design of the intersections would be further refined to best accommodate emergency vehicles. The Build Alternatives would not permanently alter planned routes for emergency responses or evacuations. Therefore, no long-term impacts to emergency services are expected from the project.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made and no changes to utilities would be required. Intersection queues would not be reduced, and delays at the signalized intersections would continue. Therefore, movement of emergency services would not be improved.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Because implementation of the project would not have adverse effects on utilities and emergency services, no avoidance or minimization measures are proposed.

2.1.9 Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Regulatory Setting

Caltrans, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, directs that full consideration should be given to the safe accommodation of pedestrians and bicyclists during the development of federal-aid highway projects (see 23 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 652). It further directs that the special needs of the elderly and the disabled must be considered in all federal-aid projects that include pedestrian facilities. When current or anticipated pedestrian and/or bicycle traffic presents a potential conflict with motor vehicle traffic, every effort must be made to minimize the detrimental effects on all highway users who share the facility.

In July 1999, the U.S. Department of Transportation issued an Accessibility Policy Statement pledging a fully accessible multimodal transportation system. Accessibility in federally assisted programs is governed by the U.S. Department of Transportation regulations (49 Code of Federal Regulations 27) implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S. Code [USC] 794). The Federal Highway Administration has enacted regulations for the implementation of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including a commitment to build transportation facilities that provide equal access for all

persons. These regulations require application of the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements to federal-aid projects, including Transportation Enhancement Activities.

Affected Environment

This section has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment to address the hybrid roundabout design for Alternative 1. This section is based on the following technical reports and planning documents:

- Final State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, completed in August 2017, prepared by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County
- State Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project – Estimation of Induced Traffic Demand, completed in September 2020, prepared by Caltrans
- Final Traffic Operations Analysis Report, completed in September 2020, prepared by Caltrans
- Intersection Control Evaluation Step 2 and Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum, completed in November 2022, prepared by Caltrans
- Traffic Operations Analysis of Updated Alternative 1 for Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project, completed January 2025, prepared by Caltrans

Supplemental information was obtained from the following documents:

- 2018 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan, prepared by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County
- Caltrans' Roundabouts: California State Highway System Roundabout Inventory Report, completed in May 2017
- Caltrans' Transportation Concept Report for State Route 68, completed in October 2013
- Caltrans' District System Management Plan, completed in August 2015

Study Area

The study area for the project includes the portion of State Route 68 just west of Josselyn Canyon Road (post mile 4.8) to east of San Benancio Road (post mile 13.7). State Route 68 is the main route between the Monterey Peninsula and the Salinas Valley and is an important corridor for commercial activity and residential access. The affected environment includes nearby communities within and immediately adjacent to the project limits.

State Route 68 operates as both a conventional highway and a freeway. From State Route 1 in the City of Monterey and heading east for 11.12 miles (near Toro Park), State Route 68 is a two-lane conventional highway, with 12-

foot lanes and 8-foot outside shoulders. State Route 68 then operates as a four-lane freeway for 2.92 miles, with 12-foot lanes and 8-foot to 10-foot outside shoulders. From the end of the freeway to Blanco Road in the City of Salinas (post mile 19.97), State Route 68 is a four-lane conventional highway with 12-foot lanes and 8-foot shoulders.

Terrain through the State Route 68 corridor varies from flat to rolling. The speed limit is 55 miles per hour from State Route 1 (post mile 3.95) and changes to a speed limit of 65 miles per hour between west of Portola Road (post mile 15.14) and Reservation Road (post mile 17.2).

Nine intersections were evaluated as part of the Traffic Operations Analysis Report and Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum traffic studies:

- Josselyn Canyon Road
- Olmsted Road
- State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard)
- Ragsdale Drive
- York Road
- Pasadera Drive
- Laureles Grade
- Corral de Tierra Road
- San Benancio Road

Existing Travel Patterns

The 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan conducted a study of regional travel pattern characteristics throughout the project area using sensors and blue tooth technology to evaluate trip patterns. The study found that 60 percent of traffic observed on State Route 68 represents local trips, with at least one origin or destination located within the State Route 68 corridor.

Trips that pass through the entire corridor without stopping make up about 20 to 40 percent of total trips. For eastbound travel, State Route 68 throughput ranges between 20 and 40 percent depending on its specific origin, with the highest amount of through traffic originating from central Monterey or the State Route 1 corridor. Traffic originating from the eastern part of Monterey is more likely to use State Route 68 and less likely to use an alternate route. For westbound travel, the State Route 68 throughput ranges between 20 and 33 percent depending on its specific origin, with the highest amount of through traffic originating from Salinas along the State Route 68 corridor.

Analysis Thresholds: Level of Service and Vehicle Miles Traveled under Senate Bill 743

Prior to the implementation of Senate Bill 743, evaluation of transportation impacts under CEQA relied on Level of Service (LOS) to determine how a project might increase or reduce traffic delays in the project area. Level of Service is a description of the quality of a transportation facility's operation, ranging from Level of Service A (best operating conditions, indicating free-flow traffic conditions with little or no delay) to Level of Service F (worst operating conditions, representing over-saturated conditions where traffic flows exceed design capacity, resulting in long queues and delays).

Senate Bill 743, passed in 2013, amended CEQA to allow the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to develop new guidelines under CEQA establishing alternative metrics to Levels of Service for the analysis of transportation impacts. On December 28, 2018, the Office of Administrative Law approved the amendments to the CEQA Guidelines including changes related to Senate Bill 743. The amended CEQA Guidelines add a new section on determining the significance of transportation impacts, and generally specify Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the most appropriate measure of transportation impacts. Caltrans' implementation guideline memorandum dated April 13, 2020 and updated September 20, 2020 provides an implementation timeline for Senate Bill 743. The timeline states that projects initiated after December 28, 2018, that began environmental review before September 15, 2020, would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if the use of a vehicle miles traveled-based transportation impact significance determination in the draft environmental document is warranted.

Caltrans initiated environmental review for the State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project on July 29, 2019, and therefore the project was evaluated for vehicle miles traveled applicability. The evaluation determined that the State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project was exempt from the vehicle miles traveled-based analysis requirement for the following reasons: 1) the project is not a new alignment project; 2) the project is not a capacity-increasing project; and 3) the Transportation Agency for Monterey County conducted extensive public outreach during preparation of the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan that showed strong public support for the project.

Based on guidance included in the Office of Planning and Research 2018 VMT Technical Advisory, the project is not likely to lead to measurable or substantial increases in vehicle travel.

While the project is not a capacity-increasing project (though it would improve travel time through the corridor and provide additional facilities for bicycle and pedestrian users), Caltrans conducted an induced travel demand analysis that assessed the potential vehicle miles traveled induced by both Alternatives 1 and 2 (State Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project –

Estimation of Induced Traffic Demand, Caltrans September 25, 2020). Alternative 2 adds short lane segments to State Route 68 for specific modifications to improve traffic flow and reduce queuing. These additional short lane sections at the nine intersections, a combined total of 2.2 lane miles, were determined not to cause an increase in vehicle miles traveled that would be significant or substantial in relation to the current regional daily vehicle miles traveled in accordance with the induced travel demand analysis conducted by Caltrans. The Alternative 1 hybrid roundabout would add an estimated combined 0.80 lane mile to the project limits within the highway corridor. The lane miles for the Build Alternatives when calculated into daily vehicle miles traveled are below the allowable threshold of 29,664 daily vehicle miles traveled for the project based on the project's percentage of regional lane miles. Therefore, Caltrans has determined that neither Build Alternative would likely lead to a measurable or substantial increase in vehicle miles traveled.

With the adoption of the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) and the 2020–2024 Caltrans Strategic Plan, prioritization of Mobility Investments is now based on the traffic operations metric of Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay (DVHD). The Traffic Operations Analysis Report, dated September 30, 2020, used the legacy traffic operations metric of Level of Service (LOS) as defined by the Highway Capacity Manual. The legacy Level of Service metrics for the existing condition are presented here, as the 2020 Traffic Operations Analysis Report analysis of existing conditions was used to determine the need for operational improvements. However, the traffic operations performance metrics for the future Build and No-Build Alternatives for the project were converted into the current policy responsive metric of Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay (DVHD) in the 2023 Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum. These Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay analyses are based on a corridor-level traffic model (VISSIM) that enables assessment of operations (traffic flow and delays) on a highway corridor such as State Route 68 as a single integrated network, modeling queuing (vehicles waiting in line) and traffic behavior between and among intersections rather than an assessment of individual intersection operations.

Six levels are used to denote the various levels of service from "A" through "F." Table 2.1.9.1 provides a summary of Levels of Service for intersections with traffic signals. Level of Service criteria for unsignalized intersections are also applied to roundabouts. Table 2.1.9.2 provides a summary of Levels of Service for unsignalized intersections, which includes roundabouts.

Table 2.1.9.1 Level of Service Criteria for Signalized Intersections

Level of Service	Average Control Delay (Seconds per Vehicle)	Flow Type/Operational Condition
A	Less than or equal to 10	Stable flow/Free flow or low delay values
B	Between 10-20	Stable flow/Slight delays
C	Between 20-35	Stable flow/Acceptable delays
D	Between 35-55	Approaching unstable flow/Tolerable delay, occasionally wait through more than one signal cycle before proceeding
E	Between 55-80	Unstable flow/Intolerable delay
F	Greater than 80	Forced flow/Congested and queues fail to clear

Source: Highway Capacity Manual (HCM 7th edition), Transportation Research Board, 2023

Table 2.1.9.2 Level of Service Criteria for Unsignalized Intersections, Including Roundabouts

Level of Service	Average Control Delay (Seconds per Vehicle)	Flow Type/Operational Condition
A	Less than or equal to 10	Stable flow/Free flow or low delay values
B	Between 10-15	Stable flow/Slight delays
C	Between 15-25	Stable flow/Acceptable delays
D	Between 25-35	Approaching unstable flow/Tolerable delay, occasionally wait through more than one signal cycle before proceeding
E	Between 35-50	Unstable flow/Intolerable delay
F	Greater than 50	Forced flow/Congested and queues fail to clear

Source: Highway Capacity Manual (HCM 7th edition), Transportation Research Board, 2023

Existing Intersection Operational Conditions

According to the 2020 Traffic Operations Analysis Report, the target Level of Service for all intersections is Level of Service C during weekday peak hour (morning and evening) operations. All nine intersections evaluated in the 2020 Traffic Operations Analysis Report are either three-legged or four-legged intersections. The Traffic Operations Analysis Report evaluated the Level of Service for each leg of each intersection separately. An average Level of Service was then determined for each of the nine intersections by averaging the Levels of Service of all legs for each intersection. Existing conditions analysis shows that almost all of the intersections have at least one leg below Level of Service C. A summary of existing intersection Levels of Service is shown in Table 2.1.9.3.

Table 2.1.9.3 Existing Intersection Level of Service

Existing Intersection Location	Existing Morning Peak Level of Service	Existing Evening Peak Level of Service
Josselyn Canyon Road – Northbound	D	C
State Route 68 – Eastbound	C	A
State Route 68 – Westbound	B	A
Josselyn Canyon Road – Intersection Average	**C**	**A**
Olmsted Road – Northbound	D	C
Olmsted Road – Southbound	C	D
State Route 68 – Eastbound	C	C
State Route 68 – Westbound	C	D
Olmsted Road – Intersection Average	**C**	**C**
State Route 218 (Monterra Road) – Northbound	C	D
State Route 218 (Canyon del Rey Boulevard) – Southbound	C	C
State Route 68 – Eastbound	B	C
State Route 68 – Westbound	C	C
State Route 218 (Canyon del Rey Blvd) – Intersection Average	**C**	**C**
Ragsdale Drive – Northbound	B	B
Ragsdale Drive – Southbound	C	B
State Route 68 – Westbound	A	C
Ragsdale Drive – Intersection Average	**B**	**B**
York Road – Southbound	C	D
York Road – Eastbound	B	B
State Route 68 – Westbound	B	D
York Road – Intersection Average	**B**	**C**
Boots Road – Northbound	D	C
Pasadera Drive – Southbound	D	C
State Route 68 – Eastbound	B	B
State Route 68 – Westbound	C	B
Pasadera Drive – Intersection Average	**C**	**B**
Laureles Grade – Northbound	C	D
State Route 68 – Eastbound	C	D
State Route 68 – Westbound	B	C
Laureles Grade – Intersection Average	**C**	**C**
Corral de Tierra – Northbound	D	D
Corral de Tierra – Southbound	D	C
State Route 68 – Eastbound	C	D
State Route 68 – Westbound	C	B
Corral de Tierra – Intersection Average	**C**	**C**
San Benancio Road – Northbound	E	C
San Benancio Road – Northbound	E	C
State Route 68 – Eastbound	B	D
State Route 68 – Westbound	C	C
San Benancio Road – Intersection Average	**C**	**C**

Source: Traffic Operations Analysis Report, September 2020, Table 7.

Corridor Collision History

Caltrans' Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System, referred to as "TASAS," maintains an accident database recording all collisions on or

associated with state highway facilities. The database can identify locations with high accident concentrations. Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System collision history data for State Route 68 from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019 presented in the 2020 Traffic Operations Analysis Report shows that a total of 288 collisions occurred during that period, categorized as follows:

- 3 of the 288 collisions, or 1 percent, resulted in fatalities, with a total of three persons killed
- 132 of the 288 collisions, or 45.8 percent, resulted in injuries, with a total of 220 persons injured
- 239 of the 288 collisions, or 83 percent, involved multiple vehicles
- 21 of the 288 collisions, or 7.2 percent, occurred in wet conditions
- 50 of the 288 collisions occurred, or 17.4 percent, in dark conditions

In general, most of the collisions took place in the eastern two-thirds of the project corridor (east of York Road).

Table 2.1.9.4 summarizes the number of fatal, injury or property damage-only collisions for the three-year period from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019 for each highway segment in the project limits.

Table 2.1.9.4 Number of Collisions by Segment (January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019)

Segment Begin Post Mile	Segment End Post Mile	Segment Length in Miles	Number of Fatal Collisions	Number of Injury Collisions	Number of Property Damage-Only Collisions	Total Collisions
4.80	4.82	0.02	0	0	0	0
4.82	6.68	1.86	0	25	8	33
6.68	6.71	0.04	0	0	0	0
6.72	6.81	0.10	0	1	0	1
6.81	6.97	0.16	0	1	0	1
6.97	8.33	1.36	0	12	20	32
8.33	11.10	2.77	0	31	42	73
11.10	11.21	0.11	1	7	7	15
11.21	15.18	3.97	2	55	76	133
Total Corridor	Blank Space	**10.38**	**3**	**132**	**153**	**288**

Source: Traffic Operations Analysis Report, September 2020

Table 2.1.9.5 summarizes the number of individual deaths and individual injuries resulting from collisions for the three-year period from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019 for each highway segment in the project limits.

Table 2.1.9.5 Number of Deaths and Injuries Resulting from Collisions by Segment (January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019)

Segment Begin Post Mile	Segment End Post Mile	Segment Length in Miles	Total Number of Deaths	Total Number of Persons Injured
4.80	4.82	0.02	0	0
4.82	6.68	1.86	0	42
6.68	6.71	0.04	0	0
6.72	6.81	0.10	0	4
6.81	6.97	0.16	0	1
6.97	8.33	1.36	0	21
8.33	11.10	2.77	0	48
11.10	11.21	0.11	1	13
11.21	15.18	3.97	2	91
Total Segment Miles	Blank Space	**10.38**	**3**	**220**

Source: Traffic Operations Analysis Report, September 2020

Table 2.1.9.6 summarizes collision data by Day of Week by Time Period for the three-year period from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019 for each highway segment in the project limits. Analyzing the three-year collision data for State Route 68 from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019 by day of week in three-hour increments shows the following:

- 235 or 82 percent of the 288 collisions occurred during weekdays
- 243 or 84 percent of the 288 collisions occurred during daytime hours between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- The greatest number of collisions in a single time period occurred between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., with a total of 98 or 34 percent of the 288 collisions

Table 2.1.9.6 Number of Collisions by Day of Week and Time of Day (January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019)

Time of Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
00:00-03:00	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	5
03:00-06:00	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	5
06:00-09:00	3	4	10	8	8	9	1	43
09:00-12:00	4	7	9	6	2	5	5	38
12:00-15:00	7	3	9	11	14	10	10	64
15:00-18:00	6	14	19	13	12	25	9	98
18:00-21:00	3	1	6	3	4	3	2	22
21:00-24:00	1	1	1	3	1	5	1	13
Total	**24**	**30**	**58**	**44**	**45**	**58**	**29**	**288**

Source: Traffic Operations Analysis Report, September 2020

Analysis of the three-year collision data for State Route 68 from January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2019, by collision type shows the following:

- 72.2 percent of the 288 collisions were rear-end collisions
- 10 percent of the 288 collisions were hit object or animal collisions
- 6.6 percent of the 288 collisions were broadside collisions
- The remaining 11.2 percent of the 288 collisions were head-on, sideswipe, overturn or auto-pedestrian collisions and other types

Analysis of the three-year collision data for State Route 68 from January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2019, by primary collision factor shows the following:

- 67.2 percent of the 288 collisions were a result of speeding
- 15.8 percent of the 288 collisions were a result of improper turns or failure to yield
- 5.4 percent of the 288 collisions were a result of driving under the influence
- 11.6 percent of the 288 collisions were a result of other factors

The Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System data for this same three-year period indicates that three highway segments between the project limits experienced three-year average collision rates above the statewide average. Table 2.1.9.7 lists those segments with collision rates above the statewide average in comparison to the statewide average for similar facilities for the three-year period from January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2019.

Table 2.1.9.7 State Route 68 Segments with Three-Year Collision Rates Above the Statewide Average (January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019)

Segment Post Miles	Segment Location	Collision Rate Type	Actual Collision Rate Exceeding Average	Statewide Average Collision Rate
4.82-6.68	West of Josselyn Canyon Road to west of State Route 218	Fatal and Injury Collisions Only	0.47 per million vehicle miles	0.40 per million vehicle miles
6.97-8.33	East of State Route 218 to east of York Road	Total Collisions	0.86 per million vehicle miles	0.80 per million vehicle miles
11.10-11.21	East of Laureles Grade to Laureles Grade	Fatal Collisions Only	0.034 per million vehicles	0.023 per million vehicles

Source: Traffic Operations Analysis Report, September 2020

According to the Traffic Operations Analysis Report traffic collision data for January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2019, the highest concentration of rear-

end collisions during that period occurred at or very close to the following intersections:

- York Road
- Pasadera Drive
- Laureles Grade
- Corral de Tierra Road
- San Benancio Road

Research shows that stop-and-go traffic conditions contribute to or are the cause of rear-end collisions. Analysis of collision characteristics included in the August 2017 Final State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan (page 74) concluded that most of the collisions along segments of State Route 68 relate to the extensive queuing condition at intersections within the project limits, specifically high incidences of rear-end collisions and excessive speed.

Table 2.1.9.8 provides summary data for collision rates on State Route 68 compared with the statewide average for the more recent period of October 1, 2019, to September 30, 2022.

Table 2.1.9.8 State Route 68 Segments with Three-Year Collision Rates in Relation to Statewide Average October 2019 through September 2022

Begin Post Mile	End Post Mile	Length (mile)	State Route 68 Actual (Fatal + Injury)	Statewide Average (Fatal + Injury)
4.80	4.82	0.02	0.00	0.54
4.82	6.68	1.86	0.44	0.61
6.68	6.71	0.03	0.00	0.54
6.72	6.81	0.09	0.08	0.31
6.81	6.97	0.16	0.11	0.79
6.97	8.33	1.36	**0.81**	0.61
8.33	11.10	2.77	0.69	1.20
11.10	11.21	0.11	0.35	0.65
11.21	13.70	2.49	0.81	1.16

The collision data for this more recent timeframe on State Route 68 indicates that the segment of State Route 68 between post mile 6.97 to post mile 8.33, which is from just west of Ragsdale Drive to east of York Road, had collision rates higher than the statewide average. The other segments showed collision rates less than the statewide average. The Traffic Operations Analysis Report and Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum studies used the 2017 to 2019 collision data as representative of more typical travel demand conditions. The collision data for the period of October 2019 through September 2022 covers the period of the COVID-19 health pandemic, during which time traffic volumes on roadways were generally lower due to stay-at-

home health orders and telework practices. Therefore, the data does not reflect the typical traffic operation conditions on State Route 68; however, it is presented as additional information about the affected environment of the project study area.

Vehicle-Wildlife Collisions

In addition to being a key corridor for the traveling public between the Monterey Peninsula and the Salinas Valley, State Route 68 is bordered by important wildlife habitat, including the 14,650-acre Fort Ord National Monument and the Sierra de Salinas range just east of the Santa Lucia coastal range. These areas connect to the Ventana Wilderness in Los Padres National Forest farther south of the State Route 68 corridor. State Route 68 can be a barrier to wildlife attempting to cross between habitats on each side of the highway, putting both travelers and animals at risk of collision.

As part of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, a study of wildlife roadkill (Wildlife Connectivity Analysis, 2016 prepared by Pathways for Wildlife) was done for the State Route 68 corridor. The purpose of the study was to provide a detailed wildlife connectivity analysis, including GIS (geographic information system) mapping of habitats, existing crossings, connectors (culverts, drainpipes, and bridges) and roadkill data. Wildlife cameras installed at 11 locations (existing culverts and bridges, and wildlife hot spot trail) along the State Route 68 corridor from York Road to Portola Road during 2016 detected 2,709 instances of wildlife crossing the State Route 68 corridor. During the 2016 study period, biweekly roadkill surveys were conducted, and 60 animals were recorded hit on State Route 68. The highest percentages of animal species hit were badgers at 33 percent, followed by deer at 25 percent. The study found that most roadkill incidents occurred near existing culverts and bridges, which have high use by animals. The intersection areas with the higher numbers of roadkill, based on physical evidence, included York Road, Pasadera Drive-Boots Road, Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road. Further discussion is provided in the Natural Environment Study prepared for the project (Caltrans October 2023).

Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes

The 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan included a multimodal Level of Service analysis, which showed that while the State Route 68 corridor serves mostly vehicular traffic, bicycle and pedestrian activity occurs at many of the project intersections. The analysis followed the Highway Capacity Manual's 2010 Multimodal Level of Service methodology. Per the methodology procedure, Level of Service is evaluated as a function of the infrastructure characteristics rather than on volume of bicycle and pedestrian users. The 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan studied multimodal Level of Service for pedestrians and bicyclists at each of nine the project intersections.

Along State Route 68, the main inputs in evaluating bicycle Level of Service at the signalized intersections are: intersection crossing distance; width of the travel lane, bike lane, and shoulder; and number of vehicles per lane. For most intersections, the bicycle Level of Service score was "D" or better with the exception of three intersection legs that scored a level "E" during the morning and/or evening peak hour. All intersections with legs receiving the level "E" score also have legs with higher scores. The three legs scoring a bicycle Level of Service "E" were at the following intersections:

- Olmsted Road
- Pasadera Drive-Boots Road
- San Benancio Road

The main inputs in evaluating pedestrian Level of Service at the signalized intersections along State Route 68 are: number of lanes being crossed; right-turn-on-red vehicles; vehicle volumes and speed; and delay at the intersection. All signalized intersections that include pedestrian phases and marked crossings recorded a Level of Service of D or better.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1: State Route 68 Roundabouts – Long-Term Operation

Alternative 1 proposes to reconfigure the nine existing signalized intersections along the State Route 68 corridor within the project limits into modern, roundabouts. Modern roundabouts have improved geometric characteristics, including channelized approaches and engineered splitter islands that result in lower vehicle speeds and fewer conflict points. Unlike other types of traffic circles, modern roundabouts include the following characteristics:

- Counterclockwise flow – traffic travels counterclockwise around a center island
- Entry yield control – vehicles entering the roundabout yield to traffic already circulating
- Low speed – the specific geometric curvature results in lower vehicle speeds through the roundabout; for the State Route 68 project, single-lane roundabout design speed would be 25 miles per hour and multi-lane and hybrid roundabout design speed would be 30 miles per hour
- Pedestrian access – provided only across legs of the roundabout, behind the yield line
- Truck apron – a reinforced concrete apron around the perimeter of the center island to accommodate use of the roundabout by large trucks, buses, and fire engines

Roundabouts typically require varying lane widths; narrower lanes help control speed leading up to the roundabout and wider lanes enable trucks to navigate the circle successfully. Approaching lane widths typically vary from 12 to 20 feet, and road shoulders are eliminated next to the approach lanes and in the circle itself to discourage drivers from passing bicyclists that may be riding through.

Alternative 1 proposes varying diameters of the roundabout circles for each intersection. The State Route 68 intersections at Josselyn Canyon Road, Olmsted Road, Ragsdale Drive, York Road, and Pasadera Drive-Boots Road will have circle diameters of 150 feet, with 170 feet at the State Route 68/State Route 218 intersection. The updated design of the roundabouts at the three easternmost intersection locations, Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road, will include hybrid design of partial single lane and partial two-lanes around the circle. The roundabout circle diameters at these locations will range from 130 to 150 feet. The intersection at State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road is proposed to be elliptical in shape, ranging from 130 to 140 feet. The circulatory roadway at all of the project intersections is proposed to be 20 to 30 feet wide. Mountable aprons, 15 feet wide, will line the edge of the roundabouts' central islands to allow larger vehicles and their trailers to safely maneuver through the roundabout and for maintenance access to the island. Raised splitter islands will be placed along the approaches to the roundabouts; the islands work to separate traffic and reduce vehicle speeds.

Alternative 2: State Route 68 Integrated Corridor Management and Adaptive Signal Control – Long-Term Operation

Alternative 2 proposes making operational improvements at nine existing signalized intersections (separated into six locations). This alternative proposes to replace the traffic signal at six intersections and modify traffic signals at three locations. Alternative 2 would establish two Integrated Corridor Management segments along State Route 68: between Josselyn Canyon Road and York Road and between Laureles Grade to San Benancio Road. All currently signalized intersections would be upgraded with traffic sensors/traffic detection, traffic signal controllers, and fiber optic or wireless communication systems at the intersections. These communication devices would allow each signalized intersection to be adaptive and allow them to react to changing traffic conditions, monitor traffic conditions at each intersection in real time, and continuously distribute green time equitably for all traffic movements. The Alternative 2 improvements would also reduce queuing and the possible rate of vehicle collisions, enhance wildlife habitat connectivity, and improve bicycle and pedestrian access throughout the project corridor. Operational improvements proposed under Alternative 2 would incorporate the December 2020 Traffic Operation Analysis Report (TOAR) recommendations for intersection lane configurations that considered the 2045 forecasted peak traffic volumes as well as recent lane configuration reevaluations (removal of right-turn lane) at the Corral de Tierra Road intersection.

Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay

This section has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and includes information from the Traffic Operations Analysis of Updated Alternative 1 for Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project memorandum, prepared by Caltrans January 2025. For Alternative 1, a reduction in Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay (DVHD) for both existing traffic conditions (2025) and future traffic conditions (2035 and 2045) is identified in the 2023 Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum. A further improvement in delay savings resulted from the analysis of the updated Alternative 1 design with hybrid roundabouts at the three easterly intersection locations. These results were compiled based on the operation of the entire corridor for each of the studied alternatives. Table 2.1.9.9 shows projected Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay as well as the Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay savings for Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 compared with the No-Build condition. A positive Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay savings denotes an improvement over the No-Build, while a negative Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay savings indicates worse performance than the No-Build.

According to the Traffic Analysis of Updated Alternative 1, the proposed roundabouts are estimated to result in a Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay savings of 2,787, 4,419 , and 5,206 hours in 2025, 2035, and 2045, respectively. These delay savings result in a reduction of Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay of over 28 percent in 2045 compared with the No-Build Alternative. The Alternative 2 intersection improvements are anticipated to result in higher Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay savings of 4,056, 8,057, and 13,188 in 2025, 2035, and 2045, respectively, over the No-Build conditions.

Table 2.1.9.9 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay Comparison of Alternatives

Alternative	2025 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay	2025 Savings of Delay	2035 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay	2035 Savings of Delay	2045 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay	2045 Savings of Delay
No-Build Alternative	6,609	Not Applicable	11,583	Not Applicable	18,457	Not Applicable
Alternative 1 (updated): 5 single-lane, 1 multi-lane, and 3 hybrid Roundabouts	3,821	2,787	7,164	4,419	13,251	5,206
Alternative 2: Expanded Signalized Intersections	2,553	4,056	3,526	8,057	5,269	13,188

Sources: Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum, Table 1 (Caltrans, August 2023), and Traffic Operational Analysis of Updated Alternative 1 (Caltrans, January 2025).

Daily Person Hours of Delay

This section has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and includes information from the Traffic Operations Analysis of Updated Alternative 1 for Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project memorandum, prepared by Caltrans January 2025. The 2023 Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum and the Traffic Operations Analysis of Updated Alternative 1 also provide the traffic operations metric of Daily Person Hours of Delay (DPHD), which is related to Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay based on the typical vehicle occupancy rate. The No-Build Alternative provides the conditions without the project, and a positive Daily Person Hours of Delay savings denotes an improvement over the No-Build condition.

According to the 2025 Traffic Operations Analysis of Updated Alternative 1, the proposed roundabouts (Alternative 1) will result in over 28 percent savings in Daily Person Hours of Delay in the 2045 horizon year over the No-Build condition, an improvement of just under 3.5 percent over the mostly single-lane roundabout designs. Likewise, Alternative 2 would result in the savings of 7,097, 14,100, and 23,079 Daily Person Hours of Delay in 2025, 2035, and 2045, respectively. This translates to a reduction in Daily Person Hours of Delay of 71 percent in 2045. Table 2.1.9.10 shows 2045 projected Daily Person Hours of Delay for horizon years 2025, 2035 and 2045 for Alternatives 1 and 2, and the No-Build condition, as well as the Daily Person Hours of Delay savings of the build alternatives over the No-Build condition.

Table 2.1.9.10 Daily Person Hours of Delay Comparison of Alternatives

Alternative	2025 Daily Person Hours of Delay	2025 Savings of Delay	2035 Daily Person Hours of Delay	2035 Savings of Delay	2045 Daily Person Hours of Delay	2045 Savings of Delay
No-Build Alternative	11,565	Not Applicable	20,270	Not Applicable	32,300	Not Applicable
Alternative 1 (updated): 5 single-lane, 1 multi-lane, and 3 hybrid Roundabouts	6,688	4,844	12,536	7,734	23,189	9,111
Alternative 2: Expanded Signalized Intersections	4,468	7,097	6,170	14,100	9,221	23,079

Source: Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum, Table 2 (Caltrans, August 2023) and Traffic Operational Analysis of Updated Alternative 1 (Caltrans, January 2025)..

Alternative 1 State Route 68 Roundabout Overall Corridor Operations: Traffic Flow and Efficiency

Eliminating bottlenecks at the existing signalized intersections along the State Route 68 corridor is anticipated to improve the overall average travel speed through the corridor during peak hours of operation. The following tables provide the peak period Vehicle Hours of Delay comparison for the project alternatives for the entire project corridor, including the nine project intersections. Unlike Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay, the Vehicle Hours of Delay metric accounts only for network-level delays experienced during each of the peak hours (morning and evening). Under the No-Build Alternative, vehicle delay would be greater, and delays would become increasingly higher in subsequent future years compared to existing delay conditions. The No-Build Alternative provides the conditions without the project, and a positive Vehicle Hours of Delay savings denotes an improvement over the No-Build condition; a negative Vehicle Hours of Delay savings indicates worse performance than the No-Build condition.

As shown in Table 2.1.9.11, the morning peak hour Vehicle Hours of Delay performance of updated Alternative 1 is marginally better than the No-Build condition in horizon years 2025 and 2035, with a small Vehicle Hours of Delay savings over the No-Build condition. In the 2045 morning peak hour, the Alternative 1 performance will have a significant Vehicle Hours of Delay savings over the No-Build Alternative. Alternative 2 would have the greatest amount of delay savings.

Table 2.1.9.12 shows the evening peak hour performance of each alternative. The evening peak hour performance of updated Alternative 1 will have significant Vehicle Hours of Delay savings over the No-Build condition. Alternative 2 offers the best delay savings overall.

Table 2.1.9.11 Morning Peak Hour Vehicle Hours of Delay Comparison by Alternative and Horizon Year

Alternative Morning Peak	2025 Vehicle Hours of Delay	2025 Vehicle Hours of Delay Savings	2035 Vehicle Hours of Delay	2035 Vehicle Hours of Delay Savings	2045 Vehicle Hours of Delay	2045 Vehicle Hours of Delay Savings
No-Build Alternative	259	Not Applicable	455	Not Applicable	747	Not Applicable
Alternative 1 Roundabouts (updated)	247	12	436	19	625	122
Alternative 2 Expanded Signalized Intersection	116	143	130	325	162	585

Alternative 2 would provide short sections of expanded lanes and additional lane channelization at the intersection legs as well as enhanced signal systems. The additional number of lanes close to the intersection would have additional potential traffic conflict points at the intersections compared to either the No-Build (existing condition) or the roundabout designs under Alternative 1. Refer to the discussion regarding intersection traffic safety below.

Table 2.1.9.12 Evening Peak Hour Vehicle Hours of Delay Comparison by Alternative and Horizon Year

Alternative Evening Peak	2025 Vehicle Hours of Delay	2025 Vehicle Hours of Delay Savings	2035 Vehicle Hours of Delay	2035 Vehicle Hours of Delay Savings	2045 Vehicle Hours of Delay	2045 Vehicle Hours of Delay Savings
No-Build Alternative	377	Not Applicable	627	Not Applicable	884	Not Applicable
Alternative 1 Roundabouts (updated)	129	248	251	376	570	314
Alternative 2 Expanded Signalized Intersection	140	237	228	399	375	509

Alternative 2 State Route 68 Integrated Corridor Management and Adaptive Signal Control - Overall Corridor Operations: Traffic Flow and Efficiency

Eliminating bottlenecks at the existing signalized intersections along the State Route 68 corridor to reduce queues would improve the overall average travel flow through the corridor during peak hours of operation. Under the No-Build Alternative, vehicle delay will be highest and delays will become increasingly higher than existing delay conditions with subsequent future years. The Alternative 2 intersection improvements are projected to reduce delays by about 69 percent in 2035 and by about 71 percent in 2045.

While Alternative 2 signalized intersection modifications would improve peak hour corridor delays more than the No-Build Alternative for both existing and future conditions, Alternative 2 is not expected to offer improved safety benefits. The Expanded Signal Alternative adds additional conflict points to each of the nine study intersections compared to the No-Build condition, which translates to more opportunities for vehicle and pedestrian collisions to occur as discussed in the above Safety Analysis.

Intersection Delay Comparisons

This discussion of Intersection Delay Comparisons was added after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Traffic Operational Analysis Report Addendum and Traffic Operational

Analysis of Updated Alternative 1 provided forecasted vehicle hours of delay at each of the nine project intersections during the 2045 horizon year for both morning and evening peak hour periods compared to the No-Build Alternative. The analysis of the individual intersections, however, does not account for compounding delays and queuing between intersections, particularly closely spaced intersections such as Corral de Tierra Road and San Benancio Road. Alternative 1 offers a significant reduction in 2045 Vehicle Hours of Delay at several intersections with the best overall performance in the western half of the project limits such as at Olmsted and York roads. Alternative 2 would also have substantial reduction in Vehicle Hours of Delay particularly at intersections in the eastern portion of the project limits.

Alternative 1 updated with hybrid roundabouts at Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road intersection locations is estimated to reduce the intersection Vehicle Hours of Delay estimates for 2045 during the morning and evening peak hours. Tabular data with the results of the updated Vehicle Hours of Delay for the three eastern intersection roundabouts is provided in the Traffic Operational Analysis of Updated Alternative 1 (2025) provided in Volume 2 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact. Data for the other six project intersections did not change from the information in the Traffic Operational Analysis Report Addendum (2023).

Traffic Safety Analysis

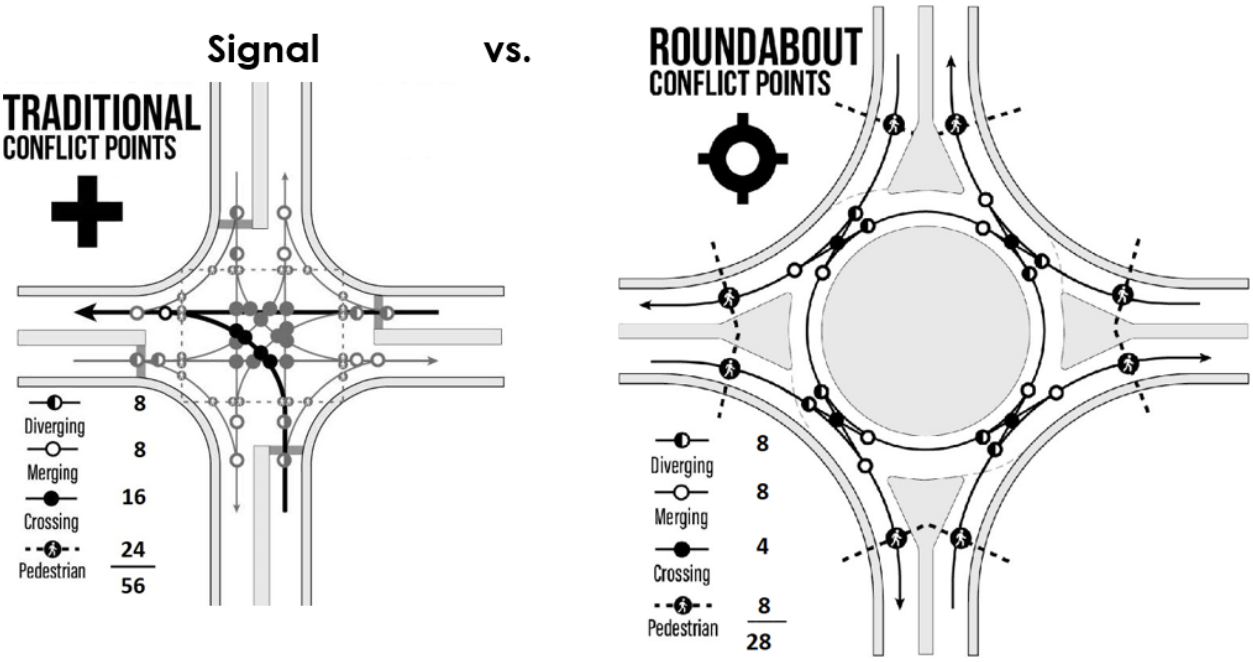
An important element in the consideration of intersection improvement alternatives is safety performance. With Caltrans' adoption of the Safe System Approach, there is an increased emphasis on reducing the number and severity of conflict points at intersections. To implement the Safe Systems Approach for this project, Caltrans considered the Safe Systems concepts for each of the intersection control alternatives considered. The Safe Systems Approach compares the effectiveness of intersection designs based on research-based measures of effectiveness, including conflict points, conflict point severity, exposure, and intersection complexity. According to the analysis in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum, the proposed roundabouts (Alternative 1) have the fewest conflict points as well as the lowest conflict point severity out of all the project intersections. Intersections with more conflict points introduce a greater potential for a collision to occur, so alternatives with fewer conflict points would offer better safety performance.

A "conflict point" refers to a spot where two vehicles or a vehicle and pedestrian could potentially collide at an intersection. As shown in Figure 2.1.9.1, a conventional signalized intersection has 32 vehicle and 24 pedestrian conflict points. In comparison, a single-lane roundabout would have 20 vehicle conflict points and 8 pedestrian conflict points. Converting to a roundabout would result in a 38 percent and 67 percent reduction in vehicle and pedestrian conflict points, respectively, with a 75 percent reduction in

crossing conflicts. Fewer conflict points would result in fewer opportunities for vehicle and pedestrian collisions.

Conflict points are labeled as diverging, merging, or crossing and pedestrians/bicyclists. By adding short segments of additional lanes at the approaches to intersections, Alternative 2 would increase the number of conflict points at the intersections compared to the existing condition (No-Build). Accident data from Caltrans' Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS) for the period between 2017 and 2019 concludes that the project intersections in the eastern half of the corridor limits (York Road to San Benancio Road) had more property damage-only collisions (ranging from 8 to 21 collisions per intersection) compared to the intersections in the western portion (Josselyn Canyon Road to Ragsdale Drive), which had a range of 2 to 5 property damage-only collisions per intersection.

Figure 2.1.9.1 Comparison of Vehicle-to-Vehicle Conflict Points at Signalized and Roundabout Intersections



Source: FHWA, A Safe System-Based Framework and Analytical Methodology for Assessing Intersections

Roundabout Traffic Safety

Various studies show substantial safety improvements at conventional intersections converted to roundabouts. At traffic signal-controlled intersections, traffic must come to a complete stop in the red signal phase, which causes vehicle queuing (waiting in line). The geometry of roundabouts greatly reduces the 32 movement conflicts present at conventional intersections; yield control intersections such as roundabouts enable rolling

queues where traffic slows but does not come to a complete stop. Roundabouts have only eight total conflict points, and the type of conflicts that remain are the same-direction variety, which result in substantially less severity, and as a result less likelihood of injury. Following intersection conversion to roundabout, crash frequencies at converted intersections have been shown to be reduced by up to 29 percent at multi-lane intersections and 51 percent at single-lane intersections. Studies also show that collisions resulting in severe, debilitating injuries and fatalities in roundabout intersections are rare.

The Insurance Institute of Highway Safety in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration has shown that, compared to signalized intersections, roundabouts result in:

- Up to 37 percent reduction in overall collisions
- Up to 75 percent reduction in injury collisions
- Up to 90 percent reduction in overall fatalities
- 75 percent fewer conflict points than a traditional intersection

Therefore, conversion of standard signalized intersection control to roundabout configurations, particularly single-lane roundabouts, is expected to substantially reduce collision frequency.

Alternative 1 State Route 68 Roundabout Bicyclist and Pedestrian Safety

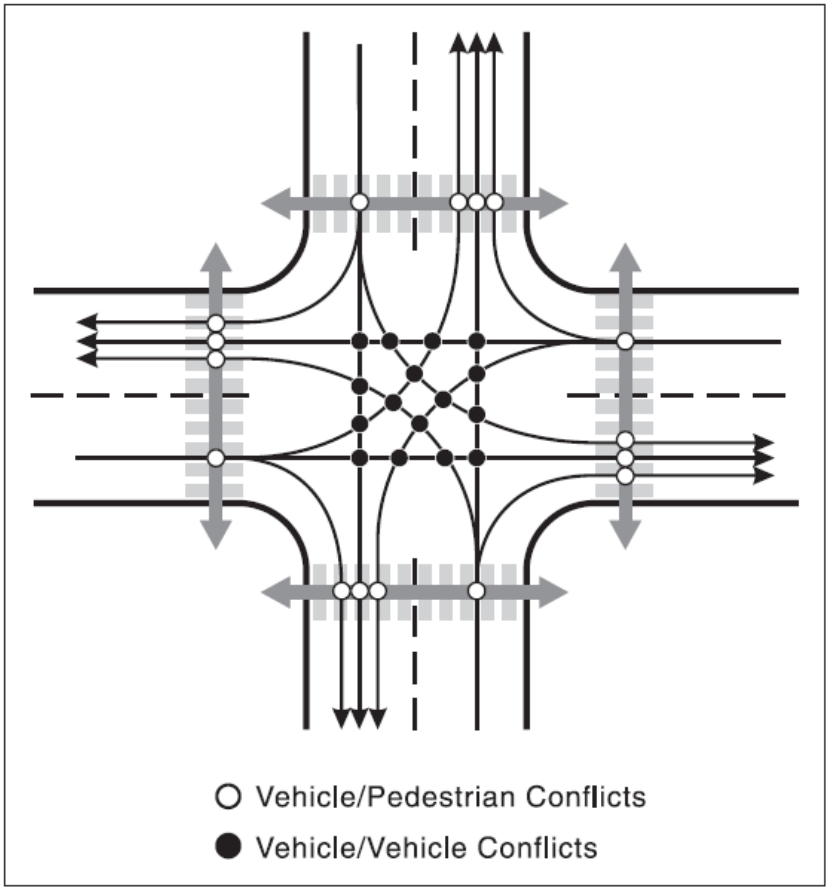
The Insurance Institute of Highway Safety in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration has shown that, compared to signalized intersections, roundabouts result in an up to 40 percent reduction in collisions involving pedestrians. The reduction of the total number of conflict points and collision severity also applies to pedestrians and bicyclists. The geometric features of modern roundabouts also reduce vehicle speed and ensure speed consistency. Lower vehicle speeds reduce crash severity for bicyclists and pedestrians. Crosswalks are designed to cut through the splitter islands, which provides pedestrian refuge between lanes, making it safer to cross a roadway with traffic in both directions of travel.

Crosswalks are also typically set back one vehicle length from the edge of the circulatory segment of the roundabout to allow the driver to focus on pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the lane prior to turning attention to merging with vehicles in the roundabout. Figures 2.1.9.2 and 2.1.9.3 show vehicle-pedestrian-conflicts at signalized intersections and at roundabouts. As is shown in the figures, there are 16 vehicle-pedestrian conflict points in a conventional intersection versus 8 vehicle-pedestrian conflict points in a roundabout.

When using modern roundabouts, bicyclists have the option of riding in the traffic lane with motor vehicles through the roundabout or biking on the

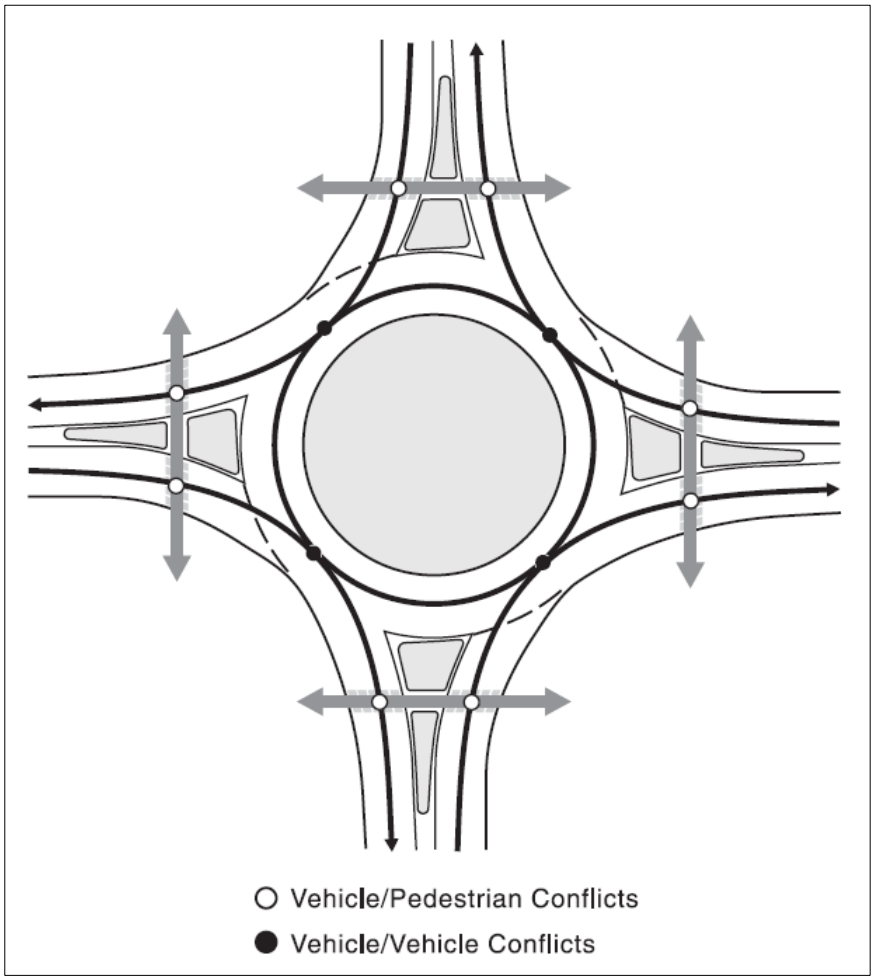
shared use pedestrian path and crossing traffic lanes using crosswalks. Roadway bike lanes end about 100 feet in advance of the circulatory segment of the roundabout to remind bicyclists to merge into the road or onto the shared pedestrian path via access ramps. Ending the bike lane prior to entry into the roundabout also provides vehicles with an opportunity to be mindful of merging bicyclists before beginning to merge. Bicyclists using the travel lane must yield to pedestrians.

Figure 2.1.9.2 Vehicle to-Pedestrian Conflict Points at Signalized Intersections



Source: Roundabouts: An Informational Guide, Federal Highway Administration Publication Number FHWA-RD-00-067

Figure 2.1.9.3 Vehicle-Pedestrian Conflict Points at a Single-Lane Roundabout



Source: Roundabouts: An Informational Guide, Federal Highway Administration Publication Number FHWA-RD-00-067

As a result, roundabouts are considered safer for pedestrians and bicyclists than traditional signalized intersections because:

- Travel speeds are lower
- Crossing distance is shorter
- Refuge is provided in splitter islands
- Vehicle/pedestrian and vehicle/bicycle conflict points are reduced

Alternative 2 State Route 68 Integrated Corridor Management and Adaptive Signal Control - Bicyclist and Pedestrian Safety

Most bicycle and pedestrian routes through the modified signalized intersections will remain as they now exist. The addition of new turning lanes in Alternative 2 would result in wider intersections and the elongation of existing crosswalk lengths at the following intersections:

- Josselyn Canyon (east, west, and south legs)
- Olmsted (west, north, and south legs)
- State Route 218 (west and north legs)
- York (east and north legs)
- Pasadera (east and north legs)
- Laureles (east and south legs)
- San Benancio (west and south legs)

Widening of intersections and the resulting elongation of crosswalks across the intersections would impact pedestrians and bicyclists using crosswalks by requiring them to cross a wider intersection in a limited time. However, the crosswalks would be better delineated, and the upgraded signal timing with push buttons for crossing demand would improve the existing conditions at the signalized intersections.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made. Intersection queues would not be reduced, and delays at the existing signalized intersections would continue and worsen over time.

Under the No-Build Alternative, vehicle delay along the entire corridor would be highest and delays would become increasingly greater than existing delay conditions with subsequent future years. No-Build Alternative delays are projected to increase from the existing delay condition by more than 75 percent in 2035 and by more than 175 percent in 2045 (see Table 2.1.9.9 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay Comparison of Alternatives).

Monterey Regional Airport

The project is near the Monterey Regional Airport but would not cause a change in air traffic patterns since the project involves in-place modification of existing intersections and does not change or create a new route. Therefore, neither project Alternative 1 nor Alternative 2 would increase airport hazards because of a design feature or incompatible use.

Conclusions – Long-Term Traffic Analysis

The project is a transportation improvement project that would not increase the capacity of State Route 68 or the intersecting cross-streets within the project limits or would otherwise cause substantial increases in traffic or vehicle miles traveled through the corridor in future horizon years. Design elements have been incorporated into the Build Alternatives to improve traffic flow, reduce delay, and provide enhanced facilities for bicyclists and pedestrian use of the intersections.

Both Build Alternatives are expected to improve traffic flow and reduce delays in the long term compared with the No-Build Alternative because they would improve operations at intersections along the State Route 68 corridor where delays and bottlenecks currently occur. The No-Build Alternative would not involve modifying existing conditions; therefore, improvements to traffic flow and safety are not anticipated to occur. Both Alternatives 1 and 2 include improvements to wildlife crossings, which are anticipated to reduce the number of collisions due to vehicle-wildlife collisions.

Alternative 2, while entailing some modification to the existing signalized intersections, is not anticipated to reduce the number of intersection collisions to the extent anticipated for Alternative 1. Alternative 2 would widen some intersections, which would result in elongation of crosswalk lengths, which may affect pedestrian and bicyclist safety when using the crosswalks. Alternative 1 would have fewer potential traffic movement conflict points than Alternative 2.

Vehicle-Wildlife Conflicts

From a traffic safety perspective, the State Route 68 corridor routinely experiences vehicle-wildlife conflicts as documented in the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan (Transportation Agency for Monterey County 2017) and the study contained therein that examined wildlife roadkill data along the corridor. The Build Alternatives include the same wildlife crossing improvements at five locations as described in Sections 1.3 and 1.4. The proposed improvements will install new culverts near existing degraded culverts in locations where wildlife activity has been observed along the highway, along with wildlife fencing installation along the edges of the highway to guide animals to the new culvert. Both Build Alternatives would provide improved conditions to reduce conflicts between vehicles and wildlife within the project limits.

Temporary Construction Impacts

The No-Build Alternative would not involve any construction activities, so no temporary impacts related to construction would occur.

For both Build Alternatives, some impacts to traffic flow and/or routing are expected to occur during construction of the project. It is anticipated that

construction of the improvements at the nine project intersections will occur in several phases, with the intersection locations per phase to be determined. Short-term traffic delays are expected along State Route 68 and cross-streets at project intersections throughout the duration of the project. During construction, detours at each intersection will be developed as necessary to ensure continuous access to and from cross-streets. Night work is expected to occur during each construction phase and temporary night closures may occur. A traffic management plan will be developed to manage traffic during construction. The Transportation Agency for Monterey County intends to establish an interagency task force to provide input from the public on traffic operations during construction of the project. Pedestrian and bicycle lane facilities may also be closed and re-routed intermittently during construction.

Standard Procedures

The following standard procedures will be included as part of the project to minimize traffic impacts during construction:

TRA-1: To address construction impacts, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County will develop a public outreach plan with input from an interagency task force to ensure public feedback is considered when planning for temporary construction delays. Outreach efforts will take into consideration potential detour locations, and timing of detours and night work. A key component of the outreach plan will be targeted communication and messaging to ensure travelers are informed in advance of the construction process. Prior to the start of construction, affected parties will be contacted for an opportunity to provide input to the public outreach plan or participate in the task force.

TRA-2: Caltrans will implement a traffic management plan during the construction period to reduce transportation/traffic and pedestrian/bicycle impacts associated with construction activities. This plan will include alerting emergency services, local school districts, and the public and all other entities identified in the public outreach plan described in minimization TRA-1.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Standard procedures described above will be implemented to manage traffic during construction. No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

2.1.10 Visual/Aesthetics

Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, establishes that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically (emphasis added) and culturally pleasing surroundings (42 U.S. Code [USC] 4331[b][2]). To

further emphasize this point, the Federal Highway Administration, in its implementation of NEPA (23 USC 109[h]), directs that final decisions on projects are to be made in the best overall public interest taking into account adverse environmental impacts, including among others, the destruction or disruption of aesthetic values.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) establishes that it is the policy of the state to take all action necessary to provide the people of the state "with…enjoyment of aesthetic, natural, scenic and historic environmental qualities" (California Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21001[b]).

California Streets and Highways Code Section 92.3 directs Caltrans to use drought-resistant landscaping and recycled water when feasible and incorporate native wildflowers and native and climate-appropriate vegetation into the planting design when appropriate.

Affected Environment

Information in this paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The visual/aesthetics analysis of the proposed project's potential effects on the existing visual environment is based on the Visual Impacts Assessment prepared by Caltrans (October 2, 2023), and the Re-evaluation and Visual Assessment Update memorandum prepared by Caltrans (July 16, 2024). The project visual (aesthetics) setting, or affected environment, is the area of land that is visible from, adjacent to, and outside of the site, determined by topography, vegetation, and viewing distance.

Regional Landscape

The regional landscape of a project area establishes a frame of reference for comparing the visual effects of the project and determining the significance of these effects. The project area is bounded by the Salinas Valley to the east and Monterey Bay to the west. The former Fort Ord Military Reservation and various land uses therein form the northern edge of the area, and steep mountain ridges to the south of State Route 68 separate the highway corridor and Carmel Valley. The region has prominent landforms, including the Gabilan Mountains east of the city of Salinas, Mount Toro, Jacks Peak, and the Pacific Ocean coastline.

Vegetation is a main component of the visual character of the region. A variety of plant communities and vegetative types surround the State Route 68 corridor, including closed-cone pine and cypress forest, riparian-wetland areas, coastal scrub vegetation, and dense canopies of coastal oak woodland. East of Laureles Grade, the vegetation is mostly annual grassland, coastal oak woodland, some mixed chaparral, and coastal scrub.

Land uses in the region are mixed, but open space, and pastureland predominates the Salinas Valley and the State Route 68 corridor. A large

portion of the land along State Route 68 remains in open space due to the preservation of undeveloped portions of the former Fort Ord Military Reservation, now the Fort Ord National Monument property. Development is mostly along edges of communities and major transportation corridors, such as State Route 1, U.S. Route 101, and State Route 68.

State Route 68 serves as a main arterial serving as a commuter route as well as a scenic tourist route between two of Monterey County's principal urbanized areas—the Monterey Peninsula at the west end, and the city of Salinas at the east end. Low-density development is interspersed within the open space-undeveloped rural character along the route. The segment of State Route 68 from post miles R3.94 to 20.10 is known as the Monterey-Salinas Highway. The route within most of the project limits is a two- to four-lane divided conventional highway with turn pockets, 12-foot travel lanes and shoulders from 4 to 10 feet wide. State Route 68 is classified as a freeway from post miles 15.5 to 15.7.

Scenic Highway

In addition to its importance as a key traffic corridor, State Route 68 is also a designated scenic highway. State Route 68 is an Officially Designated Scenic Highway from post mile L4.3 (adjacent to the State Route 1/State Route 68 interchange) to post mile R17.8 (near the intersection of the Salinas River near Salinas). The route is an Eligible State Scenic Highway from post mile 0.00 near Monterey Bay to post mile L4.26 from the city of Monterey to State Route 1. The Scenic Highway designation is based largely on the rural character and lack of urbanization visible along the highway corridor. The visual quality and diversity of the State Route 68 corridor has been recognized as a valuable resource of Monterey County.

Local planning policies emphasize the importance of preserving visual quality and supporting community aesthetic values. The visual quality of the project corridor is protected under the Monterey County General Plan's Conservation and Open Space Element. Goal OS-1 of the Element is to "Retain the character and natural beauty of Monterey County by preserving, conserving, and maintaining unique physical features, natural resources, and agricultural operations." Specifically, Policy OS-1.2 under this goal states that "Development in designated visually sensitive areas shall be subordinate to the natural features of the area."

The project corridor also falls within the County's Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan and the Toro Area Plan. Both plans have policies related to visually sensitive areas. Policy T-3.3 in the Toro Area Plan states that portions of the county- and state-designated scenic routes shall be designated as critical viewshed. In addition, a 100-foot building setback is required on all lots adjacent to these scenic routes to provide open space and landscape buffers, excepting driveways and pedestrian walkways. A similar policy, GMP-3.3, is in the Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan.

Project Corridor Landscape and Land Uses

Vegetation types are diverse along the project corridor. The western portion contains closed-cone pine and cypress forest; in the middle and easterly sections of the project limits, vegetation transitions to dryer climate ecosystems with foothill woodlands and grasslands with oaks. Creeks with riparian vegetation occur adjacent to State Route 68 and several cross-streets throughout the project limits.

Residential development within the project corridor is on the south side of State Route 68 and on the hillsides, with some residential uses on the north along York Road, between Laguna Seca Golf Ranch and the Laguna Seca Recreation area, between Corral de Tierra Road and San Benancio Road, and on the east side of San Benancio Road and the Toro Regional Park east of the project limits. Development can be seen from State Route 68, though it is mostly screened from view by existing roadside vegetation, landforms, or both.

Commercial development is concentrated in the western end of the project corridor, with the Monterey Regional Airport and Ryan Ranch commercial and office uses. The eastern portion has a few gas stations, restaurants, and convenience shops. Several churches, schools, and recreational lands are scattered throughout the project corridor.

Environmental Consequences

Assessment Methods

The method of analysis of the project's potential impacts on views from and adjacent to State Route 68 generally follows guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, Visual Impact Assessment for Highway Projects (FHWA, March 1981). The first part of the process establishes the existing or baseline conditions, including establishing the visual environment of the project, identifying and assessing the visual resources in the project area, and identifying viewer response to those resources. Visual assessment units and key views are identified. The next part of the analysis is determination of potential visual impacts that the project would cause. The visual appearance of the project alternatives is described and compared with the existing aesthetic conditions and expected viewer response to any changes brought by the project alternatives. Finally, measures are proposed to offset visual effects that the project alternatives would be anticipated to cause.

The focus of the visual impacts analysis is to determine the proposed project's impacts on views from and adjacent to State Route 68 as well as any other potentially critical locations. Elements that might contribute to impacts to views include landscape alteration, visibility of hardscape and structural components of the proposed intersection designs, removal of trees and other vegetation, and grading and erosion that would alter the overall aesthetic character.

Four visual assessment units within the project limits were established to describe the views of the existing landscape, and an inventory of onsite scenic resources was developed; these visual resources are evaluated and rated for their aesthetic benefit and for their contribution to the visual character of the region. The visual resource inventory is then compared with the features of the proposed project (both Build Alternatives) to determine if there would be any visual conflicts or impacts to the existing visual resources. Photographs from key views and photo simulations of the proposed intersection improvements are used for analysis of the potential visual effects, or changes that the project may cause to the visual character of the project area.

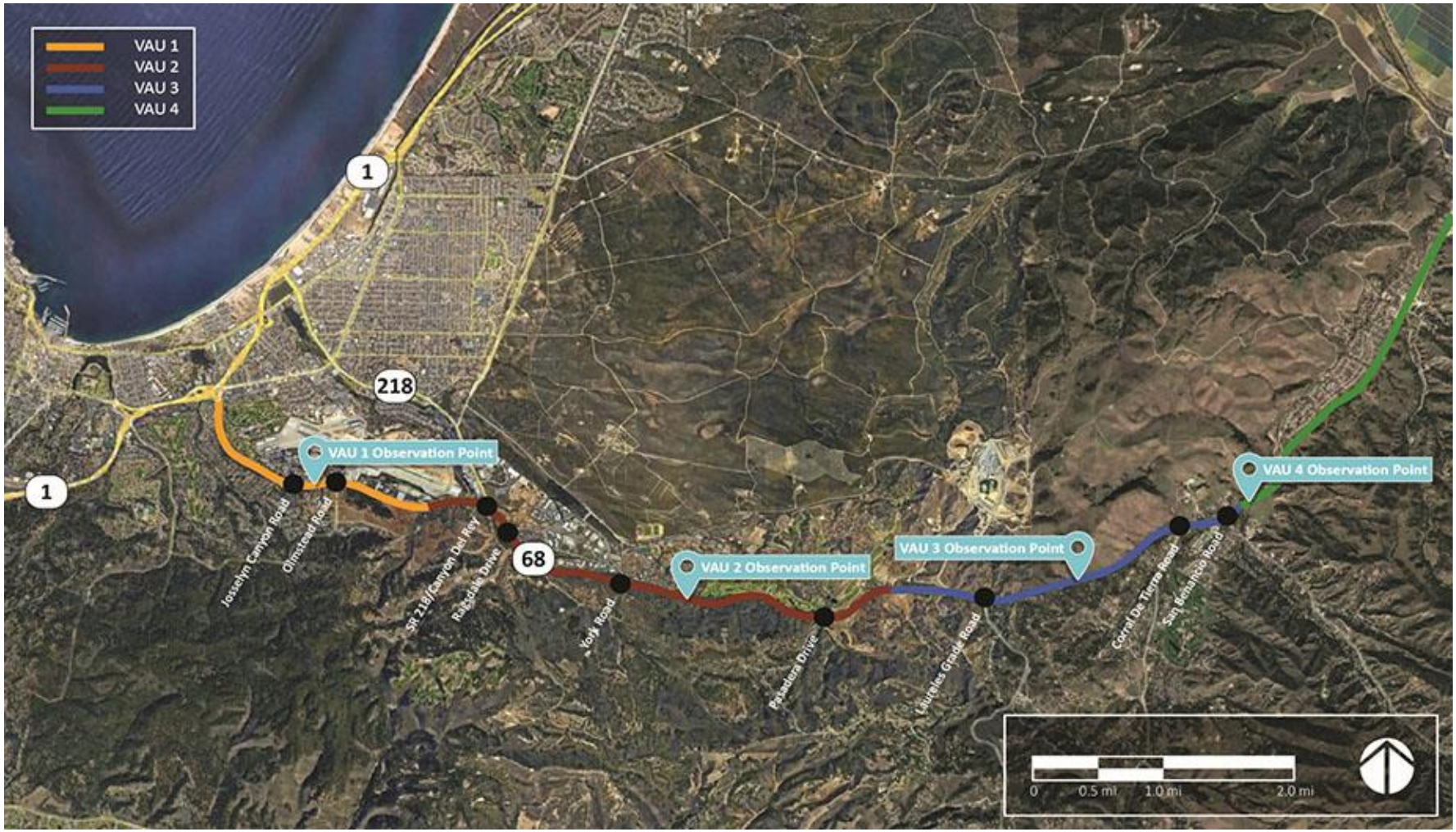
The visual impact assessment includes an emphasis on evaluating the cumulative effects that each of the project intersection modifications, under the Build Alternatives, may have on the overall visual character of the highway corridor when viewed in sequence, given the length of the project area (about 9 miles), rather than solely the individual intersection aesthetic components.

Existing Visual Assessment Units and Key Views

The project portion of the State Route 68 corridor (post miles 4.8 to 13.70) was divided into a selection of four “outdoor rooms,” or visual assessment units, each with varying visual character and quality, to characterize the visual environment.

Figure 2.1.10.1 shows the locations of the four visual assessment units.

Figure 2.1.10.1 Visual Assessment Units



Visual Assessment Unit 1 (see Figure 2.1.10.2) is in the western portion of the corridor, beginning at post mile 4.8 at the westernmost end of the project limits, to just past Olmsted Road. This unit includes the intersections of State Route 68/Josselyn Canyon Road and State Route 68/Olmsted Road. It is characterized by Monterey pines and cypress trees close to the highway edge, creating a narrow shady corridor. Buildings along the northern side of State Route 68 are visible but partially screened from view from the highway.

Figure 2.1.10.2 Visual Assessment Unit 1



Visual Assessment Unit 2 (see Figure 2.1.10.3) is in the western portion of the project corridor from just past Olmsted Road and continuing east to Laguna Seca Recreation Area. The topography varies from steep to rolling hills, with limited views to distant hills. Vegetation consists of oak woodland and pastureland with oaks. Development is limited to low-density residential in the view corridor, with commercial buildings in a business park. Occasional distant views show widely separated hillside residences and ranches. Visual Assessment Unit 2 includes the intersection of State Route 68/State Route 218, a two-lane highway that connects State Route 1 and State Route 68 through the cities of Del Rey Oaks, Sand City, and Seaside. Visual Assessment Unit 2 also includes the State Route 68 intersections with Ragsdale Drive, York Road, and Pasadera Drive.

Figure 2.1.10.3 Visual Assessment Unit 2



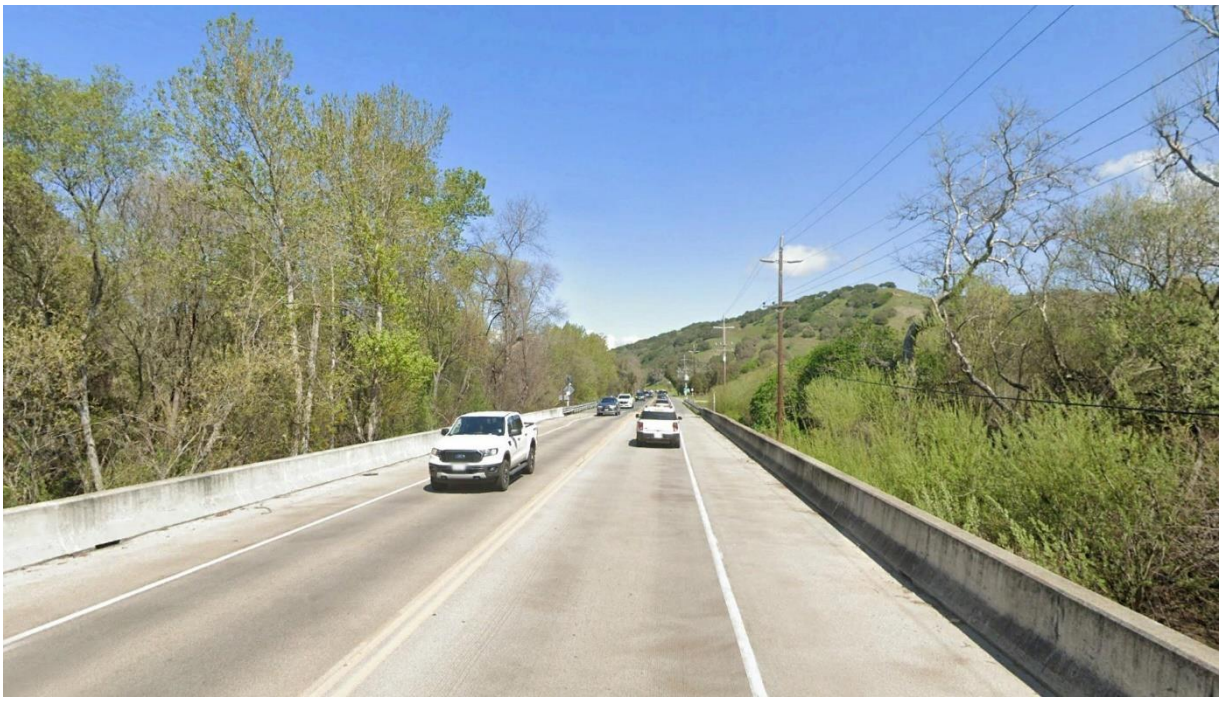
Visual Assessment Unit 3 (see Figure 2.1.10.4) is characterized by distant views of Fort Ord and Toro Park hills and residences on the hillsides on the south side of State Route 68. In this unit, the vegetation and hills are farther away from the roadway opening views. This visual assessment unit contains Laureles Grade, which connects State Route 68 and rural residential developments south of the highway. The visual unit also includes the intersections of State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road and State Route 68/San Benancio Road. The Toro area is considered by the County of Monterey General Plan to be a Scenic viewshed, and Corral de Tierra Road is a county-designated Scenic Route. A small commercial development is in the southwest corner of the intersection. San Benancio Road is a collector street that provides access to several rural residential developments.

Visual Assessment Unit 4 (see Figure 2.1.10.5) is the easternmost of the four visual units and includes the State Route 68 bridge over Toro Creek and the adjacent riparian corridor, forming a distant view zone. Vegetation changes from grasslands and oaks to dense willows and mature sycamore trees. The bridge at San Benancio Road with the dense vegetation on either side visually narrows the corridor, allowing only views for the motorist to the distant hills.

Figure 2.1.10.4 Visual Assessment Unit 3



Figure 2.1.10.5 Visual Assessment Unit 4



A representative viewing location, called a Key View, was selected along the project corridor to best represent the typical visual character of the project

area; it contains unique project area components, and/or affected resources, and represents affected viewer groups. The key view area for the proposed project (Key View 1, in Figure 2.1.10.6) was selected to show the typical changes caused by the project alternatives and associated visual character changes in the project corridor. Key View 1 is generally representative of the likely changes to occur under the Build Alternatives and provides a reasonable evaluation of the project's overall potential visual impacts.

Figure 2.1.10.6 Key View 1



Key View 1 is within Visual Assessment Unit 1 and looks eastbound on State Route 68 approaching Josselyn Canyon Road. Visual changes that would occur with either of the two Build Alternatives would be visible in the key view, such as tree and vegetation removal, grading, new pavement and striping, new directional signage, lighting, signals, and undergrounding of existing overhead utility lines.

Visual Resources and Resource Change

The visual character and visual quality of the visual resources in the project corridor are described as the baseline on which potential changes caused by the proposed project Build Alternatives are assessed. Resource change is

one of two major elements, the other element being viewer response, for determining visual impacts of a proposed project.

Visual character includes attributes of form (visual mass and shape, for example, tree and vegetation cover and natural conditions), lines, color, texture, dominance (position, size, contrast between developed and undeveloped areas), scale, diversity (variety of visual patterns), and continuity (uninterrupted flow of form, line, color, and textural patterns). These attributes are visually experienced as an integrated whole, for the perceived visual character of the landscape.

The State Route 68 corridor has generally consistent visual form, following the curvilinear form of the landscape, with mostly undeveloped lands in grazing and open space. Vegetation is landscape in shades of greens and yellows in the form of annual grasslands, oak woodland, mixed chaparral, and coastal scrub. The southern side of the project corridor has more of the rural residential land uses on the hillsides; the scale of visible structures is generally consistent with no dominant features. Occasional vertical elements occur in the corridor, such as highway signage, streetlights, and overhead utility lines.

Visual quality is defined using three criteria:

- Vividness – the extent to which the landscape is memorable and is associated with distinctive, contrasting, and diverse visual elements.
- Intactness – the integrity of visual features in the landscape and the extent to which the existing landscape is free from non-typical visual intrusions.
- Unity – the extent to which all visual elements combine to form a coherent, and harmonious visual pattern.

A resource change evaluation is conducted to determine to what degree a proposed action would alter the visual character and/or visual quality of a visual resource setting. A resource change evaluation determines which specific criteria contribute the most to the existing quality of each view, and if change would occur to that criterion as a result of the project. The resource change evaluation is considered in combination with the anticipated viewer response (see discussion that follows) to determine potential levels of visual impact caused by the project.

Separate resource change evaluations were conducted for the key view established for the analysis. A numerical rating between 1 and 7 (7 being the highest rating) was assigned for the visual quality of existing conditions from each viewpoint.

Photo simulations were prepared to show the likely appearance of each of the key views after project construction to assess potential changes and general project appearance. The photo simulations are intended to show a reasonable representation of the project Build Alternatives approximately 7 to

10 years after construction; the simulations do not include specific design details or specific landscaping components; design and landscaping details would be developed with community involvement during subsequent design review processes.

Numerical ratings were assigned to the proposed view simulations, and any differences between the ratings of the existing and anticipated views informed the degree of resource change that may occur from the proposed project.

Viewer Sensitivity and Viewer Response

The population affected by a proposed project is composed of viewers who are people whose views of the landscape may be altered by proposed changes within the landscape, and the proposed project, either from physical changes and/or perceived changes to the landscape. Viewer response to changes in the visual environment varies based on multiple aspects such as viewer sensitivity and response. Viewer sensitivity is strongly related to visual preference (values, preconceptions, opinions, historical associations, and community goals). Viewer response assumptions consider viewing proximity, duration of views, activity while viewing, and overall viewing context.

For highway projects, viewer groups include those with views of the road, views from the road, the physical locations of viewer groups, the number of people in the viewer groups, and the duration of the views. Viewers of (or to) the road are those who can see the road project or any of its components from offsite locations such as residences, commercial developments, agricultural and recreational properties. Viewers from the road are primarily motorists, including commuters, tourists, truck drivers, transit riders and drivers, as well as non-motorists (pedestrians, bicyclists).

Viewer response to changes in the project landscape is the second variable, along with Resource Change discussed above, that determine the extent of visual impacts caused by construction and operation of the proposed project. Because of the project area's proximity to visual resources and the importance of the visual environment (Scenic Highway and adjacent roadway designations), the visual analysis of the project assumes a high level of viewer sensitivity throughout the almost 9-mile length of the project. Each of the seven Observer Viewpoints established for the analysis was given a Viewer Response rating of 6 (7 being highest sensitivity).

Planning Policies and Guidelines Related to Aesthetic-Visual Resources

The County of Monterey, City of Monterey, and other cities that surround the project limits maintain planning policies and guidelines to preserve the scenic values of the area, for land use, site and building design and construction. As noted earlier in this section, State Route 68 in the project area is an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway. In addition, the County has designated visually sensitive areas along the State Route 68 corridor in both the Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan and the Toro Area Plan. Laureles Grade, between State

Route 68 and Carmel Valley Road to the southwest, is a an officially designated County Scenic Route. The County Board of Supervisors has also designated Corral de Tierra, San Benancio, Corral de Cielo, and Underwood roads as county scenic routes. State Route 1 within the City of Monterey is an adopted scenic highway from State Route 68 to the Carmel River.

Both project Build Alternatives, are generally consistent, but may not completely align with existing county, city and state visual preservation policies. The key policy is the maintenance of the State Route 68 Scenic Highway designation. Of the project Build Alternatives, Alternative 1 (Roundabouts) would be the most compatible; Alternative 2 (Signalized intersections with Adaptive Signal Controls and Integrated Corridor Management design) would be the least compatible given the greater urban context created by expanded signalized intersections. The Visual Impact Assessment for State Route 68 Corridor Improvements includes a detailed listing of scenic policies and guidelines for the project area.

Visual Analysis of Build Alternatives

Visual impacts analysis for the proposed project includes assessing changes to the visual resources of the project area and viewshed in combination with the anticipated viewer response to the changes. The analysis considers long-term permanent effects, temporary effects, and the project's contribution to cumulative impacts in combination with other projects in the study area.

The project's impacts on views from public areas include locations from State Route 68 and the proposed intersections, as well as other potentially critical locations such as public parks and trails (Ryan Ranch Park, Laguna Seca Recreation Area, Fort Ord National Monument). Elements of the project designs, such as visibility of hardscape, lighting, tree and other vegetation removal, grading and erosion potential, and roadside signage are assessed that could potentially change the existing terrain and overall aesthetic character of the project area.

Both of the Build Alternatives would have considerable effects on the visual/aesthetic setting of the project in regard to its visual character and quality and would contribute to resource changes along the State Route 68 corridor.

- Visual Character: Both Build Alternatives would be inconsistent with the existing visual character of the State Route 68 corridor, resulting in an increased scale due to retaining walls, increased signage and other roadside elements. These elements would become dominant to the rural surroundings, particularly due to the mass scale and shape of the new retaining walls. The existing diversity would be lessened with removal of a large number of trees and other vegetation. As discussed in Section 2.3, Alternative 1 would remove up to 4,000 trees and Alternative 2 would remove up to 5,500 trees of varying sizes. Additional vertical elements such as traffic signage and streetlights would generate additional

interruption of the visual continuity of the corridor, even with undergrounding of overhead lines.

- Visual Quality: The visual quality of the State Route 68 project corridor would be changed by the Build Alternatives. The existing corridor has scenic vistas of the hills, grazing and other open spaces, and gentle topographic patterns with natural vegetation, which increases the overall vividness with a high level of intactness. Most of the project corridor has a high level of unity, with the western portion less unified with views of surrounding residential, commercial and industrial types of development. The increase in the number and size of retaining walls, widened roadway prism, and barriers would reduce existing intactness. Removal of trees and vegetation as well as landform alteration in certain areas within the 9 miles of the project would result in lower vividness. Unity would decrease with additional highway signage, streetlights, and stoplights (the latter with Alternative 2).
- Resource Change: Both Build Alternatives would contribute toward a resource change on the State Route 68 corridor. The project would cause an increase in scale with construction of retaining walls, increased traffic signage, removal of trees and other vegetation, and other roadside elements that would result in a moderate-high change in both the visual character and visual quality of the corridor. The alteration of the rural character of the project corridor, in combination with the expected sensitivity of viewers, would result in a moderate-high visual resource change.

Visual Impact Ratings and Photo Simulations of Build Alternatives

Table 2.1.10.1 shows the visual impact ratings used to assess viewer response and resource change.

Table 2.1.10.1 Visual Impact Ratings Using Viewer Response and Resource Change

Resource Change	Viewer Response Low (L)	Viewer Response Moderate-Low (ML)	Viewer Response Moderate (M)	Viewer Response Moderate-High (MH)	Viewer Response High (H)
Low (L)	L	ML	ML	M	M
Moderate-Low (ML)	ML	ML	M	M	MH
Moderate (M)	ML	M	M	MH	MH
Moderate-High (MH)	M	M	MH	MH	H
High (H)	M	MH	MH	H	H

For the project photo simulations, the key view shown above in Figure 2.1.10.6 was used to show the visual character of the setting and to develop a simulation that would represent how the proposed project would appear at that location, one simulation for each build alternative. Photo simulations are

prepared using computer modeling in combination with known dimensions of the existing site elements for visual scale references with the intended result of accurately representing the basic mass, location, and scale of the proposed project elements. Aesthetic treatments such as retaining wall texture and color in the simulations are generic representations; actual aesthetic treatments would be determined during the final design (Plans, Specifications, and Estimates) phase of the project, and would be developed with input from community engagement efforts. Landscaping shown in the simulations shows anticipated plant growth at about seven to 10 years after project construction.

Existing view and proposed view simulations of each of the build alternatives are shown in Figures 2.1.10.7 through 2.1.10.10.

Figure 2.1.10.7 Eastbound State Route 68 Approaching Josselyn Canyon Road



In Figure 2.1.10.7, the visual quality of the existing view from State Route 68 in this area is considered moderately high due to several factors. The Monterey pine trees and cypress are close to the highway edge, creating a narrow shady corridor; the highway is in a slightly curvilinear form following the natural landscape, which contributes to the intactness of the view. Developments are hidden from view behind the dense vegetation and steep topography along the south side of the corridor, contributing to the relatively high degree of visual unity and intactness. Though the intersection is signalized, and there are overhead utility lines and poles, the natural surroundings dominate, for a unified quality.

Figure 2.1.10.8 Alternative 1 Hardscaped Roundabout



Figure 2.1.10.8 shows the photo simulation of how the intersection would look with the Alternative 1 roundabout as currently proposed (hardscape center island and splitter islands), with two retaining walls, directional signage, and lighting. The design includes additional paved areas for a roundabout, shared bicycle and pedestrian path, bicycle path and splitter island. The retaining wall on the north side of State Route 68 would range in height from about 4 to 22 feet with a length of about 320 feet. The other retaining wall, not visible in this viewpoint, would be along northbound Josselyn Canyon Road and have a concrete barrier; it would be about 192 feet long with a height ranging from 4 to 18 feet. The additional paved footprint, additional directional signage, lighting, and retaining walls would contribute to a more urbanizing effect. Though the retaining wall would be curved, it becomes the dominant element in the view rather than the natural landscape, reducing the intactness and visual unity of the setting. Removal of trees and other vegetation adjacent to the roadway, as well as a hardscaped center island of the roundabout, would also contribute to a more urbanized character of the immediate area.

Figure 2.1.10.9 shows the project simulation of the intersection under Alternative 1 with landscaping. Similar to the hardscaped roundabout, the additional pavement, retaining wall, signage and lighting would reduce the visual quality and vividness rating by creating a more urbanized character in the immediate vicinity. While removal of trees and other vegetation would be required to construct the roundabout and associated features, which would contribute to an adverse effect on unity and intactness, the vegetative character of the center island and splitter island areas would reduce the urban

character and unify the area by making more of a visual connection between the natural surroundings and the landscaped elements.

Figure 2.1.10.9 Alternative 1 Landscaped Roundabout



Figure 2.1.10.10 Alternative 2 Signalized Intersection



Alternative 2 would increase the intersection footprint to accommodate additional lanes. Figure 2.1.10.10 shows the simulated view of Alternative 2,

signalized intersection with lane channelization at the State Route 68/Josselyn Canyon Road intersection. The realignment and widening of Josselyn Canyon Road would require a retaining wall ranging from 4 to 12 feet high and about 100 feet long along the north side of Josselyn Canyon Road (not visible in this viewpoint) to minimize impacts to an adjacent cut slope, which is heavily vegetated with Monterey pine trees. The retaining wall along State Route 68 in this viewpoint is a continuation of the proposed wall from the intersection of State Route 68 and Olmsted Road, which would range from 6 to 24 feet high and about 2,025 feet long. This wall would be linear and an abrupt element having an overall negative effect on the visual unity and intactness of the location. The safety shape at the base of the retaining wall is required because of the wall's immediate proximity to the outer westbound travel lane, which creates an additional built element detracting from the unity. The travel lanes would be linear, negatively affecting the rural character and intactness of the view. Tree and vegetation removal and additional pavement compared with the existing condition would reduce the visual quality and vividness rating by creating a more urban character in the immediate vicinity.

For each of the simulations at the Key View 1, numerical ratings were assigned to reflect the resource change, including the existing condition and each of the proposed alternatives, combined with the anticipated viewer response at the location. As noted in the earlier discussion about viewer response, a high level of existing viewer sensitivity is estimated throughout the almost 9-mile length of the project; the seven Observer Viewpoints established for the analysis were given a Viewer Response rating of 6 out of 7 (7 being highest sensitivity). Positive (+) or negative (-) numerical values were determined for Resource Change and Viewer Response for the resulting impact assessment. The numerical visual impact ratings analysis for Key View 1 concluded the following:

- Alternative 1 Roundabout with hardscape: --4.1 (negative 4.1)
- Alternative 1 Roundabout with landscaping: --3.7 (negative 3.7)
- Alternative 2 Signals and Lane Channelization: --4.4 (negative 4.4)

The results of the Key View 1 analysis concluded that the Build Alternatives, including a variation to include landscaping in Alternative 1, would result in a substantial amount of visual impact, with slight variations. Alternative 2, Signalized Intersections, would have the greatest degree of visual impacts, compared with Alternative 1, Roundabouts, which would have the least; the hardscaped roundabout would have more visual impacts than a landscaped version of the roundabout.

The number of viewpoints associated with the project is infinite and, therefore, it would not be feasible or valuable to attempt to show each potential viewing scenario. As discussed in Visual Assessment Units and Key Views, one key

view was selected, Key View 1, to show the typical project changes and potential visual character changes in the project corridor from the Build Alternatives. In summary, the analysis concluded that both of the Build Alternatives and landscaping variation of the roundabout alternative would reduce visual quality to some degree; the types of impacts depend largely on the visual value of the surrounding scenic resources and the effects that the specific project features would have on those resources as perceived from that viewing area.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made and retaining walls and other structures associated with the project would not be constructed. No changes to the visual nature of the State Route 68 corridor and the individual intersections along the route would occur.

Summary of Analysis Conclusions

Permanent Long-Term Visual Changes

The project area has a visual quality that is moderately high, mainly due to the rural character, rolling landform with diverse vegetation types, and lack of urbanization visible along the highway corridor. State Route 68 is an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway in the project area east of State Route 1. Viewer sensitivities are generally expected to have high expectations of scenic quality for the State Route 68 corridor. Local planning policies emphasize the importance of preserving visual quality to community aesthetic values.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Visual Impact Assessment determined that the project would result in substantial alteration of the existing visual environment. Either Build Alternative would increase the urban character: from widening the highway prism, disturbed landform with cut slopes and altered profiles, construction of additional retaining walls and barriers, increased traffic signage, elements of roundabouts with Alternative 1, or with adaptive signal controls and expanded lane channelization with Alternative 2. Each of the alternative designs would cause different and varying degrees of visual change within the project corridor, depending on the specific design elements at each of the project intersections as discussed below.

Project landscaping and aesthetic treatments to walls and other built elements (to be further defined in the subsequent design phase), would somewhat reduce the urbanizing effect of the project elements, but the long-term permanent visual changes from increased visual scale and hardscape features would be unavoidable and noticeable.

Alternative 1 (State Route 68 Roundabouts)

The Alternative 1 proposed conversion of nine signalized intersections to roundabout design (no signals) would include a central island with apron, two

or four 12-foot-wide travel lanes (only the intersection of State Route 218/State Route 68 is proposed for four travel lanes), a landscape buffer, splitter island with landscaping, and road shoulders with backing in each direction. At some locations, retaining walls and/or landform grading in place of walls would be constructed. The center island of the roundabout would be hardscaped to minimize maintenance work (and associated travel lane closures) and to facilitate worker safety; landscaping of the center island may be considered during the final design phase.

Roundabouts would include a pedestrian and bicycle shared-use path, and shared-use crosswalks at each leg of the intersections. Bicycle lanes would lead up to the roundabouts, at which point bicyclists could use the travel lane or access a ramp to the separate shared-use path. All roundabouts would include signage, illumination (streetlights), and striping for pedestrian and bicycle crossings.

The curving shape of roundabouts and associated retaining walls are more visibly compatible with the rural character of State Route 68 and the adjacent natural landforms in the project area.

The roundabout designs allow for greater opportunity for landscaping (aesthetic treatment) compared to Alternative 2, Signals and Lane Channelization. Center islands and splitter islands can be landscaped, slightly reducing the urbanizing effect on the area's visual character.

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Re-evaluation and Visual Assessment Update prepared by Caltrans to assess the refinement of the roundabouts at the three easternmost intersection locations from single-lane to hybrid design would not result in any new additional visual impacts beyond those identified in the Visual Impact Assessment and documented in this section. The change to hybrid design roundabouts at the eastern three project intersections would have a similar impact as single-lane roundabouts; that is, they would result in alteration of the visual environment with an increase of urban character caused by the addition of project roadway elements, removal of mature trees and other vegetation, and a wider highway prism at the intersections within the project corridor. All avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures prescribed herein would remain required for the roundabout alternative.

Alternative 2 (State Route 68 Integrated Corridor Management and Adaptive Signal Control)

Alternative 2 would make various types of operational improvements at the nine project intersections through localized widening of State Route 68 and/or the intersecting local street to provide dedicated turn lanes, extension of the lane lengths, and provision of new auxiliary through lanes (short sections of additional lane that would taper back to the existing highway width) where

needed, and upgrades to the traffic signal systems with adaptive signal control technology to improve traffic flow through the intersection. Road shoulders would be widened where feasible to provide standard 8-foot widths except adjacent to right-turn lanes. Dedicated bicycle lanes would be provided adjacent to dedicated right-turn lanes and auxiliary lanes. Existing crosswalks would be restriped on widened intersection legs, and curb ramps provided adjacent to crosswalks in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act design standards.

As with the roundabouts design (Alternative 1), the Signals and Lane Channelization (Alternative 2) design elements would include modification or replacement of existing drainage facilities where necessary to accommodate the travel lane and road shoulder improvements. Retaining walls would be constructed where needed to retain cut slopes and minimize impacts to environmental resources. Overhead and underground utility lines and facilities would be relocated or set back where in conflict with the proposed intersection improvements.

Signalized intersections and associated retaining walls are linear in form, contrasting with the natural, curving character of State Route 68. Expansion of the signalized intersections would create larger paved areas than roundabouts and would not provide as much opportunity for landscaping or aesthetically treated paving. Expanded signal hardware and lenses would add to visual clutter of the intersection locations.

Design elements common to both build alternatives are compared below.

Retaining Walls

Both Build Alternatives include retaining walls at various locations and with differing dimensions. Retaining walls would be highly visible and would alter the overall vividness and unity of views of the landscape surrounding the highway corridor.

This paragraph has been revised since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Alternative 1 would have 12 retaining walls, 7 in cut slopes and 5 in fill slope conditions totaling just over 2,520 linear feet within the 9-mile-long project limits. The two highest walls would be at the State Route 68 intersections at Ragsdale Drive and at Josselyn Canyon Road. Both of these walls would range in height from 4 to 22 feet with lengths of 320 to 370 feet. The larger walls would visibly dominate the setting and increase potential for visible graffiti and the associated loss of visual quality. Retaining walls that follow the curves of the roundabouts are more consistent with the rural character of the corridor and would have a better visual connection to the surrounding natural landscape.

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The refined design

for Alternative 1 at the Laureles Grade/State Route 68 roundabout would have slightly different dimensions for retaining wall number 1 compared to the single-lane roundabout design: taller (by 2 feet) and slightly shorter in length (by 9 feet). The Corral de Tierra Road/State Route 68 hybrid roundabout would not need a retaining wall in the northwest quadrant and would replace that feature with a 3-to-1 (horizontal to vertical) or flatter fill embankment. Two additional retaining walls would be required in the northeast quadrant of the San Benancio Road/State Route 68 hybrid roundabout. Retaining wall number 2 would provide support for the private road adjacent to westbound State Route 68 and have an approximate height range of 4 to 20 feet, and length of 132 feet. Retaining wall number 3 would be 4 to 7 feet tall and about 140 feet long; landform grading (2-to-1 cut slope) would be an alternative approach to the third wall. In the northwest quadrant of the San Benancio Road hybrid roundabout, the planned retaining wall number 1 would be 3 feet taller and about 16 feet shorter in length.

The signalized intersections with lane channelization designs of Alternative 2 would have 13 retaining walls in cut areas, for a total of about 10,200 linear feet of walls. The tallest of the walls would be at the State Route 218/State Route 68 intersection, where the wall would be approximately 4 to 32 feet tall and 353 feet long. A second wall at the same intersection would be 4 to 30 feet tall and approximately 225 feet long. The longest of the retaining walls with Alternative 2 would be at State Route 68/Olmsted Road, at 2,525 feet in length, and from 6 to 24 feet tall. Retaining walls in Alternative 2 would follow the linear legs of the intersection, which would have a more urbanizing effect on the viewshed.

Alternative design elements to reduce the visual dominance of retaining walls include tiering or benching to allow for integral plantings, which would reduce the perceived scale and more urbanized appearance. In addition, landform grading could be implemented in the design to take the place of walls and make the design of both alternatives more consistent with the rural setting. Landform grading was included in the design for both Build Alternatives at the State Route 68/State Route 218 intersection to eliminate the need for a retaining wall at the northeast quadrant that would have been the tallest wall in the project. Landform grading also blends with the adjacent natural topography and vegetation, eliminates the potential for graffiti, and reduces long-term maintenance efforts.

Grading and Landform Alteration

Both Build Alternatives would require extensive grading and landform alteration, and the earthwork and associated areas of disturbance would have a substantive effect on the visual setting in the Scenic Highway corridor. Sharp transitions between the adjacent slope angles and constant flat planes would cause a more engineered visual appearance compared with the existing setting of a more natural landform. Landform grading all slopes within the project intersection improvement areas would result in a more natural,

less engineered transition between constructed cut slopes and the surrounding natural topography.

Wildlife Connectivity Improvements

Both Build Alternatives propose wildlife crossing improvements on State Route 68 at the same five locations that currently have box or pipe culverts. New larger culverts are proposed, with gentle approach slopes at the openings to create a more open and visual clearance for the wildlife. Exclusionary fencing is also included at four of the crossings to guide animals to the culvert structures. Gentle approach slopes to the culvert ends would be created to create openness and visual clearance to encourage wildlife use of the new larger culverts. Increasing the size of the existing culverts and creating the approach slopes would require excavation into the landscape at both ends to create the necessary clearance and access roads for the construction. Much of the area around the five wildlife crossing locations is heavily vegetated with native shrubs and/or trees. The removal of trees and shrubs to create the approach slopes to the culvert ends would cause a substantial reduction or rural character and visual quality.

Additional Pavement and Concrete Elements

Both Build Alternatives would increase the paved footprints of the intersections, for the roundabouts or expanded lanes, pedestrian and bicycle paths, barriers and retaining walls and other hardscape features. Alternative 1 would have a total of approximately 640 linear feet of concrete barrier. Alternative 2 would have about 175 feet of concrete barrier; the barriers would be treated with color and/or texture, but they would still contribute to the increased engineered visual character of the corridor. Collectively, additional pavement and concrete elements would substantially increase the visual scale, and the engineered, urban character compared to the existing more rural character of the corridor.

Landscape Alteration – Vegetation Removal

Both Build Alternatives would result in a substantial amount of vegetation and tree removal. The Natural Environment Study prepared for the project (refer to discussion in Section 2.3 of this document) includes preliminary estimates of the number of native trees that would be removed or adversely affected by the two Build Alternatives at and around the nine project intersections. The trees removed as a result of permanent and temporary impacts would include varying sizes from seedlings to mature trees. Up to 4,000 trees of all sizes are estimated to require removal for the roundabouts (Alternative 1), and up to 5,500 trees are estimated to be removed for the signalized intersection (Alternative 2). About 1,100 to 1,200 coast live oak trees and 300 to 400 Monterey pine trees would be potentially impacted by the roundabouts (Alternative 1), and up to 2,600 to 2,700 coast live oaks and 800 to 900 Monterey pines would be potentially impacted by the Alternative 2 expanded signalized intersections. The balance of the estimated trees impacted would

consist of other tree species. Seventy to 80 percent of these impacts are considered to be from temporary construction activities, with the remainder (20 to 30 percent) from permanent project intersection features such as expanded pavement for turn lanes, auxiliary lanes, pathways, retaining walls, and other hardscape features. Mitigation and minimization measures would be implemented for both permanent and temporary impacts to replant trees and vegetation, as prescribed in Section 2.3.

The Alternative 1 roundabouts would provide additional opportunity for replanting vegetation within the splitter islands and potentially the roundabout center island. Both Build Alternatives propose new landscaping, which is expected to reduce the adverse impacts to the visual character prior to including replacement landscaping. However, because of the high viewer sensitivity within the State Route 68 corridor as a designated Scenic Highway, the visual change associated with such substantial tree and vegetation removal with either Build Alternatives would result in a noticeable and substantial degradation of visual character of the highway corridor.

Guardrail

Metal beam guardrail with metal posts would be installed at various locations throughout the proposed project with both Build Alternatives. Guardrail can contribute to visual clutter with highway and road improvement elements and can also be a source of reflectivity and glare. Guardrail and posts would be stained to reduce reflectivity; nonetheless, their addition to the roadside environment would contribute to increasing visual clutter.

Signage, Signals, Fencing, Cable Barrier, Lighting, Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) Charging, and Utilities

New highway signage would be required for both Build Alternatives, directional signs, advance warning signs, and other traffic information; Alternative 1 (Roundabouts) would have slightly more signage than Alterative 2 (Signalized Intersections). Alternative 2 would increase the number of traffic signals at each project intersection and therefore in the overall project corridor.

Fencing to delineate the state highway right-of-way and directional fencing for the wildlife crossings would be included in both Build Alternatives. If chain link fencing is used, it would contribute to the urbanizing character of the corridor in combination with the other project elements and would be visually inconsistent with other fencing in the rural portions of the project limits.

Cable barrier is proposed for both Build Alternatives at the top of retaining walls and drainage structures; it has the same urbanizing effect as additional fencing and guardrail, though typically more visible being on the top of tall structures. Cable barrier would be stained, but it would remain another urbanizing element of the Build Alternatives.

The project intersections currently have both LED (light emitting diode) and incandescent types of street lighting. Proposed lighting for the intersection improvements includes up to one additional overhead electrolier at each of the project intersections and replacement of incandescent lamps with LED lighting. Both types of lighting emit the same level of light, but LED lamps are more efficient. Alternative 2, with the traffic signals in addition to the street lighting, would have a higher overall level of light than Alternative 1.

Overhead utility lines and wires, and utility poles are part of the existing visual setting of the State Route 68 corridor, though poles and utility lines are not uncommon in rural and agricultural settings, and many communities along the State Route 68 corridor plan to underground overhead facilities due to their cluttering appearance, environmental hazards, and detraction from overall scenic quality. Under both Build Alternatives, utility elements in conflict with the proposed improvements at the intersections would be relocated and overhead lines and wires would be undergrounded in compliance with Public Utilities Code 320.

The project includes the installation of two Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) charging stations on the existing County-operated Park and Ride lot on the east side of Laureles Grade, about 280 feet south of State Route 68. As described in Section 1.4.1, the two charging stations would be Level 2 solar-powered systems providing capability for two electric vehicles to charge at the same time. While charging stations have a slightly urbanizing effect, they would be located in an existing parking lot and these types of facilities are becoming more common place and not unexpected by the casual observer; the solar arrays may be partially visible from State Route 68.

Temporary Short-Term Visual Changes

Visual changes during project construction would include addition of construction-related vehicles, workers, equipment, and materials visible within and near the project limits. Storage areas for equipment and vehicles would also be seen in the areas. Construction safety materials would also be present during construction periods, such as temporary K-rail (concrete barrier sections), orange cones, orange fencing, temporary construction-related signage, and other construction devices.

Construction equipment and personnel and related activities would not be unexpected elements at a highway construction site, so viewers may have a reduced viewer sensitivity of the temporary visual disruption caused by the project construction, resulting in moderate short-term visual impacts during project construction. These changes are expected to diminish as mitigation measures are implemented and the site weathers.

Cumulative Visual Impacts

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Please note:

Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA Implementing Regulations that were contained in 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500 et seq. have been removed. Included in the removal was Section 1508 that defined cumulative impacts. However, consideration of cumulative impacts was included in the analyses for the draft environmental document, prior to the removal of the CEQ regulations, and therefore has been retained in the final environmental document for informational purposes only.

The combination of the proposed project elements to improve the operations at the nine intersections on State Route 68—such as widened sections around the intersections, large retaining walls in places, tree and vegetation removals, increased signage, guardrails and barriers—would result in an extensive visual change of the project area. The cumulative effect of all of these structures and elements would intensify the “human-made” appearance of the area. The project structures would contribute to a cumulative increase of the built character of the corridor.

The visual transition between the project intersection modifications and the existing visual setting (natural landscape and built environment element), would have a considerable effect even if the project has a cohesive design or presents a series of unrelated elements. The additional elements of retaining walls, barriers, paving and signage among the project features would potentially cause an increase in noticeability of the project as a whole and a cumulative degradation of visual quality.

Other developments are visible within the project viewshed, with few projects built adjacent to the project limits in recent years. The built environment is more noticeable in the western end of the State Route 68 corridor and where the proposed intersection improvements would appear somewhat more consistent with the developed areas.

Both Build Alternatives would contribute to a cumulative increase in the urban character and reduction of visual quality along the State Route 68 corridor. The visual change would be considerably more noticeable due to the scale of the project, with the addition of retaining walls, additional highway signage, tree and vegetation removals, and other road elements. The project would contribute to the alteration of the rural character of the area, which would be potentially adverse when combined with the sensitivity of viewers. Implementation of the measures discussed below in the Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures section would reduce visual impacts, but the residual effect would remain considerable and adverse.

Standard Measure

The following measure is a standard or regulatory requirement that will be implemented as part of the proposed project:

- This paragraph has been revised since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Overhead telecommunication and electric distribution lines in conflict with and affected by the project along State Route 68 shall be relocated and placed underground as close to the state highway right-of-way as feasible by the responsible utility entity in accordance with California Public Utilities Commission Public Utilities Code 320, local agency regulations for scenic highways, and applicable Caltrans policies.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measures would reduce the proposed project's potential long-term visual impacts as seen from State Route 68 and the surrounding area. With implementation of these measures, substantial unavoidable visual impacts would remain.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

VIS-1. Preserve Vegetation. Prescriptive clearing and grubbing techniques will be used to preserve as much existing vegetation and trees as possible during construction.

VIS-2. Revegetation of Disturbed Areas. All areas disturbed by project construction shall be revegetated, including but not limited to temporary access roads, staging areas, and other areas with native plant species appropriate for each location.

VIS-3. Metal Components. All metal components related to visible down drains and inlets, including but not limited to corrugated metal pipe, flared end sections, connectors, anchorage systems, cable barriers, etc., shall be darkened or colored to blend with the surroundings and to reduce reflectivity. The specific color shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-4. Electrical and Traffic Boxes. All visible electrical and traffic-related boxes shall be painted or stained to blend with the surroundings and reduce reflectivity. The specific color shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-5. Guardrail. The posts and beams of all new or replaced guardrail shall be colored and/or darkened to blend with the surroundings and to reduce reflectivity. The specific color shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-6. Stormwater Prevention Measures. All permanent stormwater prevention measures shall be designed to visually fit with the ornamental or natural landscaped roadsides. Swales, ditches, and basins shall appear as natural as possible. Built structures shall be architecturally treated, colored, or

hidden from view with planting as recommended by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-7. Concrete Components. All concrete components related to headwalls, drain inlet aprons, flared end sections, other concrete elements shall be colored to blend with the surroundings and to reduce reflectivity. The specific color shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-8. Concrete Medians and Roadside Barriers. All proposed concrete medians and roadside barriers shall include aesthetic treatment such as coloring and/or texturing appropriate for the setting. The aesthetic treatment shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture with input from the County of Monterey and local communities.

VIS-9. Roundabout Aesthetic Treatment. Aesthetic treatment shall be applied to all hardscape elements. Sidewalks shall include color if determined appropriate for the surrounding context. Treatments shall compliment the natural and scenic visual setting. If feasible, the center island of the roundabouts shall be landscaped to reduce the urbanizing character and be consistent with local policies and guidelines. The specific types of aesthetic treatments and planting shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture with input from the County of Monterey and local communities.

VIS-10. Detectable Warning Surfaces. Detectable warning surfaces shall be a color congruent with local aesthetics as determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-11. Rock Slope Protection.

a) All rock slope protection shall be placed in natural-appearing shapes rather than geometric patterns to the greatest extent possible to reduce engineered appearance.

b) Following placement of rock slope protection, the rock shall be colored to blend with the surroundings and to reduce reflectivity. The specific color shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-12. Zero Emission Charging Stations. The Zero Emissions Charging Stations shall be sited in a location that is least visible from State Route 68. Any associated aesthetics shall be determined and approved by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-13. Roadway Signage. The signage plan for the project shall consolidate signs as appropriate, avoid redundancy in signage, and locate traffic control cabinets out of sight as reasonably possible.

VIS-14. Lighting. Highway lighting fixtures, including but not limited to, decorative pedestrian-scale fixtures, shall be appropriately shielded, cut-off types to direct lighting downward. Project lighting design shall not exceed the

minimum required for operations and safety, consistent with Caltrans and County of Monterey lighting guidelines and standards as well as aesthetic standards. The lighting plan shall be approved by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

Mitigation Measures Under CEQA

VIS-15. Landscape Planting. New and replacement planting shall be included to the greatest extent possible to reduce the urbanizing effects of increasing paving, retaining walls, and other built features of the project, and for aesthetic attributes. The following shall be approved by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture:

a. New planting shall be a combination of trees, shrubs, and ground covers as appropriate.

b. New planting shall be native of horticulturally appropriate non-native species.

c. Trees and shrubs shall be planted from the largest container size horticulturally appropriate in order to shorten the amount of time required until they provide substantial visual benefit.

d. New planting shall not be placed such that it would block views of the hills.

e. All plantings shall be maintained until established.

VIS-16. Slope Grading. All excavation slopes shall include slope-rounding and landform grading as appropriate to reduce their engineered appearance and to visually blend with the natural topography of the region.

VIS-17. Retaining Walls. The following measures related to retaining walls shall be implemented during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the proposed project:

a) In areas where retaining walls are proposed, landform grading shall be considered where feasible as a replacement for walls or to reduce the size of the walls.

b) Where large retaining walls are proposed and landform grading is not possible as a replacement, the design shall include measures such as benching or tiering to enable opportunities for integral planting.

c) All retaining walls, including associated safety shape, shall include aesthetic treatment such as texture and color appropriate for the location. Any associated concrete gutters and cable barriers shall be integrally colored and/or stained. The aesthetic treatment shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture with input from the County of Monterey and local communities.

d) Planting shall be included with all retaining walls to the greatest extent feasible.

2.1.11 Cultural Resources

Regulatory Setting

The term "cultural resources," as used in this document, refers to the "built environment" (structures, bridges, railroads, water conveyance systems, etc.), places of traditional or cultural importance, and archaeological sites (both prehistoric and historic), regardless of significance. Under federal and state laws, cultural resources that meet certain criteria of significance are referred to by various terms including "historic properties," "historic sites," "historical resources," and "tribal cultural resources." Laws and regulations dealing with cultural resources include:

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, sets forth national policy and procedures for historic properties, defined as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects included in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and to allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation the opportunity to comment on those undertakings, following regulations issued by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 Code of Federal Regulations 800). On January 1, 2014, the First Amended Section 106 Programmatic Agreement among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and Caltrans went into effect for Caltrans projects, both state and local, with Federal Highway Administration involvement. The Programmatic Agreement implements the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations, 36 Code of Federal Regulations 800, streamlining the Section 106 process and delegating certain responsibilities to Caltrans. The Federal Highway Administration's responsibilities under the Programmatic Agreement have been assigned to Caltrans as part of the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program (23 U.S. Code 327).

The Archaeological Resources Protection Act applies when a project may involve archaeological resources located on federal or tribal land. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act requires that a permit be obtained before excavation of an archaeological resource on such land can take place.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the consideration of cultural resources that are historical resources and tribal cultural resources, as well as "unique" archaeological resources. California Public Resources Code Section 5024.1 established the California Register of Historical Resources and outlined the necessary criteria for a cultural resource to be considered eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources

and, therefore, a historical resource. Historical resources are defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(j). In 2014, Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) added the term "tribal cultural resources" to CEQA, and AB 52 is commonly referenced instead of CEQA when discussing the process to identify tribal cultural resources (as well as identifying measures to avoid, preserve, or mitigate effects to them). Defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074(a), a tribal cultural resource is a California Register of Historical Resources or local register eligible site, feature, place, cultural landscape, or object that has a cultural value to a California Native American tribe. Tribal cultural resources must also meet the definition of a historical resource. Unique archaeological resources are referenced in Public Resources Code Section 21083.2.

Public Resources Code Section 5024 requires state agencies to identify and protect state-owned historical resources that meet the National Register of Historic Places listing criteria. It further requires Caltrans to inventory state-owned structures in its rights-of-way. Sections 5024(f) and 5024.5 require state agencies to provide notice to and consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer before altering, transferring, relocating, or demolishing state-owned historical resources that are listed on or are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or are registered or eligible for registration as California Historical Landmarks. Procedures for compliance with Public Resources Code Section 5024 are outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Caltrans and the State Historic Preservation Officer, effective January 1, 2015. For most federal-aid projects on the State Highway System, compliance with the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement will satisfy the requirements of Public Resources Code Section 5024.

Affected Environment

This paragraph was updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. This section is based on the following technical studies: the Historic Property Survey Report for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Operational Improvements, Monterey County, California (July 2023), the Archaeological Survey Report for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project (Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc., March 2020), the Historical Resources Evaluation Report for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvement Project (JRP Historic Consultants, LLC, August 2020), the Supplemental Archaeological Survey, Extended Phase I and Phase II Testing Report for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project (Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc., December 2021), the Draft Cultural Resources Management Plan for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvement Project (prepared by Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc., September 2022), the Finding of Effect for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project (Uva, 2024), and Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project (January 2025).

Records Searches

Background research for archaeological resources was conducted for the study area, including a records search of materials on file in the Caltrans Cultural Resources Database and a search of records at the Northwest Information Center (File No. 19-0662), part of the California Historical Resources Information System at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California. The records search included a one-half mile radius of the Archaeological Study Area.

Professional qualified architectural historians working for JRP Historical Consulting LLC (JRP) examined previous historic resource inventory and evaluation surveys and reports, and reviewed the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, California Historical Landmarks, and the California Points of Historic Interests Lists, and the Caltrans Historic Bridge Inventory to assess the location of known historic resources within the Architectural Study Area. JRP reviewed the records search conducted by Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc. (Far Western) at the Northwestern Information Center, and prior cultural resources studies conducted in the project area. Information about additional background research efforts for historical resources in the project area is provided in the Historical Resources Evaluation Report.

Area of Potential Effects and Study Areas

The Area of Potential Effects for cultural resources studies was established as the maximum extent of the combined footprints of the Build Alternatives, under consideration for the proposed project. Two Areas of Potential Effects were developed, one for archaeological resources studies and one for architectural history studies. The Area of Potential Effects include all areas where direct and indirect effects are possible. An Area of Direct Impacts was also established to encompass where ground-disturbing activities would occur at each project location (intersection or combination of intersections). The Area of Direct Impacts is the area where project activities would occur—the project work limits—and includes all construction elements of the project such as utility relocations, construction, staging, and temporary roads.

The Architectural Study Area was developed to include State Route 68 between post mile 4.8 west of Josselyn Canyon Road, and post mile 13.7 east of Torero Drive. In general, it includes an adjacent row of historic-era properties in accordance with the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference, Chapter 2.3.7.1 Establishing the Area of Potential Effects, with some exceptions for large rural properties or those where the built environment is buffered from construction by physical barriers. Where proposed project work would occur within the existing state highway right-of-way, the Architectural Study Area included a 50-foot buffer area from the edge of the highway.

This paragraph has been updated since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Archaeological Area of Potential Effects is the maximum extent of the combined footprint of both Build Alternatives as well as all areas of projected ground disturbance, including utility relocations, construction staging, and temporary access roads. In addition, the Archaeological Area of Potential Effects includes the entire plotted boundaries of archaeological sites CA-MNT-3/H and CA-MNT-4, sites that were determined to be not adversely affected by the project's proposed alternatives. The Archaeological Study Area encompasses 204 acres within six discrete segments within the project limits, a 300-foot corridor centered on the existing State Route 68 alignment. Portions of the study area are within the highway right-of-way and other portions are outside of the right-of-way on private property.

Field Survey

Initial field survey work for archaeological resources was conducted from October 30 to November 1, 2017 by Far Western, accompanied by a representative from the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County. Additional survey work was conducted in the eastern end of the project limits on November 20 and 21, 2019. About 27 acres of the 204-acre study area could not be surveyed on foot due to dense vegetation or prohibited access (Permits to Enter were not approved), but just over 4 acres of the 27 acres had been surveyed as part of previous studies, therefore leaving about 23 acres, or 11 percent of the study area not surveyed.

For architectural resources, JRP conducted reconnaissance field surveys of the entire Architectural Survey Area on December 19, 2019 to establish the Architectural Study Area and the historical resources within the study area also referred to as the survey population. Intensive-level surveys were conducted on April 23 and May 7, 2020, with some limitations in place for safety due to conditions during the early part of the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Native American Consultation

An initial request was made to the Native American Heritage Commission on June 28, 2019 to search the Sacred Lands files for cultural resources within the Scenic Route 68 project; the Native American Heritage Commission responded that the files were negative for cultural resources and provided a list of Native American contacts within the region. In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and as required under CEQA Public Resources Code 21080.3.1, and Assembly Bill 52, Caltrans consulted with pertinent Native American contacts to identify potential Native American resources within the Area of Potential Effects. A Consultation Group was formed for purposes of project consultation among representatives from Native American tribes in the project region. Chapter 4.0, Comments and Coordination, provides additional detail regarding Native American consultation efforts.

Results

Historic-Era Resources: Twenty historic-era properties within the project Architectural Study Area were evaluated, or reevaluated. Nineteen of those properties were found not to meet the significance and integrity evaluation criteria of the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources. Those resources are listed in Table 2.1.11.1.

One property within the study area—2999 Monterey Salinas Highway, referenced as CA-MNT-1438/H (P-27-001459)—was previously determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources, and is considered an historic property under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and an historic resource for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The property includes the Ryan House/Cademartori's Restaurant (currently known as Tarpy's Roadhouse). The Ryan House was built in the mid-1920s in a sprawling Arts and Crafts style, characterized by intricate local stonework. The property also includes multiple outbuildings and landscape features. Stone archways form openings for some of the building's doors, and a prominent archway provides access to the main building's courtyard. The courtyard includes log- and concrete-framed pergolas, a commemorative bas-relief of the American Expeditionary Force of World War I, and a dining alcove with a concrete bench and pedestal set into the masonry walls. In addition to the main building, the property includes contributing outbuilds and landscape features such as circular stone posts flanking the driveway from State Route 68, stone mastery retaining walls and staircases, a stone- and concrete-lined pond, landscaping, and sculptures.

In 1994, Portia Lee and Parsons Brinkerhoff Quade and Douglas, Inc. recommended the residential complex to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its local historical significance as the work of an owner-designer-builder using local stone, rocks and natural materials. A subsequent study by the consulting firm SWCA in 2014 concurred with the eligibility finding and also recommended its eligibility for the California Register of Historic Resources under Criterion 3 as a historic district that included its landscape elements. The results of the field survey conducted for the project concurred that this resource retains sufficient historic integrity and, therefore, remains eligible for both the National and California registers. This site is also described below under Archaeological Resources because the site is a combination of an historic-era and prehistoric habitation site.

Table 2.1.11.1 lists the historic-era resources evaluated for the project and their respective eligibilities for the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources. Included are several resources previously evaluated for other projects in the area.

Table 2.1.11.1 Historic-Era Resources Evaluated for National and California Registers

Assessor's Parcel Number	Address/Location	Eligibility for National Register or California Registers
013-271-002-000	1375 Josselyn Canyon Road, Monterey	No
013-271-003-000	1349 Josselyn Canyon Road, Monterey	No
100-241-053-000	1360 Josselyn Canyon Road, Monterey	No
101-231-003-000	1529 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Monterey	No
013-322-006-000	2700 Garden Road, Monterey	No
013-222-008-000	2801 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Monterey	No
013-221-012-000	2901 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Monterey	No
259-021-002-000 Ryan House/ Cademartori Restaurant (currently Tarpy's Roadhouse)	2999 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Del Rey Oaks	**Yes**
012-601-017-000, 012-601-026-000	181 Calle del Oaks, Del Rey Oaks	No
173-071-048-000, 173-071-056-000	10520 York Road, Monterey County	No
173-062-005-000	906 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Monterey County	No
173-062-004-000	900 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Monterey County	No
173-062-002-000	902 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Monterey County	No
173-031-010-000	918 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Monterey County	No
161-641-018-000, 161-641-019	2 Corral de Tierra Road, Monterey County	No
161-641-017-000	12 Corral de Tierra Road, Monterey County	No
161-541-001, -002, and -003-000, 616-571-001-000	23799 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Monterey County	No
161-061-004-000	8 San Benancio Road, Monterey County	No
161-061-003-000	727 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Monterey County	No (previously determined)
161-011-084-000	715 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Monterey County	No (previously determined)
El Toro Creek Bridge	Bridge Number 44 0264 (State owned)	No (previously determined)

Archaeological Resources: This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Records searches indicate that 81 previous cultural resource studies have been conducted within a one-half-mile radius of the study area; of those, 41 of the studies are within or bisect the direct study area. Thirty-six resources were previously recorded within the one-half-mile records search radius. Seven of those 36 resources are in or bisect the project study area: three are prehistoric habitation sites, two are multi-component sites consisting of a prehistoric habitation site, a historic-era residential site, one historic residence, and one isolated find. Each of the seven sites is briefly described below. Due to the sensitive nature of prehistoric resources and the need for confidentiality, the locations of specific prehistoric resources are not disclosed in this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

CA-MNT-3/H (P-27-000139)

This site is a late prehistoric habitation with midden originally recorded in 1948. Multiple investigations of the site have been conducted over the years and in 1989 it was determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places with concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Officer. The archaeological investigations conducted for the proposed project focused on the previously untested portions of the site within the project Area of Potential Effects to determine whether or not those portions contributed to the qualities for which the previously tested portion of the site was found eligible. Extended Phase I testing of portions of the site within the project area revealed very sparce surficial and deeply buried archaeological deposits. It was recommended that these deposits do not to contribute to the qualities for which the site was found eligible due to the low density and diversity of cultural materials recovered.

CA-MNT-4/267 (P-27-000140/000373)

Sites MNT-4 and MNT-267 were both recorded in 1948 as small prehistoric habitation sites. During a testing program in 1975, the two sites were combined as a complex as they overlapped. The site is referred to herewith as CA-MNT-4. Phase II testing of a small portion of the entire site complex conducted as part of studies for another project in the area in 2005 concluded with identification of intact deposits and a recommendation of the site being eligible for listing.

The investigation of another portion of the site complex for the proposed Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project determined that no further site testing would be conducted due to sensitive biological resources in the area. Cultural resource testing will resume when the biological federal jurisdictional permits have been received to allow testing within jurisdictional areas. Consultation to determine effects to potential cultural resources will be ongoing with the State Historic Preservation Officer and Caltrans Cultural Studies Office.

CA-MNT-1262 (P-27-001299)

This site is a prehistoric habitation originally recorded in 1984. Extended Phase I testing conducted by Far Western in support of the project included testing portions of the site within the project study area and resulted in negative findings. The site boundaries were redrawn to exclude the areas of negative findings, and the site record was updated.

CA-MNT-280 (P-27-000385)

Site MNT-280 was originally recorded in 1950 as the Fort Ord Military Reservation occupation site destroyed by bulldozing activity in 1940. Extended Phase I testing conducted by Far Western in support of the project determined that the portions of CA-MNT-280 that were mapped within the project area resulted in negative findings. The site boundaries were redrawn to exclude areas of negative findings, and the site record was updated.

CA-MNT-1438/H (P-27-001459)

Site CA-MNT-1438/H is a combination prehistoric and historic site that includes the Ryan House/Cademartori Restaurant (Tarpy's Roadhouse) and a prehistoric habitation site. The Ryan House was originally constructed as an Arts and Crafts style home built in the mid-1920s using local stone. It has since been converted into a restaurant. The property also includes several character-defining landscape features, including circular stone posts flanking the driveway from State Route 68, stone masonry retaining walls and staircases, a stone and concrete-lined pond, landscaping and sculptures. This property is the only historic-era resource in the Area of Potential Effects determined to be eligible for both the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources. Refer to additional description above under Historic-Era Resources.

The prehistoric habitation site on the same property (CA-MNT-723/P-27-000803) was originally recorded in 1977, noting one burial (no associated documentation was filed); a 1993 study found that 90 percent of the site was disturbed by various construction projects of local development. The archaeological investigation by Far Western for this project resulted in negative findings within the study area.

P-27-002715

This site is a single-family California Ranch-style residence constructed in 1953. The residence is a single-story cross-gabled, medium-pitched wood-shingle roof, with walls of modern adobe and vertical board and batten. The style is a typical example of post-World War II architecture of the region. Previous study conducted in 2003 recommended the residence as not eligible for listing in the National or California registers.

P-27-002868

This resource is an isolated brown silicate flake documented in 2002 by a prior study. The record indicates the site may be a larger site with a subsurface deposit.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

Buried Archaeological Site Assessment

A buried archaeological site assessment, referencing data from the Soil Survey Geographic Database, the California Mines and Geology and in-house geographic information systems data, shows nine main landforms associated with nine distinct soil types; modeling of the relationships of area water, slopes and elevation data concluded that most of the project area (about 86 percent) has either Low or Lowest potential for buried archaeological sites. However, the eastern portion of the project area (about 14 percent of the area) has Moderate to Highest potential for buried sites.

Both Build Alternatives have the potential for deep ground disturbance (over 3 feet of depth) during construction. Therefore, buried archaeological remains could be encountered by earth disturbance activities.

Extended Phase I and Phase II archaeological evaluations were conducted in July 2020 and focused on five of these previously recorded archaeological sites: CA-MNT-3, CA-MNT-4, CA-MNT-280, CA-MNT-1262, and CA-MNT-1438/H. Extended Phase I studies resulted in negative findings at sites CA-MNT-280, -1262, and -1438/H, so Phase II studies were not conducted at those sites.

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. As sites CA-MNT-3 and CA-MNT-4 had been previously determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as part of studies for other projects, the State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the eligibility determination for CA-MNT-3 in 1989. Testing for the proposed project focused on untested portions of those sites. The Area of Direct Impact for Alternative 1 overlaps a small portion of CA-MNT-4. A thin and sparse archaeological deposit was sampled at site CA-MNT-4, however, due to insufficient data recovered, a recommendation of National Register Eligibility could not be made by the investigation conducted for the proposed project. Caltrans is assuming that CA-MNT-4 is considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places for the purposes of this project, and it will be protected in its entirety from any potential effects from the project through the establishment of an Environmentally Sensitive Area, in accordance with Section 106 Programmatic Agreement Stipulation VIII.C.3.

The Area of Direct Impact for Alternative 2 overlaps a portion of site CA-MNT-3. The testing of CA-MNT-3 was limited to the existing highway right-of-way due to denial of access by a property owner. The sparse archaeological deposits identified in the testing were determined to not contribute to the qualities for which the site was previously determined eligible for listing on the National Register. However, large portions of the remainder of the site remain untested, and contributing and non-contributing areas were not identified in previous studies. Archaeologists for the proposed State Route 68 Corridor project assume that the untested portions of site CA-MNT-3 within the project Area of Potential Effects have a high potential to contain buried archaeological deposits, which possibly contribute to the overall eligibility of the site.

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. In addition to sites MNT-3 and MNT-4, another area considered to have elevated buried site sensitivity could not be sampled due to concerns of impacting sensitive biological resources. As a result, the decision was made to conduct further testing as part of a minor phasing approach. Therefore, the potential effects of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 on this additional area is undetermined until testing is completed in accordance with the Cultural Resources Management Plan and Finding of Effect document.

Build Alternatives. This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Supplemental Archaeological Survey, Extended Phase I and Phase II Testing report concluded that Alternative 1 (Roundabouts) would not impact any of the portions of the five previously recorded sites (CA-MNT-3, CA-MNT-4, CA-MNT-280, CA-MNT-1262, and CA-MNT-1438/H) in the Archaeological Study Area. The 2020 Extended Phase I/Phase II Evaluation efforts concluded that archaeological resources may be affected by construction of retaining walls and wildlife crossings that are part of Alternative 1 due to the disturbance of soils that are considered to have high potential for containing buried archaeological resources. The Supplemental Historic Property Survey Report for Hybrid Roundabouts for the State Route 68 Safety Improvement Project (EA: 05-1J790, Monterey County (October 2024) addresses updated Alternative 1. The proposed design of the hybrid roundabouts at the three eastern intersections of the project would eliminate a proposed retaining wall at the Corral de Tierra Road/State Route 68 intersection and shorten proposed retaining walls at the Laureles Grade and San Benancio intersections that were proposed with the earlier design of Alternative 1. The addition of two retaining walls for the hybrid roundabout at San Benancio Road has the potential to impact potentially buried archaeological resources at that location.

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Alternative 2 would not impact sites CA-MNT-4, CA-MNT -280, CA-MNT -1262, or CA-MNT -

1438/H. However, it may potentially impact an untested portion of CA-MNT-3 that was previously determined eligible for listing on the National Register. After the public review period for the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, the Project Development Team selected Alternative 1 as the preferred project alternative; therefore, Alternative 2 is not anticipated to be implemented.

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Because both of the Build Alternatives would have deep ground disturbance (more than 3 feet in depth) as part of construction work, areas within the project limits with elevated archaeological sensitivity would be tested as part of the Finding of Effect document and the Cultural Resources Management Plan described below. Though Caltrans has selected Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative, the plan document provides guidance for archaeological testing in sensitive areas that could be impacted for either Build Alternative.

If any unanticipated prehistoric cultural resources are discovered during project construction, all earth-moving activity around the immediate discovery area would be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find. If human remains are discovered, the county coroner should be contacted. If the coroner thinks that the remains are Native American, the procedures prescribed in Measure Cultural-4 shall be followed.

The following three paragraphs were added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. An approximate 5-acre portion of the project area that is mapped in the highest sensitivity for containing buried archaeological deposits could not be accessed to undergo subsurface geoarchaeological testing. Caltrans biologists determined that subsurface archaeological studies at that location would require an Incidental Take Permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife due to the presence of critical habitat for protected state and/or federal listed species.

Given the project's minor access restriction, District 5 proposed a Phased Approach to the Identification, Evaluation, and Findings of Effect for this project due to the likelihood that the proposed project activities in the restricted portion of the project area will not have an adverse effect on historic properties in accordance with Stipulation XII.B of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement. The Caltrans Cultural Studies Office approved this approach on August 13, 2022.

A Cultural Resources Management Plan (Pacheco Patrick, 2022) was prepared to guide completion of subsurface geoarchaeological investigations within the restricted access areas of the project area and addresses the phased approach to identification efforts, including evaluation, and the application of the Criteria of Adverse Effect on potentially unidentified historic properties within the restricted access areas of the project area once the

necessary biological permits are obtained. Caltrans District 5 proposes to complete the Section 106 studies after Incidental Take Permit acquisition and prior to construction in accordance with the methods established in the Cultural Resources Management Plan. Consulting Native American parties will be invited to observe and monitor the work.

On March 17, 2025, the State Historic Preservation Officer did not object to Caltrans' proposed findings that the project will likely result in a Finding of No Adverse Effect, and use of minor phasing to complete Section 106 studies. After the testing in the restricted areas is completed, the finding of effect will be determined. District 5 shall continue consultation with the Cultural Studies Office and State Historic Preservation Officer in accordance with Stipulation X.B.2 of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement.

Native American Consultation

Caltrans has consulted with the project's Native American consultation group since the initial planning phase of the project. Consultation will continue throughout the Section 106 process. Other tribes or Native American groups who attach religious or cultural significance to historic properties that may be affected by the undertaking will be invited to participate as consulting parties in the Section 106 process.

Historic Built Environment Resources Assessment

During the preliminary design phase of the project, adjustments were made to the design of Alternative 2 (Signals and Lane Channelization) just west of the State Route 218/State Route 68 intersection. The reason was to shift the alignment of State Route 68 slightly to the south because the original plan for widening would have impacted the character-defining circular gate posts adjacent to the state highway right-of-way that contribute to the Ryan House/Cademartori Restaurant (Tarpy's Roadhouse) (CA-MNT-1438/H) property. The design adjustments made to Alternative 2 also avoided impacts to those identified historic features. Alternative 1 (Roundabout) at that intersection would not encroach onto the CA-MNT-1438/H site. Therefore, neither Build Alternative would adversely affect the one historic-era property eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or the California Register of Historical Resources within the Architectural Study Area.

Because the remaining historic-era cultural resources within the Area of Potential Effects have been determined to be ineligible for either the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources, the Build Alternatives do not have potential to adversely affect any historic-era cultural resources.

There are historic properties protected by Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 within the project vicinity. However, the project Build Alternatives would not "use" those properties as defined by Section 4(f).

Please see Appendix A, under the heading "Section 4(f) De Minimis Determinations" for additional details.

Anticipated Section 106 Finding of Effect for the Project as a Whole

Within the project Area of Potential Effect for historic resources, there are three cultural sites that have been determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Two of the historic properties are archaeological sites CA-MNT-3 and CA-MNT-4, and one is an historic-era resource CA-MNT-1438/H. The historic-era resource would be avoided with no direct effects by both project Build Alternatives 1 and 2.

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Archaeological sites CA-MNT-3 and CA-MNT-4 are within the project Area of Potential Effect. Alternative 1 would likely affect a small portion of CA-MNT-4, and Alternative 2 may affect portions of CA-MNT-3. Both sites will be protected from project impacts with establishment of an Environmentally Sensitive Area. The project will likely not have an adverse effect on the two known pre-historic sites and potential buried resources within the restricted areas to be tested. The procedures for completion of testing are in the Finding of Effect document for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project. Completion of subsurface testing within restricted areas of the project will determine the project's effects on potential buried archaeological resources and their potential for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Any adverse effects would be addressed by implementing procedures in the Cultural Resources Management Plan, including preconstruction, construction, and post-construction procedures. The post-construction procedures include the final Finding of Effect analysis process.

Overall, the project as a whole would likely not have an adverse effect on historic properties.

Both Build Alternatives have the potential for deep ground disturbance (over 3 feet of depth) during construction, and therefore, buried archaeological remains could be encountered by earth disturbance activities. If unexpected cultural materials are discovered during project construction, all earth-moving activity within and around the immediate discovery area will be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find, as prescribed in Measure CR-3 in the Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures section. If human remains are discovered, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities shall stop in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains and the County Coroner contacted. See Measure CR-4 below.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made and retaining walls and other structures associated with the Build Alternatives would not be constructed; as a result, there would not be any disturbance of

intact archaeological resources or historic-era built environment resources eligible for listing on the National or California registers.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA

The following mitigation measures (under CEQA) will be implemented to reduce any potential, project-related adverse effects to cultural resources in the project area.

CR-1. Cultural Resources Management Plan. This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project will adhere to the requirements specified in the Finding of Effect for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project, Monterey County (dated 2024) and the Cultural Resources Management Plan for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements (dated September 2022).

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Within 30 days of Caltrans District 5 and the City determining that all fieldwork required under Stipulation II has been completed, District 5 shall provide a brief letter report to the Cultural Studies Office and State Historic Preservation Officer and any interested tribal parties. The letter report will summarize the field efforts and construction monitoring and any preliminary finds that resulted from them.

If Caltrans determines that historic properties were affected by the undertaking in accordance with the procedures specified in the Cultural Resources Management Plan, Caltrans will ensure the preparation and distribution of a Final Monitoring Report in accordance with the process specified in the Finding of Effect.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. If Caltrans determines the project would have an adverse effect on historic properties, Caltrans shall consult with the Cultural Studies Office and State Historic Preservation Officer and interested tribal parties on implementation of a mitigation program in accordance with the processes for Mitigation of Adverse Effects specified in the Cultural Resources Management Plan. If the project results in no adverse effects to historic properties, there will be no obligation to develop alternative mitigation options.

CR-2. Treatment of Native American Remains if Discovered. Human remains and related items of Native American origin discovered during the implementation of the terms of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement and the proposed project will be treated in accordance with State Health and Safety Codes and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98(a) through (d). All activities within the vicinity of the discovery will be stopped and the Caltrans

Archaeologist will be notified immediately and consulted on how to proceed. A written report shall be prepared within 48 hours of notification of the Caltrans Archaeologist. A reburial plan will be developed in consultation with the Most Likely Descendent and implemented prior to construction as a condition of treatment in the event human remains are encountered.

CR-3. Discovery of Unanticipated Cultural Effects. If during construction activities, Caltrans determines that either the undertaking would affect a previously unidentified property that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or affect a known historic property in an unanticipated manner, Caltrans will address the discovery or unanticipated effect in accordance with Stipulation XV.B of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement. Caltrans at its discretion may, pursuant to 36 Code of Federal Regulations Section 800.13(c), assume any discovered property to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

CR-4. Discovery of Native American Remains. If any unanticipated prehistoric cultural resources are discovered during project construction, all earth-moving activity around the immediate discovery area would be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find. If human remains are discovered, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities should stop in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the county coroner should be contacted. If the coroner thinks that the remains are Native American, the coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission representative, who, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, would then notify the Most Likely Descendent. At this time, the person who discovered the remains would contact Terry Joslin, Caltrans' District 5 Native American Coordinator, to coordinate with the Most Likely Descendent on the respectful treatment and disposition of the remains. Further provisions in Public Resources Code 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

2.2 Physical Environment

2.2.1 Hydrology and Floodplain

Regulatory Setting

Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) directs all federal agencies to refrain from conducting, supporting, or allowing actions in floodplains unless it is the only practicable alternative. The Federal Highway Administration requirements for compliance are outlined in 23 Code of Federal Regulations 650 Subpart A. To comply, the following must be analyzed:

- Practicability of alternatives to any longitudinal encroachments.
- Risks of the action.

- Impacts on natural and beneficial floodplain values.
- Support of incompatible floodplain development.
- Measures to minimize floodplain impacts and to preserve/restore any beneficial floodplain values affected by the project.

The base floodplain is defined as “the area subject to flooding by the flood or tide having a one percent chance of being exceeded in any given year.” An encroachment is defined as “an action within the limits of the base floodplain.”

Affected Environment

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Hydraulic information was obtained from the Location Hydraulic Study prepared by Caltrans dated December 21, 2020, the Location Hydraulic Study Addendum prepared by Caltrans dated September 28, 2023, and the Location Hydraulic Study-Addendum Number 2 prepared by Caltrans dated March 26, 2025.

Natural and Beneficial Floodplain Values

Undisturbed or minimally disturbed floodplains provide natural and beneficial floodplain values that include, but are not limited to, fish, wildlife, plants, open space, natural beauty, scientific study, outdoor recreation, agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, natural moderation of floods, water quality maintenance, and groundwater recharge (23 Code of Federal Regulations Section 650.105).

Project Floodways and Flood Zones

Within the project limits, the State Route 68 highway alignment runs parallel to and crosses in various locations two Regulatory Floodways: one west and one east of the Laureles Grade intersection. The National Flood Insurance Program defines a “regulatory floodway” as the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height (usually 1 foot). The regulatory floodways are within the overall 100-year floodplain, or alternatively referred to as the 1-percent annual chance floodplain and/or the base flood elevation area, as defined in the Regulatory Setting section above, and as described below. Not all floodplains have Regulated Floodways.

In addition, the project limits encompass several Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Maps. These maps show that most of the project site is within Flood Zone X, which is defined as areas determined to be outside of the 0.2 percent annual chance floodplain (also known as the 500-year flood zone). However, the Location Hydraulic Study found that the project has some spot locations within or near the base

floodplain (the 100-year flood zone) in Zones A, AE, and/or AO, defined as follows (source: https://www.fema.gov/about/glossary):

- Zone A: Area with a 1 percent annual chance of flooding (base floodplain) and a 26 percent chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. No depths or base flood elevations are shown within these zones.
- Zone AE: Area with a 1 percent annual chance of flooding (base floodplain) where base flood elevations are provided.
- Zone AO: River or stream flood hazard areas, and areas with a 1 percent or greater chance of shallow flooding each year, usually in the form of sheet flow, with an average depth ranging from 1 to 3 feet. These areas have a 26 percent chance of flooding over the life of a 30-year mortgage. Average flood depths derived from detailed analyses are shown within these zones.

The following two project intersections and single bridge location directly intersect with one or more of these zones:

- Canyon Del Rey Boulevard/State Route 218 – Flood Zones A, AE, and AO
- Ragsdale Drive – Flood Zone A
- El Toro Creek Bridge, east of San Benancio Road – Flood Zone AE

The following three project intersections are within close proximity to zones that have a 1 percent chance of flooding:

- York Road – near but not within Flood Zone A
- Pasadera Drive – near but not within Flood Zone AE
- San Benancio Road – near but not within Flood Zone AE

The following proposed wildlife crossing locations are also within close proximity to zones that have a 1 percent chance of flooding:

- Wildlife Crossing #1 at York Road – near but not within Flood Zone A
- Wildlife Crossings #2 and 3 west of Pasadera Drive – near but not within Flood Zone AE
- Wildlife Crossing #5 – near but not within Flood Zone AE

Flood Insurance Rate Maps were obtained from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and project locations were overlaid on each map, as shown in Figures 2.2.1.1 through 2.2.1.5. Because the western portion of the project containing the State Route 68/Josselyn Canyon Road and State Route 68/Olmsted Road intersections does not include any special Federal

Emergency Management Agency flood zones, a map for that area is not included here.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

Under both Build Alternatives, some work locations are within the 100-year flood zone (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard/State Route 218, Ragsdale Drive, and El Toro Creek Bridge), and other project locations are near the 100-year flood zone.

Under either Build Alternative, the project would not result in substantial impacts to natural and beneficial floodplain values (as defined in 23 Code of Federal Regulation Section 650.105) or support probable incompatible floodplain development such as commercial development or urban growth.

Under Alternative 1, the preliminary design for the roundabouts will avoid encroachment into Regulatory Floodways and the 1 percent annual chance flood discharge would be conveyed without increasing base flood elevations. Further, under Build Alternative 1, there will be no longitudinal encroachment of floodplains, and no significant risks to floodplains associated with the project.

Alternative 2, the expanded signalized intersection design, would involve incursion into the Regulatory Floodway and potentially result in longitudinal encroachment into the adjacent floodplain near the State Route 68/San Benancio Road intersection. This is because Build Alternative 2 would include widening of the State Route 68 bridge over El Toro Creek east of the intersection to accommodate two lanes of travel in each direction and a tapered striped median.

See Figures Figure 2.2.1.1 through 2.2.1.5 for flood zone maps of the project area intersections.

Figure 2.2.1.1 Flood Zone Map – State Route 68/State Route 218 and State Route 68/Ragsdale Drive Intersections

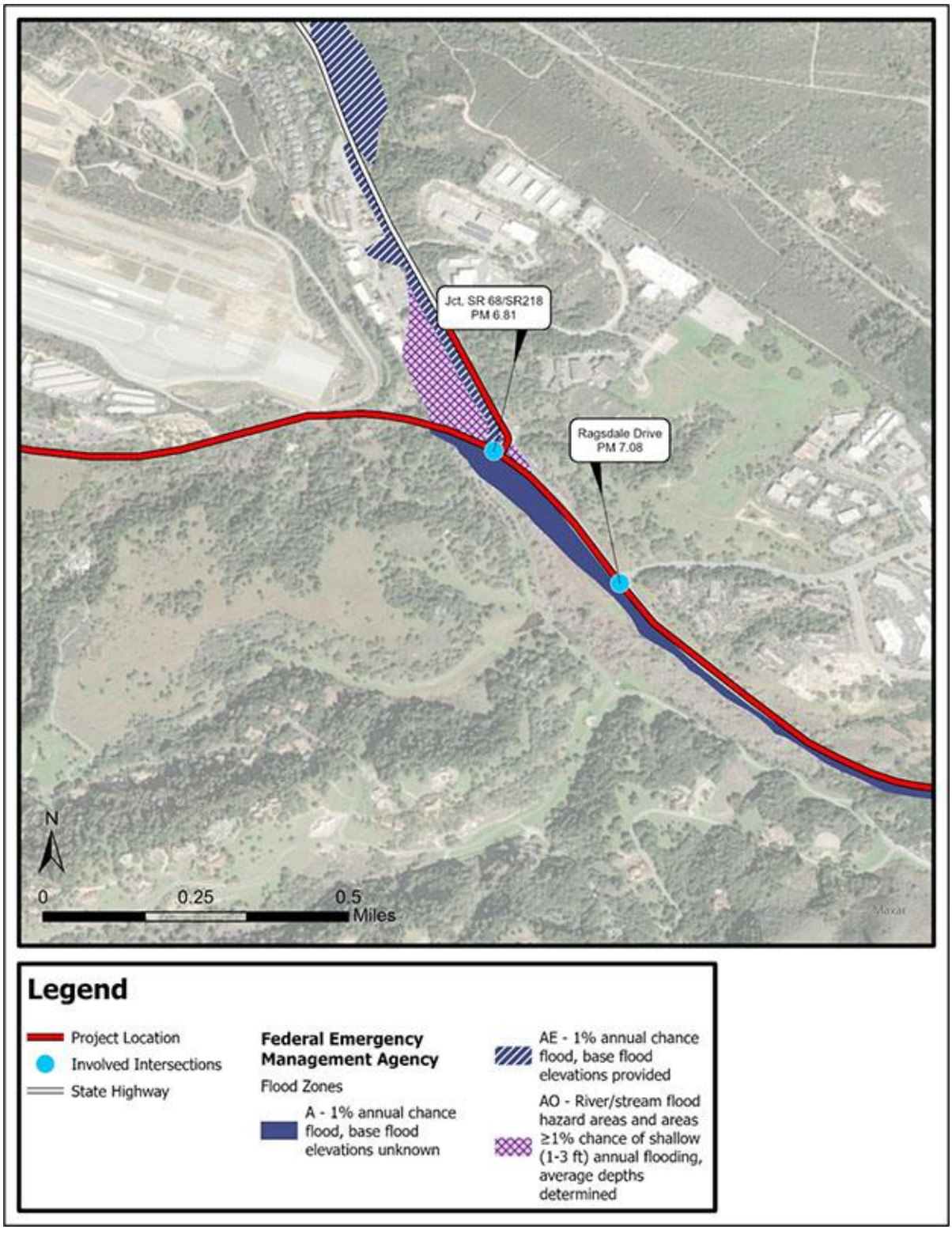


Figure 2.2.1.2 Flood Zone Map – State Route 68/York Road Intersection

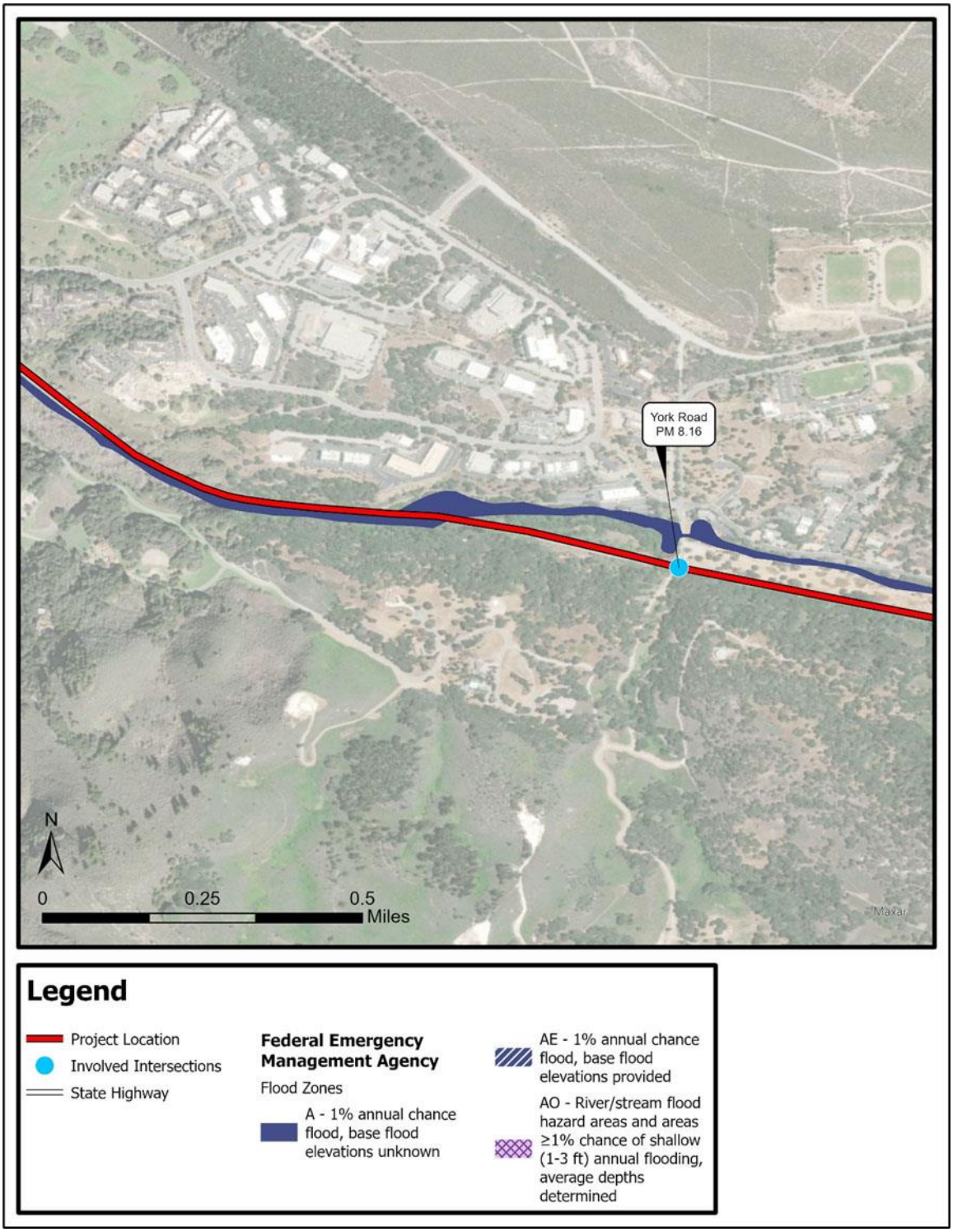


Figure 2.2.1.3 Flood Zone Map – State Route 68/Pasadera Drive Intersection

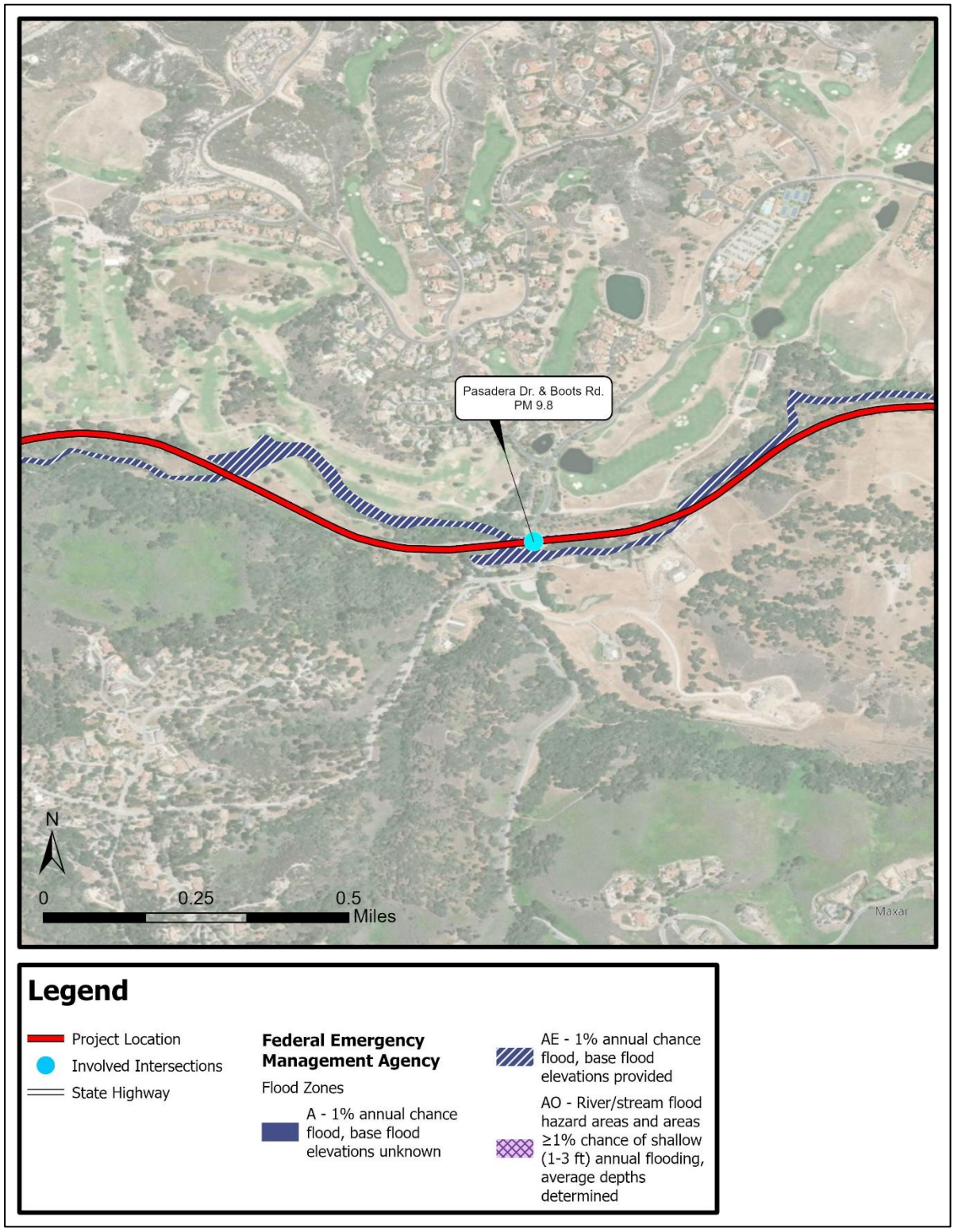


Figure 2.2.1.4 Flood Zone Map – State Route 68/Laureles Grade Intersection

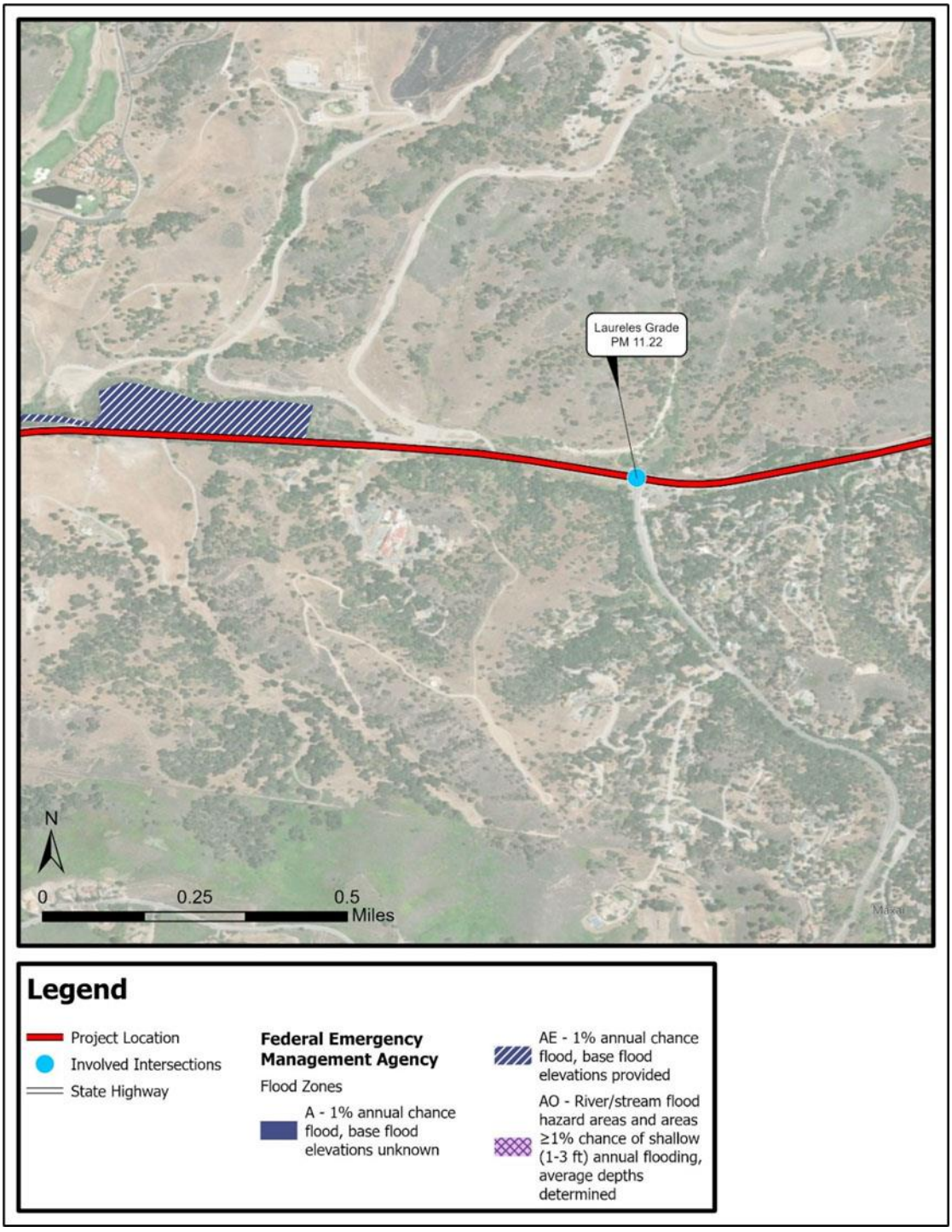
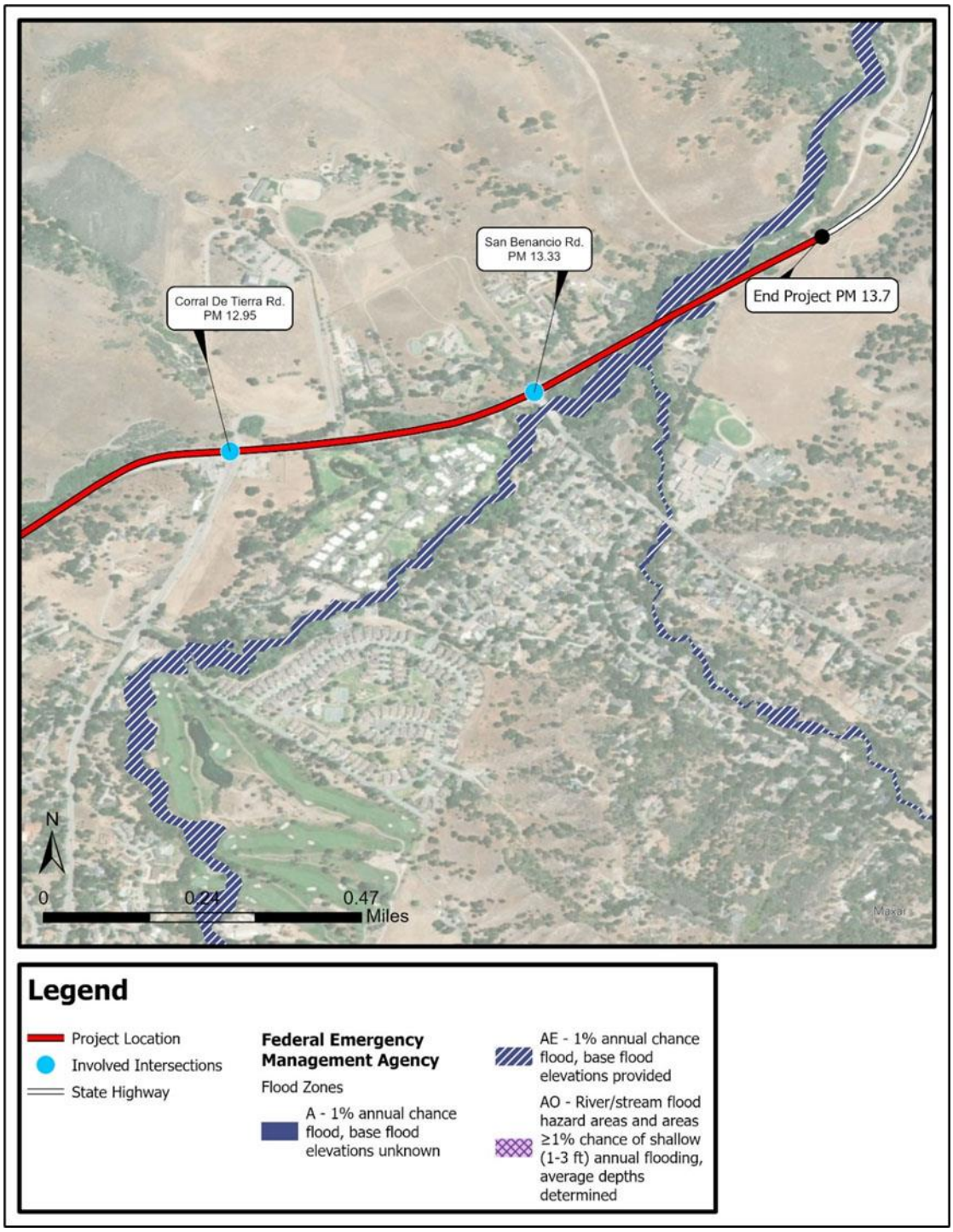


Figure 2.2.1.5 Flood Zone Map – State Route 68/Corral De Tierra Road and State Route 68/San Benancio Road Intersections



El Toro Creek at the location of the bridge crossing is identified as a Regulatory Floodway Zone AE with Base Flood Elevations determined, and with floodplain areas located adjacent to the floodway. The potential exists for

encroachment into the floodplain and Regulatory Floodway at the State Route 68 El Toro Creek Bridge under Alternative 2 because the bridge widening would require the addition of four new columns in the floodway to support the additional lanes (for a total of six columns). Therefore, Alternative 2 would have a potential adverse effect on the Regulated Floodway of El Toro Creek due to the installation of additional bridge support columns.

If Alternative 2 were to have been chosen as the preferred alternative, the design of the State Route 68 El Toro Creek Bridge improvements would be revised and refined after confirmation from the Federal Emergency Management Agency of the existing State Route 68 El Toro Creek Bridge base flood elevation and hydraulic model. The existing bridge hydraulic design components and flood capacity would be analyzed for potential accommodation of the additional bridge columns. Alternative 2 would be designed to maintain the base flood elevation within the Regulated Floodway in accordance with federal regulations and associated Caltrans design criteria, to the extent feasible. If the findings of final design review and investigations determine that the Alternative 2 bridge design would raise or otherwise change the base flood elevation and there are no feasible avoidance alternatives to achieve the project improvements, Caltrans would file a Conditional Letter of Map Revision with the federal government, the process for which would add substantial time and costs to the project.

The project Build Alternatives would incorporate Standard Specifications, design features, and practices to help address potential impacts related to Regulated Floodways and natural and beneficial floodplain values.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made and retaining walls and other structures associated with the build alternatives would not be constructed within or near the 100-year flood zone.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures would be required for Alternative 1, the preferred alternative.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Measure HYD-1 (Mitigation under CEQA) would only have applied if Build Alternative 2 had been chosen. However, it was not chosen and, therefore, the measure is not needed.

HYD-1. Alternative 2 Expanded Signalized Intersections. If Alternative 2 is selected as the preferred alternative during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project, Caltrans will coordinate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to confirm the base flood elevation of El Toro Creek at the State Route 68 bridge crossing. Additional hydraulic design review and revisions will be conducted as necessary for bridge alterations

related to the State Route 68/San Benancio Road intersection improvements in accordance with Caltrans' and federal design criteria to maintain the existing base flood elevation. If the findings of final design review and investigations determine that the Alternative 2 bridge design would raise or otherwise change the base flood elevation and there are no feasible avoidance alternatives to achieve the project improvements, Caltrans would file a Conditional Letter of Map Revision with the federal government.

2.2.2 Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff

Regulatory Setting

Federal Requirements: Clean Water Act

In 1972, Congress amended the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, making the addition of pollutants to the waters of the United States (U.S.) from any point source unlawful unless the discharge is in compliance with a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit. A point source is any discrete conveyance such as a pipe or a human-made ditch. This act and its amendments are known today as the Clean Water Act. Congress has amended the act several times. In the 1987 amendments, Congress directed dischargers of storm water from municipal and industrial/construction point sources to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit scheme. The following are important Clean Water Act sections:

- Sections 303 and 304 require states to issue water quality standards, criteria, and guidelines.
- Section 401 requires an applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct any activity that may result in a discharge to waters of the U.S. to obtain certification from the state that the discharge will comply with other provisions of the act. This is most frequently required in tandem with a Section 404 permit request (see below).
- Section 402 establishes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, a permitting system for the discharges (except for dredge or fill material) of any pollutant into waters of the U.S. Regional Water Quality Control Boards administer this permitting program in California. Section 402(p) requires permits for discharges of storm water from industrial/construction and municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s).
- Section 404 establishes a permit program for the discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the U.S. This permit program is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The goal of the Clean Water Act is "to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issues two types of 404 permits: General and Individual. There are two types of General permits: Regional and Nationwide. Regional permits are issued for a general category of activities when they are similar in nature and cau.se minimal environmental effect. Nationwide permits are issued to allow a variety of minor project activities with no more than minimal effects.

Ordinarily, projects that do not meet the criteria for a Regional or Nationwide Permit may be permitted under one of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Individual permits. There are two types of Individual permits: Standard permits and Letters of Permission. For Individual permits, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' decision to approve is based on compliance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA) Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines (40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 230), and whether the permit approval is in the public interest. The Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines were developed by the U.S. EPA in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and allow the discharge of dredged or fill material into the aquatic system (waters of the U.S.) only if there is no practicable alternative which would have less adverse effects.

The guidelines state that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may not issue a permit if there is a least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (also known as LEDPA) to the proposed discharge that would have lesser effects on waters of the U.S. and not have any other substantial adverse environmental consequences. According to the guidelines, documentation is needed that a sequence of avoidance, minimization, and compensation measures has been followed, in that order. The guidelines also restrict permitting activities that violate water quality or toxic effluent standards, jeopardize the continued existence of listed species, violate marine sanctuary protections, or cause "significant degradation" to waters of the U.S. The U.S. EPA defines "effluent" as "wastewater, treated or untreated, that flows out of a treatment plant, sewer, or industrial outfall." In addition, every permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, even if not subject to the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines, must meet general requirements. See 33 Code of Federal Regulations 320.4. A discussion of the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative determination, if any, for the document is included in the Wetlands and Other Waters section.

State Requirements: Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

California's Porter-Cologne Act, enacted in 1969, provides the legal basis for water quality regulation within California. This act requires a "Report of Waste Discharge" for any discharge of waste (liquid, solid, or gaseous) to land or surface waters that may impair beneficial uses for surface and/or groundwater of the state. It predates the Clean Water Act and regulates discharges to waters of the state. Waters of the State include more than just waters of the U.S., like groundwater and surface waters not considered waters of the U.S. Also, it prohibits discharges of "waste" as defined, and this definition is broader than the Clean Water Act definition of "pollutant." Discharges under

the Porter-Cologne Act are permitted by Waste Discharge Requirements and may be required even when the discharge is already permitted or exempt under the Clean Water Act.

The State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards are responsible for establishing the water quality standards (objectives and beneficial uses) required by the Clean Water Act and regulating discharges to ensure compliance with the water quality standards. Details about water quality standards in a project area are included in the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan. In California, Regional Water Quality Control Boards designate beneficial uses for all water body segments in their jurisdictions and then set criteria necessary to protect those uses. As a result, the water quality standards developed for particular water segments are based on the designated use and vary depending on that use. In addition, the State Water Resources Control Board identifies waters failing to meet standards for specific pollutants. These waters are then state listed in accordance with Clean Water Act Section 303(d). If a state determines that waters are impaired for one or more constituents and the standards cannot be met through point source or non-point source controls (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits or Waste Discharge Requirements), the Clean Water Act requires the establishment of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), which specify allowable pollutant loads from all sources (point, non-point, and natural) for a given watershed.

State Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards

The State Water Resources Control Board administers water rights, sets water pollution control policy, and issues water board orders on matters of statewide application, and oversees water quality functions throughout the state by approving Basin Plans, Total Maximum Daily Loads, and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits Regional Water Quality Control Boards are responsible for protecting beneficial uses of water resources within their regional jurisdiction using planning, permitting, and enforcement authorities to meet this responsibility.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4)

Section 402(p) of the Clean Water Act requires the issuance of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits for five categories of storm water discharges, including Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s). An MS4 is defined as “any conveyance or system of conveyances (roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, human-made channels, and storm drains) owned or operated by a state, city, town, county, or other public body having jurisdiction over storm water, that is designed or used for collecting or conveying storm water.” The State Water Resources Control Board has identified Caltrans as an

owner/operator of an MS4 under federal regulations. Caltrans' MS4 permit covers all Caltrans rights-of-way, properties, facilities, and activities in the state. The State Water Resources Control Board or the Regional Water Quality Control Board issues National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits for five years, and permit requirements remain active until a new permit has been adopted.

The Caltrans MS4 Permit, ORDER 2022-0033-DWQ NPDES NO. CAS000003 (adopted on June 22, 2022, and effective on January 1, 2023) has three basic requirements:

1. Caltrans must comply with the requirements of the Construction General Permit (see below);

2. Caltrans must implement a year-round program in all parts of the State to effectively control storm water and non-storm water discharges; and

3. The Caltrans storm water discharges must meet water quality standards through implementation of permanent and temporary (construction) Best Management Practices (BMPs), to the maximum extent practicable, and other measures as the State Water Resources Control Board determines to be necessary to meet the water quality standards.

   To comply with the permit, Caltrans developed the Statewide Storm Water Management Plan to address storm water pollution controls related to highway planning, design, construction, and maintenance activities throughout California. The Statewide Storm Water Management Plan assigns responsibilities within Caltrans for implementing storm water management procedures and practices as well as training, public education and participation, monitoring and research, program evaluation, and reporting activities. The Statewide Storm Water Management Plan describes the minimum procedures and practices Caltrans uses to reduce pollutants in storm water and non-storm water discharges. It outlines procedures and responsibilities for protecting water quality, including the selection and implementation of Best Management Practices. The proposed project will be programmed to follow the guidelines and procedures outlined in the latest Statewide Storm Water Management Plan to address storm water runoff.

Construction General Permit

Construction General Permit, ORDER WQ 2022-0057-DWQ (adopted on September 8, 2022 and effective on September 1, 2023). The permit regulates storm water discharges from construction sites that result in a Disturbed Soil Area (DSA) of 1 acre or greater, and/or are smaller sites that are part of a larger common plan of development. By law, all storm water

discharges associated with construction activity where clearing, grading, and excavation result in soil disturbance of at least 1 acre must comply with the provisions of the General Construction Permit. Construction activity that results in soil disturbances of less than 1 acre is subject to this Construction General Permit if there is potential for significant water quality impairment resulting from the activity as determined by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards. Operators of regulated construction sites are required to develop Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs); to implement sediment, erosion, and pollution prevention control measures; and to obtain coverage under the Construction General Permit.

The Construction General Permit separates projects into Risk Levels 1, 2, and 3. Risk levels are determined during the planning and design phases and are based on potential erosion and transport to receiving waters. Requirements apply according to the Risk Level determined. For example, a Risk Level 3 (highest risk) project would require compulsory storm water runoff pH and turbidity monitoring, and before construction and after construction aquatic biological assessments during specified seasonal windows. For all projects subject to the permit, applicants are required to develop and implement an effective Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans. In accordance with the Caltrans Statewide Storm Water Management Plan and Standard Specifications, a Water Pollution Control Program is necessary for projects with Disturbed Soil Area less than 1 acre.

Section 401 Permitting

Under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, any project requiring a federal license or permit that may result in a discharge to a water of the U.S. must obtain a 401 Certification, which certifies that the project will be in compliance with state water quality standards. The most common federal permits triggering 401 Certification are Clean Water Act Section 404 permits issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The 401 permit certifications are obtained from the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board, dependent on the project location, and are required before the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issues a 404 permit.

In some cases, the Regional Water Quality Control Board may have specific concerns with discharges associated with a project. As a result, the Regional Water Quality Control Board may issue a set of requirements known as Waste Discharge Requirements under the State Water Code (Porter-Cologne Act) that define activities, such as the inclusion of specific features, effluent limitations, monitoring, and plan submittals that are to be implemented for protecting or benefiting water quality. Waste Discharge Requirements can be issued to address both permanent and temporary discharges of a project.

Affected Environment

The following paragraph was updated after circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Water quality and stormwater information for the project environment was obtained from the July 27, 2023 Water Quality Technical Memo prepared by Caltrans, and the Air Quality, Noise, and Water Quality Addendum Memo (June 18, 2024) prepared by Caltrans.

The project lies in the Monterey Peninsula Hydrologic Area and undefined Hydrologic Sub-Area (HSA) within the Salinas Hydrologic Unit (HSA #309.50). The project study area crosses through several watersheds mapped by the U.S. Geological Survey, which drain west into Monterey Bay in the Pacific Ocean (western portion of site) and east into El Toro Creek, which then flows to the Pacific Ocean via the Salinas River (eastern portion of site).

The receiving water bodies are Canyon Del Rey Creek and El Toro Creek. Other potential receiving water bodies include Watson Creek and Harper Creek, depending on the natural flow of drainage. The receiving waters for this project are not listed as impaired on the federal Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list.

The 2019 Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan does not list the receiving waters for this project as including the following beneficial uses:

- Cold (uses of water that support cold water ecosystems including, but not limited to, preservation or enhancement of aquatic habitats, vegetation, fish or wildlife, including invertebrates)
- Spawn (uses of water that support high quality aquatic habitats suitable for reproduction and early development of fish)
- Migratory (uses of water that support habitats necessary for migration or other temporary activities by aquatic organisms, such as anadromous fish)

Therefore, the receiving water risk for this project is characterized as low. There are no Drinking Water Reservoirs and/or Recharge Facilities within the project limits.

There is an existing permanent Caltrans maintenance facility (stockpile/decanting) near the western project limits on State Route 68. The contractor would not be allowed to use this or any other Caltrans maintenance facility without prior approval by the district Maintenance Stormwater Coordinator. This project is not located in a Significant Trash Generating Area, per the December 2018 Trash Implementation Plan.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

Alternative 1 would convert nine existing signalized intersections within the State Route 68 corridor into one- or two-lane roundabouts. Alternative 2 would modify the same nine existing signalized intersections with improvements to lane configurations and lengths, as well as upgrades to signal systems and equipment. Both alternatives also propose installation of new culverts at five locations along State Route 68 to facilitate large mammal crossing movement, and installation of directional fencing to deter wildlife from entering onto State Route 68. Additional features of the proposed project include relocation of utility lines as needed, improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and installation of two electric vehicle charging stations.

The following paragraph was updated after circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. With either Build Alternative, the project would involve earthwork (for example excavation, grading, trenching, compaction), use of curing compounds, hot mixed asphalt (HMA) paving, clearing/grubbing, and other activities. Updated estimates provided by Caltrans District 5 Stormwater design staff are that Alternative 1 will result in approximately 24.33 acres of Disturbed Soil Area and 2.12 acres of net new impervious surface area within the project limits. Alternative 2 would result in about 59.54 acres of Disturbed Soil Area and 11.95 acres of net new impervious surface area.

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. There are currently no Treatment Best Management Practices within or near the project limits. Both Build Alternatives would require Treatment Best Management Practices to treat 100 percent of the water quality volume (stormwater runoff) generated by the new and replaced impervious surfaces they would create. Because Alternative 2 would result in greater areas of disturbed soil and new impervious surface, the amount of stormwater treatment capacity needed would be greater than with Alternative 1. After the selection of Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred project alternative, the project design team mapped all contributing drainage areas and Treatment Best Management Practices were identified. Alternative 1 would create over 1 acre of Disturbed Soil Area at each work location; therefore, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and coverage under the Construction General Permit will be required prior to the start of construction.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The roadway design includes Treatment Best Management Practices such as Design Pollution Prevention Infiltration Strips/Areas (DPPIA) and Biofiltration Strip/Swales and velocity dissipation scour protection. Mitigation planting will also serve as permanent water quality and stormwater control features. The design team anticipates that 100 percent treatment would be possible;

however, if the selected alternative cannot treat 100 percent of the required water quality volume, Alternative Compliance would be required.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. By incorporating appropriate engineering design and robust stormwater Best Management Practices during construction (see "Standard Measures" below), short-term water quality impacts from the project are anticipated to be minimal. The project would not have the potential to directly discharge stormwater within the project limits to the site's receiving water bodies. Long-term impacts pertaining to water quality are not anticipated.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made and retaining walls and other structures associated with the Build Alternatives would not be constructed; therefore, project-related impacts to water quality and stormwater runoff would not occur.

Standard Measures for Management of Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff

Under either Build Alternative, effective combinations of temporary and permanent erosion and sediment controls would be used during construction to address potential impacts related to water quality and stormwater runoff. Stormwater management for the site would be coordinated through the contractor with Caltrans construction personnel to effectively manage erosion from Disturbed Soil Areas by implementing a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The following standard measures, taken from the July 27, 2023 Water Quality Technical Memo are based on Best Management Practices that will be included in (but not limited to) the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan for the preferred alternative:

Temporary Soil Stabilization

- Minimize active Disturbed Soil Areas during the rainy season using scheduling techniques.
- Preserve existing vegetation to the maximum extent feasible.
- Implement temporary protective cover/erosion control on all non-active Disturbed Soil Areas and soil stockpiles.
- Control erosive forces of stormwater runoff with effective storm flow management such as temporary concentrated flow conveyance devices, earthen dikes, drainage swales, lined ditches, outlet protection/velocity dissipation devices, and slope drains as determined feasible.

Temporary Sediment Controls

- Implement linear sediment controls such as fiber rolls, check dams, or gravel bag berms on all active and non-active Disturbed Soil Areas during the rainy season.
- To further help prevent sediment discharge, stabilized construction site entrances, and temporary drainage inlet protection, street sweeping and vacuuming would be necessary.
- Implement appropriate wind erosion controls year-round.

Non-Storm Water Management

The appropriate non-storm water Best Management Practices will be implemented year-round as follows:

- Water conservation practices are implemented on all construction sites and wherever water is used.
- The project area includes areas defined by a high groundwater elevation. Multiple earthwork and excavation operations would potentially encounter groundwater during construction activities. Dewatering Best Management Practices may need to be implemented.
- Paving and grinding procedures are implemented where paving, surfacing, resurfacing, grinding, or saw cutting may pollute stormwater runoff or discharge to the storm drain system or watercourses.
- Procedures and practices designed for construction contractors to recognize illicit connections or illegally dumped or discharged materials on a construction site and report incidents to the Resident Engineer.
- The following activities must be performed at least 100 feet from concentrated flows of stormwater, drainage courses, and inlets if within the floodplain and at least 50 feet if outside of the floodplain: stockpiling materials, storing equipment and liquid waste containers, washing vehicles or equipment, fueling, and maintaining vehicles and equipment.
- Concrete curing may be used during the installation and construction of retaining walls, sidewalks, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb ramps. Proper procedures would minimize pollution of runoff during concrete curing.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The selected preferred alternative, Alternative 1 will incorporate the project features and practices above to help address potential impacts related to water quality and stormwater runoff. No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.

2.2.3 Geology, Soils, Seismicity and Topography

Regulatory Setting

For geologic and topographic features, the key federal law is the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which establishes a national registry of natural landmarks and protects "outstanding examples of major geological features." Topographic and geologic features are also protected under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

This section also discusses geology, soils, and seismic concerns as they relate to public safety and project design. Earthquakes are prime considerations in the design and retrofit of structures. Structures are designed using Caltrans Seismic Design Criteria, which provide the minimum seismic requirements for highway bridges designed in California. A bridge's category and classification will determine its seismic performance level and which methods are used for estimating the seismic demands and structural capabilities. For more information, see the Caltrans Division of Engineering Services, Office of Earthquake Engineering, Seismic Design Criteria.

Affected Environment

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Geological and related information for the project area was obtained from the Revised District Preliminary Geotechnical Report for Highway 68 Corridor Improvement dated August 8, 2021, as well as the project Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report dated July 2023 (see also Section 2.2.4), and the Addendum to Joint Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report; Design Modifications for Hybrid Roundabouts dated August 28, 2024. Additional data and mapping of geologic hazards for the project area are available from the Monterey County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Department.

Geologic Setting

Regional Geologic Setting

The project area sits in the greater Monterey-Salinas region on the northern edge of the Santa Lucia Range, which is part of the Coast Ranges Geomorphic Province. The area is characterized by northwest-southeast trending mountains and fault zones, including the San Gregorio, Monterey Bay-Tularcitos, Reliz-Rinconada, and Chupines. These ridges, peaks, and valleys have been created over the past roughly 30 million years by movement along the San Andreas Fault Zone, causing the creation and filling of deep marine basins and the subsequent folding, faulting, and uplift of these and other sediments above sea level.

Local Geologic Setting

In the project area, the State Route 68 corridor runs along various west-east trending valley floors, including those of Canyon Del Rey and El Toro creeks. The creeks and the highway follow folds within the local marine and terrestrial sedimentary rock formations, which are more often exposed to the south of the roadway. The valley floor soils consist of floodplain and other sediment deposits washed down from the surrounding hills over eons. Other rock formations in or near the project area include old sand dune and coastal terrace deposits, thick beds of silt and gravel, and six- to 18-million-year-old layers of Santa Margarita Formation and Monterey Formation marine sedimentary rock.

In the project area, State Route 68 crosses and/or parallels three mapped, northwest/southeast-trending strands of the Chupines Fault. The U.S. Geological Survey reports that the Chupines Fault has likely been active within the past 15,000 years, though none of the three fault traces in the project area are currently known to be active. The nearest known active fault to the project site is the San Andreas, about 30 miles to the east.

Physiography and Topography

In most of the project area, the State Route 68 corridor stays in drainages that are surrounded by higher ground. The west end of the project area sits at about 112 feet above sea level, 0.4 mile west of Josselyn Canyon Road. Continuing east, the highway climbs to roughly 260 feet in elevation east of Olmsted Road before descending back to 120 feet above sea level at the State Route 68/State Route 218 intersection.

State Route 68 then climbs east steadily for nearly 5 miles up the west-flowing Canyon del Rey Creek watershed to a saddle at 500 feet elevation 0.4 mile east of Laureles Grade, repeatedly crossing back and forth over the creek as it ascends. Beyond the saddle, the road then descends the east-flowing El Toro Creek watershed to roughly 240 feet above sea level at the project's eastern boundary, east of the State Route 68/San Benancio Road intersection and the Toro Creek bridge.

The State Route 68 corridor is nestled between higher land to both the north and south. On the north, the highway consists of eroded ridges that rise to about 950 feet above mean sea level near Fort Ord National Monument. To the south, a west-east ridge between State Route 68 and the parallel Carmel River Valley ascends first gradually, and then sharply, as the road heads east toward Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road.

Though the terrain within the project area is the result of ongoing geologic processes, human development has modified the topography of the State Route 68 corridor as well. Previously disturbed deposits of artificial fill that are not included on geologic maps may be present underneath or adjacent to the roadway.

Surface Water and Groundwater

Surface Water

The project area lies along two named seasonal creeks: Canyon del Rey Creek, which flows west to the Pacific Ocean, and east-flowing El Toro Creek, which is a tributary to the Salinas River. The highway corridor also intersects and/or parallels several other unnamed tributary drainages that feed into Canyon del Rey Creek, El Toro Creek, or otherwise drain to the Pacific Ocean. These drainages follow the orientation of folds within the local marine and terrestrial sedimentary rock units.

Groundwater

Groundwater levels can fluctuate with the change of the seasons, seasonal rainfall, drought, and effects of sea level rise. The project area overlies parts of two groundwater basins: the Salinas Valley-Seaside (3-004.08), and the Salinas Valley-Monterey (3-004.10). The portion of the project area that is west of the State Route 68/State Route 218 intersection (south of the Monterey Regional Airport) does not overlie an identified groundwater basin.

Groundwater information from nearby irrigation wells along State Route 68 was obtained from the California Department of Water Resources, Water Data Library Station Map. Data from the irrigation wells in the vicinity of the proposed project show that the groundwater elevations range from 128.4 feet to 159.7 feet below ground surface; however, many proposed structures lie adjacent to streams and culverts.

Rock/Soils

Rocks

The project area is part of a complex of granitic and metamorphic rock types overlain by thick layers of marine and nonmarine sedimentary rocks. This complex is known as the Salinian Block and is separated from the Great Valley Block to the east by the San Andreas Fault Zone, and the Coastal Block to the west by the Sur-Nacimiento-Rinconada fault zone.

Geologic units in the project area include rocks and soil deposited by water, wind, and earth movements such as landslides; coastal terrace deposits of rocks and soil that were once covered by the Pacific Ocean; and marine sedimentary rocks such as sandstone, conglomerate, shale, and diatomite that make up the Santa Margarita and Monterey Formations. Artificial fill, which is not included on geologic maps, may also be present underneath or adjacent to the roadway.

Soils

Soil data was collected and reviewed from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) web soil survey portal (2021). The project area includes a variety of soil types, including loamy sands, sandy loams, clay loams, fine sands, and loams, some of which have formed from water-, wind-, and landslide-

deposited sediments. Most (about 76 percent) soils in the project area are described as moderately erodible and capable of producing moderate runoff. The U.S. Department of Agriculture soil descriptions apply to the upper 6 feet of the soil, but erosive susceptibility can extend below 6 feet in depth.

Geologic Hazards

Geologic hazards that could potentially affect the project area include seismic hazards (strong ground shaking, liquefaction, fault rupture, seismically induced landslides, rock falls, settlement, and/or subsidence) and non-seismically induced earth movement.

Seismic Hazards

Seismic hazards are associated with proximity to active earthquake faults and include strong ground shaking, liquefaction, fault rupture, tsunami, seismically induced landslides, rock falls, settlement, and subsidence.

The County of Monterey's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping and Data website maps all known earthquake epicenters in the county from 1931 to 2001 (County of Monterey, 2021). This online tool does not show any known historical earthquakes in, or within 4 miles of, the project area during that time period.

Strong Ground Shaking: A preliminary assessment of earthquake ground shaking was conducted for the each of the nine project intersections. The assessment returned estimates of horizontal peak ground acceleration ranging from 0.49g to 0.52g, corresponding to estimated maximum ground shaking magnitudes of 6.7 to 6.8 on the Moment magnitude scale. The shaking generated by this amount of energy could be perceived as Very Strong (VII) to Destructive (VIII) on the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale, depending on the observer's location.

Liquefaction (where soil transforms into a jellylike consistency): Monterey County's Geographic Information Systems website shows that much of the State Route 68 corridor within the project area has high susceptibility to liquefaction (County of Monterey, 2021). As of this writing, additional information is needed to better assess liquefaction potential. A future investigation would include the collection and analysis of soil samples for liquefaction potential at each project intersection, with the results presented in the Geotechnical Design Report.

Fault Rupture: The project site is not situated within an Earthquake Fault Zone (Alquist-Priolo) as identified by the California Geologic Survey. However, the western strand of the Chupines Fault passes approximately 450 feet north of the State Route 68/State Route 218 intersection to approximately 400 feet southeast of the intersection. The middle strand of the Chupines Fault crosses approximately 1,000 feet west of the State Route 68/York Road intersection and associated retaining walls. The eastern strand of the

Chupines Fault crosses approximately 570 feet west of the State Route 68/Pasadera Drive intersection and associated retaining walls (U.S. Geological Survey, 2004). The U.S. Geological Service reports that the Chupines Fault has likely been active within the past 15,000 years. Surface fault rupture occurring from known active faulting is considered possible.

Tsunami: The project area is not located within a tsunami hazard zone.

Seismically induced Landslides: During an earthquake, strong ground motion caused by seismic wave transmission can cause loss of soil strength and ground failure, leading to landslides on sloping land. Representative slope angles in the project area range from 1 to 53 percent. Landslide potential throughout the project area is low to moderate, except for a 1.6-mile stretch of State Route 68 from York Road to 0.12 mile west of Pasadera Drive, which is adjacent to steep hill slopes along the south side of the roadway.

Rockfalls: Rockfall potential is low for the project limits because most (more than 94 percent) of the natural representative slopes are less than 40 degrees. Cut slopes within the project limit range from 45 to 60 degrees but do not have a history of producing rockfall. Rock outcrops are not common due to the weathering characteristics of the bedrock. Depth to bedrock is predominantly greater than 6 feet below the surface.

Settlement: Soils and rock supporting any structural elements within the project scope would be investigated and analyzed for potential settlement. Mitigation practices during construction would be implemented to amend or replace soils for the allowable amount of settlement at each element.

Subsidence: Based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture soil survey, less than 1 percent of the project limits is prone to moderate subsidence. The Rindge muck, with a potential of approximately 5 feet of settlement, is located along the northwest margins of the intersection of State Route 68 and State Route 218. Most of the intersection is underlain by artificial fill and did not show signs of significant settlement during site visits in 2021 and 2022. Subsidence due to changes in the landscape or surface water management is not anticipated.

Non-Seismically Induced Earth Movement Hazards

In addition to seismically triggered landslides, mass earth movement may be induced by heavy precipitation (especially over long periods), stream erosion, changes in groundwater, disturbance by human activities, or any combination of these factors. As noted above, landslide potential in the project area is mostly characterized as low to moderate. The portion of the project site between roughly York Road and Pasadera Drive may be at higher risk for this type of hazard due to the steep terrain south of State Route 68 in that area.

Other Hazards

Volcanic Hazards

The project area is not located within a known volcanic hazard zone.

Hazards Relating to Economic/Mineral Resources

According to the California Geological Survey Mineral Land Classification Map for the project area (see Monterey County 2007 General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report, Section 4.5.1 Mineral Resources, September 2008), the project limits cross near and adjacent to areas identified with having known aggregate (sand and gravel) resources. Caltrans' Geographic Information Systems resource mapping library shows no mineral deposits within the project limits.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

In general, geologic hazards on a project site can be avoided, reduced to an acceptable level, or accommodated. Both Build Alternatives would require grading, trenching, and other earthwork operations for the construction of retaining walls, concrete barriers, culvert improvements, and more. These activities have the potential to expose construction workers and the traveling public to the effects of erosion, seismic hazards, and/or non-seismically related earth movement.

More information regarding groundwater elevations and potential for structural disturbances from surface fault rupture or liquefaction would be obtained during the final project design phase to better assess the nature of geologic hazards on the project site prior to construction. The results of these studies would be presented in the project Geotechnical Design Report.

In addition, project activities would cause visual impacts to topographic and other landscape features along State Route 68, a designated California Scenic Route. The final project design would incorporate measures to limit the alteration of high-quality visual resources.

Potential Exposure to Geologic Hazards

During the project construction phase, workers may be exposed to the effects of erosion, seismic hazards (strong shaking, ground rupture, liquefaction, slumping, slope failure), and/or non-seismically related ground failure (debris flow, dam collapse, avalanche). Some of these effects could be exacerbated in areas with artificial fill or certain soil types (for example, expansive soils). During the project operational phase, travelers using the roadway may be exposed to effects from the same geologic hazards listed above.

Implementation of safe engineering and construction practices, including compliance with Caltrans and the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal-OSHA) safety requirements, mean that project construction and

operation would not exacerbate existing geologic hazards in the project area and would not expose workers and travelers to increased levels of these hazards.

Design Elements to Protect Against Liquefaction

Soil liquefaction is the conversion of soil into a fluid-like mass during an earthquake or other seismic event. Liquefaction potential is influenced by soil compactness, particle size, and degree of water saturation. Soil consisting of unconsolidated sediments like that often found in stream beds tends to have a higher potential for liquefaction.

The project area is not known to contain any active earthquake faults; the nearest known active fault is the San Andreas, approximately 30 miles to the east. Soil samples would be collected for each project intersection during the final project design phase. Liquefaction potential would be assessed and presented in the Preliminary Geotechnical Design Report. Standard engineering practices to avoid, limit, or accommodate soil liquefaction would then be incorporated into the final project design.

Erosion Control Practices

Standard specifications and Best Management Practices would be implemented during construction at project work locations for control of erosion and sedimentation from the construction work areas, as further discussed in Section 2.2.2, Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff.

Measures to Protect Against Seismic Hazards

The use of safe engineering and construction practices on the project, which would be based on data obtained during the project's final design phase and presented in the project Geotechnical Design Report, means that project structures would be designed and built to withstand defined levels of ground acceleration and fault offset, as applicable.

Design Elements to Reduce Visual Impacts

Project-related impacts to visual features would be reduced by the incorporation of design features including maximum feasible preservation of existing vegetation, installation of new landscaping, landform grading that blends with the natural topography of the region, aesthetic treatments to walls and other built elements, undergrounding of existing overhead utility lines, and others. However, it is predicted that impacts to visual features from the project would be substantial under either Build Alternative. See Section 2.1.10, Visual/Aesthetics, for more details.

Impacts to Known Mineral Resources

No known mineral deposits exist within the project limits. Therefore, the project would be unlikely to have undesirable effects pertaining to mineral resources.

Potential Visual Impacts from Landform Modification

Both Build Alternatives would require cut/fill operations and installation of retaining walls, drainage swales, and other engineered features. These activities would result in changes to roadway scale, amount of hardscape, lighting, and views of agricultural and open space, varying topography, and native vegetation including oak woodlands. Because State Route 68 is a designated California Scenic Highway and the community places high value on these visual resources, even moderate alteration of the existing terrain or overall aesthetic character along State Route 68 would be considered a substantial visual impact. The project design would reduce aesthetic impacts by using texturing and staining to darken reflective materials, as well as by preserving existing native vegetation to the extent feasible and replanting areas where vegetation would be removed for project construction. However, the residual effect of the Build Alternatives on the visual character of the project vicinity would be a substantial impact. See the analysis of visual impacts in Section 2.1.10, Visual/Aesthetics, for more information.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made and retaining walls and other structures associated with the project would not be constructed. Therefore, impacts related to geologic, soils, seismic, and topographic hazards would not occur.

Under either Build Alternative, the following standard measures would be implemented to help address potential impacts related to erosion, sedimentation, seismic hazards, slope stability and liquefaction-prone areas. Erosion and sedimentation control measures are discussed in Section 2.2.2, Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff.

Erosion and Sedimentation

Standard Specifications and Best Management Practices would be implemented during construction at project work locations for control of erosion and sedimentation from the construction work areas.

Seismic Hazards, Slope Stability, and Liquefaction

The project design would be based on the results of geotechnical studies conducted throughout the project area and would follow current State of California seismic engineering standards to ensure maximum strength and safety of all constructed features under both static and dynamic (earthquake-caused ground shaking) conditions, as well as associated hazards such as seismic-related ground failure (rupture, landslide, liquefaction). Slope compaction specifications would be applied to project designs for slopes and embankment areas in liquefaction and landslide-prone areas of the project limits so as not to cause potential instability of the soils onsite or offsite. Also, the project would not increase groundwater levels in the work areas and would, therefore, not increase the liquefaction potential of soils in project construction areas.

After implementation of the above procedures and based on the impacts analysis discussed above, it is expected that construction of either of the Build Alternative designs would not directly or indirectly cause adverse effects relating to geology, soils, seismicity or topography, except for predicted impacts to visual features, including landform modification. This topic is discussed in Section 2.1.10, Visual/Aesthetics.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project features and practices outlined above will be implemented to help address potential effects related to geologic, soils, seismic, and topographic hazards. No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required aside from those related to visual impacts. See the measures listed in Section 2.1.10, Visual/Aesthetics, for more information.

2.2.4 Paleontology

Regulatory Setting

Paleontology is a natural science focused on the study of ancient animal and plant life as it is preserved in the geologic record as fossils. Several federal statutes specifically address paleontological resources, their treatment, and funding for mitigation as a part of federally authorized projects:

- 16 U.S. Code 431-433 (the “Antiquities Act”) prohibits appropriating, excavating, injuring, or destroying any object of antiquity situated on federal land without the permission of the Secretary of the Department of Government having jurisdiction over the land. Fossils are considered “objects of antiquity” by the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and other federal agencies.
- 16 U.S. Code 470aaa (the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act) prohibits the excavation, removal, or damage of any paleontological resources located on federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretaries of the Interior or Agriculture without first obtaining an appropriate permit. The statute establishes criminal and civil penalties for fossil theft and vandalism on federal lands.
- 23 U.S. Code 1.9(a) requires that the use of federal-aid funds must be in conformity with all federal and state laws.
- 23 U.S. Code 305 authorizes the appropriation and use of federal highway funds for paleontological salvage as necessary by the highway department of any state, in compliance with 16 USC 431-433 above and state law.

Under California law, paleontological resources are protected by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Affected Environment

Scientifically sensitive paleontological resources are geologic deposits or identified sites containing individual fossils or assemblages of fossils that are unique or unusual, diagnostically, or stratigraphically important or add to the existing body of knowledge.

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. A preliminary Paleontology Review was completed for this project in October 2019, and a Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report was completed in July 2023. In addition, the Addendum to Joint Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report; Design Modifications for Hybrid Roundabouts was prepared, dated August 28, 2024. The Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report documents seven geologic formations within the project limits, as presented in Table 2.2.4.1. These formations are shown as having a high to low potential for encountering sensitive paleontological resources in the Paleontological Sensitivity Mapping Project published by Caltrans and California State University, Fresno in June 2000.

Table 2.2.4.1 Geologic Units Found Along the State Route 68 Corridor

Geologic Unit/ Age	Description	Fossils Known	Paleontological Potential
Alluvial deposits (Qal); younger flood-plain deposits (Qyf); older floodplain deposits (Qof)/ Holocene	Unconsolidated sands, silts, and clays deposited by streams and rivers	Geologic age too young to contain fossils	Low Potential
Colluvium (Qc)/ Holocene	Unconsolidated sand and silt deposited by slope wash and mass movement	Geologic age too young to contain fossils	Low Potential
Older eolian (dune) deposits (Qod)/ Pleistocene	Weakly consolidated, well sorted sand dune deposits	None reported; depositional setting of sand dunes unlikely to preserve fossils	Low Potential
Coastal terrace deposits (Qtc, Qcts)/ Pleistocene	Uplifted coastal terraces composed of marine sandstones with thin gravel-rich layers	None known near project corridor; marine invertebrates and rare vertebrates (e.g., whale, mammoth, mastodon) known from elsewhere on Central California coast	High Potential

Geologic Unit/ Age	Description	Fossils Known	Paleontological Potential
Unnamed Continental Deposits (Qcd)/ Pleistocene	Nonmarine sandstones with pebble and cobble gravel interbeds. Contains some deposits of marine origin.	None reported from unnamed deposits; Pleistocene mammals known from deposits of similar age and depositional environment in southern Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties	High Potential
Santa Margarita Formation (Tsm)/ Late Miocene	Shallow marine sandstones and conglomerates	Clam and snail fossils known from State Route 68 corridor; marine vertebrates known from elsewhere on the Central Coast	High Potential
Monterey Formation, diatomite (Tmd)/ Late Miocene	Marine deposits of silty diatomite	Marine vertebrates, especially mammals such as whales, early pinnipeds, sea cows, desmostylians	High Potential

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

The Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report identifies ground surface or shallow subsurface occurrences of the Monterey Formation, Santa Margarita Formation, unnamed continental deposits, and coastal terrace deposits as having the highest potential for disturbance of fossils in the project area. The report notes that all nine project intersections contain at least one occurrence of a rock formation with high paleontological potential.

Disturbance of fossil-bearing rock could occur either directly through earthwork operations (grading, trenching, possibly large-diameter drilling) or indirectly through effects of exposure such as vandalism or weathering due to exposure of the rock formations. Project features and activities with the potential to cause impacts to paleontological resources include:

- Retaining walls and landform grading: large excavation footprint required for constructing retaining wall foundations, hillslopes would need to be cut back at some intersections.
- Wildlife crossings: excavations would be required for installation of 10-foot by 10-foot, and 10-foot by 12-foot below-ground box culverts.
- Drainage swales: excavations would be required for creation of swales.
- Utility undergrounding: trenching would be required for underground conduit.

Both Build Alternatives have the potential to result in direct impacts to scientifically significant paleontological resources, mostly due to construction

of retaining walls, landform grading, and wildlife crossings. The number and location of retaining walls differ between Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. The walls required for Alternative 2 are expected to require more extensive earthwork that would disturb high paleontological potential deposits, particularly the Monterey Formation. Impacts from wildlife crossings, drainage swales, and utility undergrounding would be about the same for each alternative. Potential impacts to paleontological resources with either Build Alternative would be mitigated with implementation of a Paleontological Mitigation Plan as prescribed in measures PALEO-1 and PALEO-2.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made, retaining walls and other structures associated with the project would not be constructed, and no construction-related ground-disturbing activities would occur. As a result, there would be no risk of disturbance to below-ground paleontological resources.

Cumulative Impacts Relating to Paleontology

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Please note: Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA Implementing Regulations that were contained in 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500 et seq. have been removed. Included in the removal was Section 1508 that defined cumulative impacts. However, consideration of cumulative impacts was included in the analyses for the draft environmental document, prior to the removal of the CEQ regulations, and therefore has been retained in the final environmental document for informational purposes only.

As noted above, the project Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report, dated July 2023, identified seven fossil-bearing geologic formations within the project limits (Table 2.2.4.1). These formations have varying potential for construction crews to encounter sensitive paleontological resources. Project-related construction activities, including construction of retaining walls, landform grading, trenching, and possibly large-diameter drilling, could adversely affect paleontological resources by disturbing sediments of the Monterey Formation, Santa Margarita Formation, unnamed continental deposits, and/or coastal terrace deposits.

The project Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other current and reasonably foreseeable projects in the Monterey region, nine of those could potentially result in significant impacts to paleontological resources. The analysis determined that the proposed project has the potential to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to paleontological resources.

The project would reduce potential impacts to paleontological resources through implementation of measures PALEO-1 and PALEO-2, described in the next section below. The Paleontological Mitigation Plan that would be

created during the project's design phase would require qualified paleontological monitors to oversee ground-disturbing activities in high-paleontological-potential areas. Procedures for fossil recovery, preparation, identification, and curation would be specified.

Regarding cumulative impacts, the Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report for the project states that paleontological resources on the Central Coast are not experiencing a cumulative effect from current and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Exposures of paleontologically sensitive strata in this region include large swaths of rural and mountainous terrain that are unlikely to be disturbed by human activities and would only be minimally affected by natural processes. The relatively small percentage of paleontologically sensitive strata in the area that may be disturbed by current or future development would be offset by mitigation strategies required for regulatory compliance. As such, the Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report found that the potential impacts from the Build Alternatives would not contribute to a cumulative effect on paleontological resources.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Mitigation Measures PALEO-1 and PALEO-2 prescribe preparation and implementation of a Paleontological Monitoring Plan and will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to paleontological resources.

Mitigation Measures under CEQA

PALEO-1. Preparation of Paleontological Mitigation Plan. A Paleontological Mitigation Plan shall be prepared during the design phase of the project and implemented during project construction. The Paleontological Mitigation Plan shall include provisions for paleontological monitoring during excavations that may disturb deposits of high paleontological potential, and procedures for fossil recovery, fossil preparation and identification, and fossil curation.

PALEO-2. Implementation of Paleontological Mitigation Plan. Qualified paleontological monitor(s), under the direction of a Principal Paleontologist, shall be present during ground-disturbing activities in areas of high paleontological potential, as outlined in the paleontological mitigation plan. Monitors have the authority to temporarily halt or divert earthwork in the event of a fossil discovery. If scientifically significant fossils are discovered, they shall be recovered from the field, prepared in a fossil preparation laboratory, identified to the lowest taxonomic level, and curated into a recognized paleontological specimen repository with adequate storage and a permanent curator. A Paleontological Mitigation Report outlining the results of the paleontological mitigation program shall be prepared and submitted to Caltrans.

2.2.5 Hazardous Waste and Materials

Regulatory Setting

Hazardous materials, including hazardous substances and wastes, are regulated by many state and federal laws. Statutes govern the generation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials, substances, and waste, and also the investigation and mitigation of waste releases, air and water quality, human health, and land use.

The main federal laws regulating hazardous wastes/materials are the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA). The purpose of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, often referred to as "Superfund," is to identify and clean up abandoned contaminated sites so that public health and welfare are not compromised. The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act provides for "cradle to grave" regulation of hazardous waste generated by operating entities. Other federal laws include:

- Community Environmental Response Facilitation Act (CERFA) of 1992
- Clean Water Act
- Clean Air Act
- Safe Drinking Water Act
- Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)
- Atomic Energy Act
- Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)
- Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)

In addition to the acts listed above, Executive Order 12088, Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards, mandates that necessary actions be taken to prevent and control environmental pollution when federal activities or federal facilities are involved.

California regulates hazardous materials, waste, and substances under the authority of the California Health and Safety Code and is also authorized by the federal government to implement the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act in the state. California law also addresses specific handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning of hazardous waste. The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act also restricts disposal of wastes and requires cleanup of wastes that are below hazardous waste concentrations but could impact groundwater and surface water quality. California regulations that address waste management and prevention and cleanup of contamination include Title 22

Division 4.5 Environmental Health Standards for the Management of Hazardous Waste, Title 23 Waters, and Title 27 Environmental Protection.

Worker and public health and safety are key issues when addressing hazardous materials that may affect human health and the environment. Proper management and disposal of hazardous material is vital if it is found, disturbed, or generated during project construction.

Affected Environment

This paragraph was updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Hazardous waste and materials information was obtained from the Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment prepared by Caltrans for the proposed project, dated September 26, 2023, and the Addendum to Initial Site Assessment: Design Modifications for Hybrid Roundabouts, dated August 28, 2024. The site assessment documented existing and potential hazardous waste risks identified through searches of the GeoTracker, EnviroStor, and CalGEM databases.

The project site consists of nine signalized intersections along 8.9 miles (post mile 4.8 to post mile 13.7) of the State Route 68 corridor between Monterey and Salinas. Immediately to the north of the project site is Fort Ord National Monument, a 28,000-acre former U.S. Army base that is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Superfund site. Cleanup of munitions and groundwater contamination has been completed on nearly 12,000 acres of the property and is ongoing. Also, potential hazards, including former gas stations with underground tanks, are located adjacent to the project site.

The potential for hazardous waste-related impacts on the project site is based on an assessment of the existing conditions and the potential that implementation of the proposed project would result in the disturbance of existing hazardous conditions through disruption of existing facilities or would result in discharges during project construction.

Leaking Underground Storage Tanks

The Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment identified three cases (all closed) of underground storage tank leakage within 1,000 feet of the project site. At two of these sites (GeoTracker ID numbers T10000002861 and T10000003114), both storage tanks and fuel dispensers were leaking. These two sites have the potential to impact the proposed project due to the presence of petroleum hydrocarbons in shallow soils (5 feet or less). Database information indicates that these hydrocarbons exist in the subsurface adjacent to the Caltrans right-of-way on the south side of the State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road intersection.

In addition to the cases noted in the Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment, review of the California Environmental Protection Agency database indicated three active groundwater contamination plumes north of

State Route 68 on the Fort Ord property, north of the State Route 68/Corral de Tierra intersection. The plumes are some distance from State Route 68, and there is no known contamination associated with them in the project area.

Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL)

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The historic use of leaded gasoline in automobiles has resulted in soils along roadways throughout California containing elevated concentrations of lead. Some of this soil may be safely reused on project sites, while in other cases the soil must be exported and disposed of as hazardous waste. Two studies conducted on the project site, from 2007 and 2010, presented differing results regarding the concentration of lead in soils through the project corridor.

Lead-Containing Paint (LCP) and Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACM)

The project includes work on the El Toro Creek Bridge on State Route 68 under Alternative 2. Historically, bridges and other transportation structures sometimes used construction materials including lead-containing paint and asbestos.

Yellow Thermoplastic or Traffic Stripe

Yellow thermoplastic traffic striping paint used by Caltrans until approximately 2006 contained lead in high enough amounts that the material is classified as hazardous waste upon removal. White striping paint also contains lead in smaller amounts.

Treated Wood Waste (TWW)

Caltrans guardrail and thrie-beam barrier supports, piles, and signposts often consist of wood that has been treated with chemical preservatives to prevent rot or insect attack. This treated wood is classified as hazardous waste upon removal.

Naturally Occurring Asbestos

A review of geologic mapping and mineral hazard maps indicates that naturally occurring asbestos is not present on the project site.

Unexploded Ordnance

Fort Ord, a 28,000-acre former U.S. Army post immediately north of State Route 68 in the project vicinity, is a designated Superfund site. Extensive investigation and cleanup efforts, including of military munitions, have occurred and are ongoing. According to the California Environmental Protection Agency, it is possible that in past decades some ordnance could have been mistakenly fired toward State Route 68 from Fort Ord during military training exercises. Though no unexploded ordnance is known to exist on the State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project site, the potential presence of live munitions is possible.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

The project Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment report dated September 26, 2023 states that the project can proceed with very little risk of impacts due to unanticipated hazardous waste or other contamination-related issues. However, both Build Alternatives would require grading, trenching, and other earthwork operations for the construction of retaining walls, concrete barriers, culvert improvements, and more. Therefore, the potential exists for project construction to encounter unanticipated hazardous chemicals in the soil, as well as to release hazardous chemicals from existing roadway materials.

If an unanticipated discovery or accidental release were to occur, it could cause project delays resulting from the need for remediation, and associated changes to project scope and costs. Such events are unlikely but could potentially result in adverse health impacts to construction workers and members of the traveling public, as well as undesired environmental impacts. Caltrans has developed Standard Specifications and Best Management Practices to implement in the event of an unanticipated discovery or accidental release.

Leaking Underground Storage Tanks

The project's Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment report identified two locations on the southwest side of the State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road intersection adjacent to the proposed project as being the locations of former leaking underground storage tank cases. The State of California's GeoTracker water quality database lists these cases as closed, with cleanup completed as of 2017 and 2020. However, residual contaminant plumes remain at each storage tank site.

Project design revisions were made to result in minimal encroachment upon these properties under Build Alternative 1 and avoid the gas station properties altogether under Build Alternative 2. However, if pollutants are present (petroleum hydrocarbons in shallow soils of 5 feet or less) and dewatering of groundwater is needed during construction, the potential would still exist for direct discharge of pollutants into the environment within the project limits.

This paragraph was added after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The potential risks associated with contaminated properties at the Corral de Tierra Road intersection with the hybrid roundabout design would be similar to the single-lane roundabout according to the Addendum to the Initial Site Assessment report. The hybrid roundabout design would not further encroach on the former gas station property. The standard and non-standard special provisions described below for leaking underground tanks will be implemented.

Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL)

Aerially deposited lead from the historical use of leaded gasoline exists along roadways throughout California. As a result, soils with elevated concentrations of lead may exist within the project limits on the state highway system right-of-way. Soil determined to contain lead concentrations exceeding stipulated thresholds must be managed under the July 1, 2016, aerially deposited lead agreement between Caltrans and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control. This aerially deposited lead agreement allows such soils to be safely reused within the project limits as long as all requirements of the aerially deposited lead agreement are met.

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Studies conducted on the project site in 2007 and 2010 indicate there is a potential for aerially deposited lead to be present within the project corridor. Therefore, the potential exists for earth-moving activities to disturb it and expose workers to lead-containing dust. The change to hybrid roundabout designs at the easterly three intersections would not alter the conclusions above regarding aerially deposited lead. During the project design phase, a Preliminary Site Investigation for aerially deposited lead – contaminated soils will be conducted and may be completed concurrently with further evaluation of identified contamination sites as discussed above if required.

Lead-Containing Paint (LCP) and Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACM)

Because Alternative 2 would include widening of the El Toro Creek Bridge, the potential exists for asbestos-containing materials and lead-containing paint to be disturbed, removed, or disposed of if they are present.

Yellow Thermoplastic or Traffic Stripe

Older, lead-containing yellow thermoplastic traffic striping paint has already been removed from the project limits by earlier Caltrans projects. Therefore, the remaining yellow traffic stripe or thermoplastic and all-white striping or thermoplastic striping is expected to contain lead at lower, non-hazardous concentrations.

Treated Wood Waste (TWW)

The project site has the potential to contain chemically treated wooden supports, piles, and signposts that are considered to be hazardous waste upon removal.

Naturally Occurring Asbestos

Because naturally occurring asbestos is not known to be present on the project site, no environmental consequences are expected to arise from this hazard.

Unexploded Ordnance

Unexploded ordnance is not known to exist within the project limits. However, because of the remote possibility that some military ordnance could have been fired toward State Route 68 from the Fort Ord property during past military training exercises, the potential exists for the discovery of live munitions during project implementation, creating an explosive safety hazard for workers and the public. In the unlikely event that unexploded ordnance is encountered during construction, procedural protocols released by former Fort Ord shall be followed, including stopping all work in the vicinity of the discovery and calling emergency services (911) to report what has been found.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, intersection improvements would not be made and retaining walls and other structures associated with the project would not be constructed. As a result, there would be no risk of disturbance to existing hazardous waste materials in the project locations.

Standard and Non-Standard Special Provisions

The following Standard and Non-Standard Special Provisions are taken from the Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment dated September 26, 2023. Under either Build Alternative, these actions would be implemented to ensure the proper handling, treatment, and disposal of routine hazardous materials/wastes as needed during construction to protect the health of workers, the public, and the environment.

Leaking Underground Storage Tanks

Two inventoried, former leaking underground storage tank sites exist on the south side of the State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road intersection. Though the project has been designed to avoid disturbance of residual contaminant plumes underlying these properties, it is recommended that a Non-Standard Special Provision (NSSP) be included in the Standard Special Provisions to cover handling, testing, and disposal of petroleum hydrocarbon-impacted soil and groundwater in the event unanticipated petroleum hydrocarbon impacts are encountered during construction.

Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL)

The Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment report recommends that an aerially deposited lead study be conducted during the project's Design Phase (Plans, Specifications, and Estimates). This study would provide the information necessary to determine any special handling or disposal requirements for lead-contaminated soil in compliance with the 2016 Aerially Deposited Lead Agreement between Caltrans and the Department of Toxic Substances Control.

Depending on the outcome of the aerially deposited lead soil testing, applicable Standard Special Provisions would then be implemented –

specifically, SSP 14-11.08, “Regulated Material Containing Aerially Deposited Lead,” and/or SSP 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii) for management of unregulated soils. In either case, the Construction Contractor would be required to develop and implement a Lead Compliance Plan during construction to ensure the health and safety of workers and the environment.

Lead-Containing Paint (LCP) and Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACM)

An asbestos and lead-based paint study of the El Toro Creek Bridge structures is recommended during the project’s Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase. Based on the outcome of this study, a Standard Special Provision would be implemented to ensure proper removal, handling, and disposal of asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paints, if present, at a permitted disposal facility.

Yellow Thermoplastic or Traffic Stripe

Once the pavement removal method is known, the appropriate Standard Special Provisions for removal of nonhazardous pavement markings would be determined during the project design phase to ensure proper removal, handling, and disposal of any generated traffic striping waste at a permitted disposal facility.

Treated Wood Waste (TWW)

The construction contract for the proposed project would include a Standard Special Provision requiring the proper management and disposal of treated wood waste. California Department of Toxic Substances Control guidance for the Management of Treated Wood Waste would be included as part of the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates package to ensure compliance with current Department of Toxic Substances Control regulations.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project features, provisions, and standard measures outlined above will be implemented to help address potential hazardous waste and materials. No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.

2.2.6 Air Quality

Regulatory Setting

The Federal Clean Air Act, as amended, is the main federal law that governs air quality, while the California Clean Air Act is its companion state law. These laws, and related regulations by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the California Air Resources Board, set standards for the concentration of pollutants in the air. At the federal level, these standards are called National Ambient Air Quality Standards. National and state ambient air

quality standards have been established for six criteria pollutants that have been linked to potential health concerns: carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), ozone (O3), lead (Pb), and sulfur dioxide (SO2), and particulate matter (PM)—which is broken down for regulatory purposes into particles of 10 micrometers or smaller (PM10) and particles of 2.5 micrometers and smaller (PM2.5). In addition, state standards exist for visibility-reducing particles, sulfates, hydrogen sulfide (H2S), and vinyl chloride. The national and state standards are set at levels that protect public health with a margin of safety and are subject to periodic review and revision. Both state and federal regulatory schemes also cover toxic air contaminants (air toxics); some criteria pollutants are also air toxics or may include certain air toxics in their general definition.

Federal air quality standards and regulations provide the basic scheme for project-level air quality analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In addition to this environmental analysis, a parallel “Conformity” requirement under the Federal Clean Air Act also applies.

Conformity

The conformity requirement is based on Federal Clean Air Act Section 176(c), which prohibits the U.S. Department of Transportation and other federal agencies from funding, authorizing, or approving plans, programs, or projects that do not conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for attaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. “Transportation Conformity” applies to highway and transit projects and takes place on two levels: the regional (or planning and programming) level and the project level. The proposed project must conform at both levels to be approved.

Conformity requirements apply only in nonattainment and “maintenance” (former nonattainment) areas for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, and only for the specific National Ambient Air Quality Standards that are or were violated. U.S. EPA regulations at 40 Code of Federal Regulations 93 govern the conformity process. Conformity requirements do not apply in unclassifiable/attainment areas for National Ambient Air Quality Standards and do not apply at all for state standards regardless of the status of the area.

Regional conformity is concerned with how well the regional transportation system supports plans for attaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), ozone (O3), particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), and in some areas (though not in California), sulfur dioxide (SO2). California has nonattainment or maintenance areas for all of these transportation-related “criteria pollutants” except sulfur dioxide (SO2), and also has a nonattainment area for lead (Pb); however, lead is not currently required by the Federal Clean Air Act to be covered in transportation conformity analysis. Regional conformity is based on emission analysis of Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) and Federal Transportation Improvement Programs (FTIPs) that include all transportation projects

planned for a region over a period of at least 20 years (for the Regional Transportation Plan) and 4 years (for the Federal Transportation Improvement Program). Regional Transportation Plan and Federal Transportation Improvement Program conformity uses travel demand and emission models to determine whether or not the implementation of those projects would conform to emission budgets or other tests at various analysis years showing that requirements of the Federal Clean Air Act and the State Implementation Plan are met. If the conformity analysis is successful, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) make the determinations that the Regional Transportation Plan and Federal Transportation Improvement Program are in conformity with the State Implementation Plan for achieving the goals of the Federal Clean Air Act. Otherwise, the projects in the Regional Transportation Plan and/or Federal Transportation Improvement Program must be modified until conformity is attained. If the design concept and scope and the "open-to-traffic" schedule of a proposed transportation project are the same as described in the Regional Transportation Plan and Federal Transportation Improvement Program, then the proposed project meets regional conformity requirements for purposes of project-level analysis.

Project-level conformity is achieved by demonstrating that the project comes from a conforming Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program; the project has a design concept and scope that has not changed significantly from those in the Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program; project analyses have used the latest planning assumptions and Environmental Protection Agency-approved emissions models; and in particulate matter areas, the project complies with any control measures in the State Implementation Plan. Furthermore, additional analyses (known as hot-spot analyses) may be required for projects located in carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate matter nonattainment or maintenance areas to examine localized air quality impacts.

Affected Environment

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Information regarding project-related air quality impacts was obtained from an Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Memo dated July 28, 2023 and the Air Quality, Noise, and Water Quality Addendum memo dated June 18, 2024 that were prepared by Caltrans for the project.

The project site lies in the Monterey Bay region, outside the state-designated Coastal Zone. The area is characterized by dry summers, rainy winters, prevailing northwesterly winds, and mild year-round temperatures. During summer, a high-pressure cell centered over the northeastern Pacific Ocean results in stable meteorological conditions in the region; during winter, the Pacific high-pressure cell weakens, resulting in increased precipitation and storm activity.

To protect public health against the effects of exposure to air pollution, the federal Clean Air Act requires that ambient air quality must meet the standards for criteria air pollutants in all locations generally accessible to the public (see Table 2.2.6.1). The project is in the North Central Coast Air Basin, which consists of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties. The Monterey Bay Air Resources District regulates air quality in the basin where air quality is generally good. The North Central Coast Air Basin is currently in attainment for all federal ambient air quality standards but is in nonattainment for state standards for airborne particulates less than 10 microns in diameter (PM10) (see Table 2.2.6.2).

The Federal Highway Administration's conformity guidelines include certain categories of projects that are exempt from local and regional air quality analysis because they would have little if any potential to degrade air quality and, therefore, an air quality conformity determination would not be required. Based on review of the federal guidelines, the project would qualify for an exemption under Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 93, Section 93.127 "Projects exempt from regional emissions analyses" as an intersection channelization project.

Projects that would not degrade air quality in the basin are consistent with the Monterey Bay Air Resources District's state air quality attainment goals as stated in the State Implementation Plan (the 2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan).

For the notes in the following tables, refer to notes section below Table 2.2.6.2.

Table 2.2.6.1 State and Federal Criteria Air Pollutant Effects and Sources

Pollutant	Principal Health and Atmospheric Effects	Typical Sources
Ozone (O3)[8]	High concentrations irritate lungs. Long-term exposure may cause lung tissue damage and cancer. Long-term exposure damages plant materials and reduces crop productivity. Precursor organic compounds include many known toxic air contaminants. Biogenic Volatile Organic Compounds may also contribute.	Low-altitude ozone is almost entirely formed from Reactive Organic Gases or Volatile Organic Compounds and Nitrogen Oxides in the presence of sunlight and heat. Major sources include motor vehicles and other mobile sources, solvent evaporation, and industrial and other combustion processes.
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM10)[9]	Irritates eyes and respiratory tract. Decreases lung capacity. Associated with increased cancer and mortality. Contributes to haze and reduced visibility. Includes some toxic air contaminants. Many aerosol and solid compounds are part of PM10.	Dust- and fume-producing industrial and agricultural operations; combustion smoke; atmospheric chemical reactions; construction and other dust-producing activities; unpaved road dust and re-entrained paved road dust; natural sources (wind-blown dust, ocean spray).
Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)[9]	Increases respiratory disease, lung damage, cancer, and premature death. Reduces visibility and produces surface soiling. Most diesel exhaust particulate matter—a toxic air contaminant—is in the PM2.5 size range. Many aerosol and solid compounds are part of PM2.5.	Combustion, including motor vehicles, other mobile sources, and industrial activities; residential and agricultural burning. Also formed through atmospheric chemical (including photochemical) reactions involving other pollutants, including Nitrogen Oxides, Sulfur Oxides, ammonia, and Reactive Organic Gases.
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Carbon monoxide interferes with the transfer of oxygen to the blood and deprives sensitive tissues of oxygen. Carbon monoxide also is a minor precursor for photochemical ozone.	Combustion sources, especially gasoline-powered engines and motor vehicles. Carbon monoxide is the traditional signature pollutant for on-road mobile sources at the local and neighborhood scale.
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2)[10]	Irritating to eyes and respiratory tract. Colors atmosphere reddish-brown. Contributes to acid rain. Part of the “NOX” group of ozone precursors.	Motor vehicles and other mobile sources; refineries; industrial operations.

Pollutant	Principal Health and Atmospheric Effects	Typical Sources
Sulfur Dioxide (SO2)[11]	Irritates respiratory tract; injures lung tissue. Can yellow plant leaves. Destructive to marble, iron, and steel. Contributes to acid rain. Limits visibility.	Fuel combustion (especially coal and high-sulfur oil), chemical plants, sulfur recovery plants, metal processing; some natural sources like active volcanoes. Limited contribution possible from heavy-duty diesel vehicles if ultra-low sulfur fuel not used.
Lead[12,13]	Disturbs gastrointestinal system. Causes anemia, kidney disease, and neuromuscular and neurological dysfunction. Also a toxic air contaminant and water pollutant.	Lead-based industrial processes like battery production and smelters. Lead paint, leaded gasoline. Aerially deposited lead from gasoline may exist in soils along major roads.
Visibility Reducing Particles[14]	Reduces visibility. Produces haze. Note: not related to the Regional Haze program under the Federal Clean Air Act, which is oriented primarily toward visibility issues in National Parks and other “Class I” areas.	See Particulate Matter, above.
Sulfates	Premature mortality and respiratory effects. Contributes to acid rain. Some toxic air contaminants attach to sulfate aerosol particles.	Industrial processes, refineries and oil fields, mines, natural sources like volcanic areas, salt-covered dry lakes, and large sulfide rock areas.
Hydrogen Sulfide	Colorless, flammable, and poisonous. Respiratory irritant. Neurological damage and premature death. Headache, nausea.	Industrial processes such as refineries and oil fields, asphalt plants, livestock operations, sewage treatment plants, and mines. Some natural sources like volcanic areas and hot springs.
Vinyl Chloride[12]	Neurological effects, liver damage, and cancer. Also considered a toxic air contaminant.	Industrial processes.

Refer to notes section below Table 2.2.6.2. Footnotes follow the notes section.

Table 2.2.6.2 State and Federal Criteria Air Pollutant Standards

Pollutant	Averaging Period	Concentration[3] (California Standard[1])	Concentration[3] (National Standard - Primary[2,3,5])	Basin Attainment Status – State	Basin Attainment Status – National
Ozone (O3)[8]	1 Hour	0.09 ppm (180 µg/m3)	None/Not Applicable	A	U/A
Ozone (O3)[8]	8 Hour	0.070 ppm (137 µg/m3)	0.070 ppm (137 µg/m3)	A	U/A
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM10)[9]	24 Hour	50 µg/m3	150 µg/m3	N	U
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM10)[9]	Annual Arithmetic Mean	20 µg/m3	None/Not Applicable	N	U
Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)[9]	24 Hour	None/Not Applicable	35 µg/m3	A	U/A
Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)[9]	Annual Arithmetic Mean	12 µg/m3	12.0 µg/m3	A	U/A
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	1 Hour	20 ppm (23 mg/m3)	35 ppm (40 mg/m3)	A (Monterey County)	U/A
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	8 Hour	9.0 ppm (10 mg/m3)	9 ppm (10 mg/m3)	A (Monterey County)	U/A
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	8 Hour (Lake Tahoe)	6 ppm (7 mg/m3)	None/Not Applicable	A (Monterey County)	U/A
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2)[10]	1 Hour	0.18 ppm (339 µg/m3)	100 ppb (188 µg/m3)	A	U/A
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2)[10]	Annual Arithmetic Mean	0.030 ppm (57 µg/m3)	0.053 ppm (100 µg/m3)	A	U/A
Sulfur Dioxide (SO2)[11]	1 Hour	0.25 ppm (655 µg/m3)	75 ppb (196 µg/m3)	A	U/A
Sulfur Dioxide (SO2)[11]	3 Hour	None/Not Applicable	None/Not Applicable	A	U/A

Pollutant	Averaging Period	Concentration[3] (California Standard[1])	Concentration[3] (National Standard - Primary[2,3,5])	Basin Attainment Status – State	Basin Attainment Status – National
Sulfur Dioxide (SO2)[11]	24 Hour	0.04 ppm (105 µg/m3)	0.14 ppm (for certain areas)[11]	A	U/A
Sulfur Dioxide (SO2)[11]	Annual Arithmetic Mean	None/Not Applicable	0.030 ppm (for certain areas)[11]	A	U/A
Lead[12,13]	30 Day Average	1.5 µg/m3	None/Not Applicable	A	U/A
Lead[12,13]	Calendar Quarter	None/Not Applicable	1.5 µg/m3 (for certain areas)[12]	A	U/A
Lead[12,13]	Rolling 3-Month Average	None/Not Applicable	0.15 µg/m3	A	U/A
Visibility Reducing Particles[14]	8 Hour	See footnote 14	No Federal Standards	U	None/Not Applicable
Sulfates	24 Hour	25 µg/m3	No Federal Standards	A	None/Not Applicable
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.03 ppm (42 µg/m3)	No Federal Standards	U	None/Not Applicable
Vinyl Chloride[12]	24 Hour	0.01 ppm (26 µg/m3)	No Federal Standards	None/Not Applicable	None/Not Applicable

State Ambient Air Quality Standards Area Designations (all pollutants): A = Attainment; N = Nonattainment; NA-T = Nonattainment-Transitional; U = Unclassified

National Ambient Air Quality Standards Area Designations for PM10: A = Attainment; N = Nonattainment; U = Unclassifiable

National Ambient Air Quality Standards Area Designations for O3, PM2.5, CO, and NO2: N = Nonattainment; U/A = Unclassifiable/Attainment

National Ambient Air Quality Standards Area Designations for SO2 and Lead: N = Nonattainment; U = Unclassifiable; U/A = Unclassifiable/Attainment

Footnotes in Tables:

1. California standards for ozone, carbon monoxide (except 8-hour Lake Tahoe), sulfur dioxide (1- and 24-hour), nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter (PM10, PM2.5, and visibility reducing particles), are values that are not to be exceeded. All others are not to be equaled or exceeded. California ambient air quality standards are listed in the Table of Standards in Section 70200 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations.

2. National standards (other than ozone, particulate matter, and those based on annual arithmetic mean) are not to be exceeded more than once a year. The ozone standard is attained when the fourth highest 8-hour concentration measured at each site in a year, averaged over three years, is equal to or less than the standard. For PM10, the 24-hour standard is attained when the expected number of days per calendar year with a 24-hour average concentration above 150 µg/m3 is equal to or less than one. For PM2.5, the 24-hour standard is attained when 98 percent of the daily concentrations, averaged over three years, are equal to or less than the standard. Contact the U.S. EPA for further clarification and current national policies.

3. Concentration expressed first in units in which it was promulgated. Equivalent units given in parentheses are based upon a reference temperature of 25°C and a reference pressure of 760 torr. Most measurements of air quality are to be corrected to a reference temperature of 25°C and a reference pressure of 760 torr; ppm in this table refers to ppm by volume, or micromoles of pollutant per mole of gas.

(4. N/A - deleted)

5. National Primary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary, with an adequate margin of safety to protect the public health.

(6. N/A - deleted)

(7. N/A - deleted)

8. On October 1, 2015, the national 8-hour ozone primary and secondary standards were lowered from 0.075 to 0.070 ppm.

9. On December 14, 2012, the national annual PM2.5 primary standard was lowered from 15 µg/m3 to 12.0 µg/m3. The existing national 24-hour PM2.5 standards (primary and secondary) were retained at 35 µg/m3, as was the annual secondary standard of 15 µg/m3. The existing 24-hour PM10 standards (primary and secondary) of 150 µg/m3 also were retained. The form of the annual primary and secondary standards is the annual mean, averaged over 3 years.

10. To attain the 1-hour national standard, the 3-year average of the annual 98th percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 100 ppb. Note that the national 1-hour standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the national 1-hour standard to the California standards the units can be converted from ppb to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 100 ppb is identical to 0.100 ppm.

11. On June 2, 2010, a new 1-hour SO2 standard was established and the existing 24-hour and annual primary standards were revoked. To attain the 1-hour national standard, the 3-year average of the annual 99th percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 75 ppb. The 1971 SO2 national standards (24-hour and annual) remain in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2010 standard, except that in areas designated nonattainment for the 1971 standards, the 1971 standards remain in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2010 standards are approved.

Note that the 1-hour national standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the 1-hour national standard to the California standard the units can be converted to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 75 ppb is identical to 0.075 ppm.

12. The CARB has identified lead and vinyl chloride as 'toxic air contaminants' with no threshold level of exposure for adverse health effects determined. These actions allow for the implementation of control measures at levels below the ambient concentrations specified for these pollutants.

13. The national standard for lead was revised on October 15, 2008 to a rolling 3-month average. The 1978 lead standard (1.5 µg/m3)as a quarterly average) remains in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2008 standard, except that in areas designated nonattainment for the 1978 standard, the 1978 standard remains in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2008 standard are approved.

14. In 1989, the CARB converted both the general statewide 10-mile visibility standard and the Lake Tahoe 30-mile visibility standard to instrumental equivalents, which are "extinction of 0.23 per kilometer" and "extinction of 0.07 per kilometer" for the statewide and Lake Tahoe Air Basin standards, respectively.

Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

The project alternatives would not increase the capacity of State Route 68 in the project area, and therefore they would not have the ability to degrade local air quality over the long term. In addition, if Alternative 1 (roundabouts) was implemented, the project would likely reduce traffic congestion and idling ("stop and go" activity) to the extent that overall air quality would be improved in the area. No further long-term air quality analysis is required.

Construction Emissions

Though relatively short-lived, project construction activity can have substantial temporary impacts on local air quality depending on the extent of excavation, soil transport, and subsequent fill operations needed. These impacts include release of particulate emissions (airborne dust) from earthwork activities as well as airborne pollutant emissions from construction equipment. The latter include carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NOX), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), directly emitted particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), and toxic air contaminants (TACs), such as diesel exhaust particulate matter (DPM). In addition, construction activities can be expected to temporarily increase traffic congestion in the area, resulting in increases in emissions from traffic during the delays. Therefore, implementation of either one of the project Build Alternatives is anticipated to result in a temporary increase in airborne pollutant and fugitive dust emissions.

An Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Memo, dated July 28, 2023, was prepared for the project. Memo preparation was informed by the Caltrans document "Interim Guidance: Determining CEQA significance for GHG Emissions," dated May 31, 2018. The Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool (CAL-CET) was used to calculate construction-related greenhouse gas emissions for the project, using the model's default settings for a Mainline Improvement project.

Estimated duration of project construction activities is 2,180 working days under Alternative 1, and 2,695 working days under Alternative 2. Alternative 1 was projected to produce 514 tons per year of carbon dioxide (CO2) which, in combination with other project-generated greenhouse gases, equates to a total release of 4,862 tons of CO2 equivalent emissions over the duration of the project. Alternative 2 was projected to result in 468 tons per year of CO2 and a project total of 5,430 tons of CO2 equivalent emissions over the project's duration. These estimates are based on assumptions made during the environmental planning phase of the project and are considered "ballpark" projections.

While the Monterey Bay Air Resources District has established daily construction emission thresholds for many types of projects, small highway projects like this one do not fit into the district's typical purview of jurisdiction, which typically includes residential, commercial, and industrial projects. Due to

the small scope of work in the community, this project presents minimal potential to subject surrounding sensitive receptors to inhalable construction emissions that would be considered significant. It is anticipated that the use of standard construction dust and emission minimization practices and procedures would result in particulate matter (dust) and equipment emissions that would be well within the Monterey Bay Air Resources District daily thresholds.

This paragraph was added after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The updated design in Alternative 1 from single-lane to hybrid roundabouts at the three easterly intersection locations would not add any new impacts or worsen the identified impacts for Alternative 1 discussed for air quality, neither long-term or construction emissions. The three hybrid roundabouts would add only a minor amount of lane miles (about 0.40 mile or less than one-half mile total) to the project area as the additional lane on two sides of the circles would provide additional vehicle storage for enhanced movement through the roundabouts at these three locations. The design change at the eastern one-third of the project would not increase highway capacity overall and therefore would not add new or worsening impacts.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, no intersection improvements would be made. Intersection queues would not be reduced, and delay caused by bottlenecks at the signalized intersections would continue. The overall average travel speed through the corridor during peak hours of operation would continue to slow during peak hours, and vehicles would likely use extra fuel while idling and accelerating in stop-and-go traffic and alternating between slower and faster speeds. As a result, project-related air quality improvements would not be achieved.

Under either Build Alternative, the following project features and practices would be implemented during construction to address potential impacts related to air quality. By incorporating these dust control measures, appropriate engineering design, and robust stormwater Best Management Practices, short-term air quality impacts to the project area would be minimal and would be well within the Monterey Bay Air Resources District daily thresholds.

Dust and Emissions Minimization

Standard construction dust and emissions minimization practices and procedures would be implemented during project construction.

Related Water Pollution Control Measures

The project-level Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would also help protect air quality by requiring water pollution control measures that cross-correlate with dust emission minimization, such as covering soil stockpiles, watering haul roads, and watering excavation and grading areas.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project features and standard practices outlined above will be implemented to help address potential effects related to air quality. No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required.

Climate Change

Neither the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) nor the Federal Highway Administration has issued explicit guidance or methods to conduct project-level greenhouse gas analysis. The Federal Highway Administration emphasizes concepts of resilience and sustainability in highway planning, project development, design, operations, and maintenance. Because there have been requirements set forth in California legislation and executive orders on climate change, the issue is addressed in Section 3.3 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) chapter of this document. The CEQA analysis may be used to inform the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determination for the project.

This paragraph was added after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Since the circulation of the draft environmental document, there have been many changes to federal laws related to climate change. The draft environmental document for this project was circulated prior to the July 1, 2024 effective date for the implementation of the Council on Environmental Quality's "National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Regulations Revisions Phase 2" Final Rule. This Final Rule required that federal agencies consider the effects of climate change in their environmental reviews, including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. The Council on Environmental Quality regulations further require that agencies quantify greenhouse gas emissions, where feasible, from the proposed action and alternatives. The regulations also direct agencies to identify reasonable alternatives that reduce climate change-related effects. However, the 2024 regulations which required that climate change be analyzed have since been rescinded effective April 11, 2025. Therefore, climate change is only discussed in the CEQA analysis, and no determination has been or will be made under NEPA.

2.2.7 Noise

Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provide the broad basis for analyzing and abating highway traffic noise effects. The intent of these laws is to promote the general welfare and to foster a healthy environment. The requirements for noise analysis and consideration of noise abatement and/or mitigation, however, differ between CEQA and NEPA.

California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA requires a strictly baseline-versus-build analysis to assess whether a proposed project will have a noise impact. If a proposed project is determined to have a significant noise impact under CEQA, then CEQA dictates that mitigation measures must be incorporated into the project unless those measures are not feasible. The rest of this section will focus on the NEPA/Title 23 Part 772 of the Code of Federal Regulations (23 CFR 772) noise analysis; see Chapter 3 of this document for further information on noise analysis under CEQA.

National Environmental Policy Act and 23 CFR 772

For highway transportation projects with Federal Highway Administration involvement (and Caltrans, as assigned), the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1970 and its implementing regulations (23 CFR 772) govern the analysis and abatement of traffic noise impacts. The regulations require that potential noise impacts in areas of frequent human use be identified during the planning and design of a highway project. The regulations include noise abatement criteria that are used to determine when a noise impact would occur. The noise abatement criteria differ depending on the type of land use under analysis. For example, the noise abatement criterion for residences (67 dBA) is lower than the noise abatement criterion for commercial areas (72 dBA). Table 2.2.7.1 lists the noise abatement criteria for use in the NEPA/23 CFR 772 analysis.

Table 2.2.7.1 Noise Abatement Criteria

Activity Category	Noise Abatement Criteria, Hourly A- Weighted Noise Level, Leq(h)	Description of Activity Category
A	57 (Exterior)	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose.
B (includes undeveloped lands permitted for this activity category)	67 (Exterior)	Residential.
C (includes undeveloped lands permitted for this activity category)	67 (Exterior)	Active sport areas, amphitheaters, auditoriums, campgrounds, cemeteries, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, parks, picnic areas, places of worship, playgrounds, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, recreation areas, Section 4(f) sites, schools, television studios, trails, and trail crossings.

Activity Category	Noise Abatement Criteria, Hourly A- Weighted Noise Level, Leq(h)	Description of Activity Category
D	52 (Interior)	Auditoriums, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, places of worship, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, schools, and television studios.
E	72 (Exterior)	Hotels, motels, offices, restaurants/bars, and other developed lands, properties, or activities not included in A–D or F.
F	No noise abatement criteria—reporting only	Agriculture, airports, bus yards, emergency services, industrial, logging, maintenance facilities, manufacturing, mining, rail yards, retail facilities, shipyards, utilities (water resources, water treatment, electrical, etc.), and warehousing.
G	No noise abatement criteria—reporting only	Undeveloped lands that are not permitted.

Figure 2.2.7.1 lists the noise levels of common activities to enable readers to compare the actual and predicted highway noise levels discussed in this section with common activities.

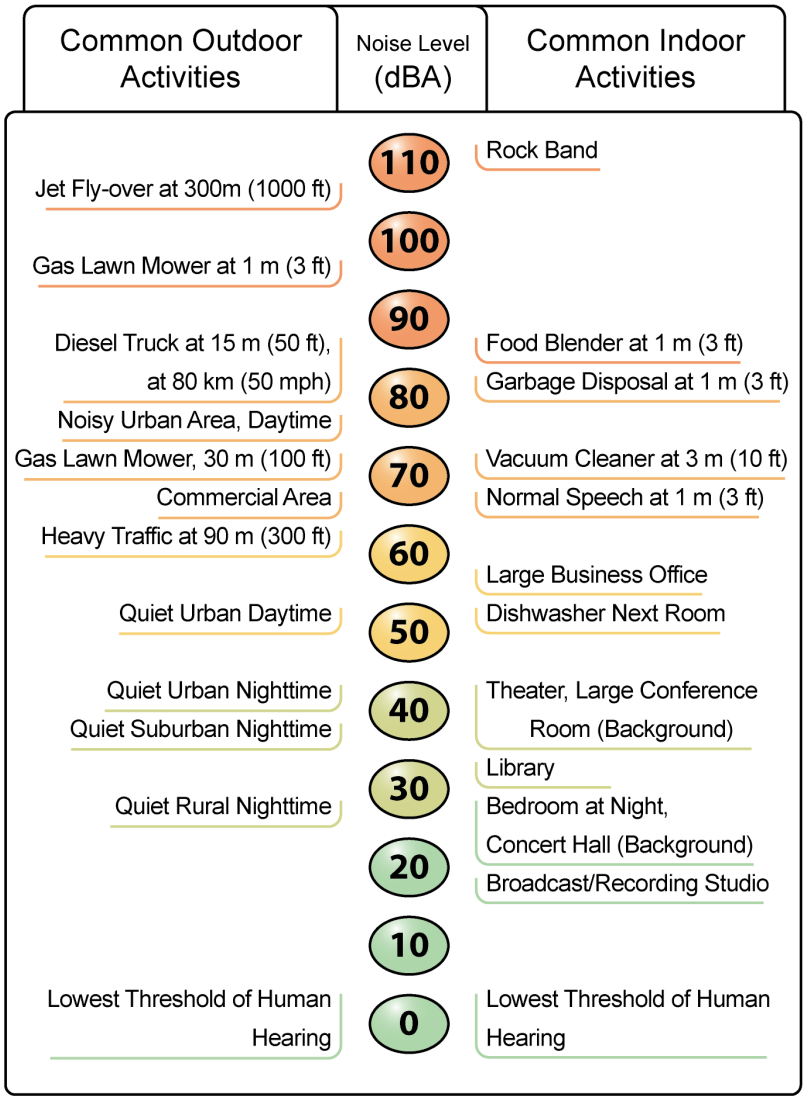
According to the Caltrans Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol for New Highway Construction and Reconstruction Projects, May 2011, a noise impact occurs when the predicted future noise level with the project substantially exceeds the existing noise level (defined as a 12 dBA or more) or when the future noise level with the project approaches or exceeds the noise abatement criteria. A noise level is considered to approach the noise abatement criteria if it is within 1 dBA of the noise abatement criteria.

If it is determined that the project will have noise impacts, then potential abatement measures must be considered. Noise abatement measures that are determined to be reasonable and feasible at the time of final design are incorporated into the project plans and specifications. This document discusses noise abatement measures that would likely be incorporated into the project.

The Caltrans Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol sets forth the criteria for determining when an abatement measure is feasible and reasonable.

Feasibility of noise abatement is basically an engineering concern. Noise abatement must be predicted to reduce noise by at least 5 dB at an impacted receptor to be considered feasible from an acoustical perspective. It must also be possible to design and construct the noise abatement measure for it to be considered feasible.

Figure 2.2.7.1 Noise Levels of Common Activities



Factors that affect the design and constructability of noise abatement include, but are not limited to, safety, barrier height, topography, drainage, access requirements for driveways, presence of local cross streets, underground utilities, other noise sources in the area, and maintenance of the abatement measure. The overall reasonableness of noise abatement is determined by the following three factors: 1) the noise reduction design goal of 7 dB at one or more impacted receptors; 2) the cost of noise abatement; and 3) the viewpoints of benefited receptors (including property owners and residents of the benefited receptors).

Affected Environment

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Information pertaining to project-related short-term and long-term noise impacts was obtained from the Noise Study Report prepared by Caltrans dated June 15, 2023, the Noise Abatement Decision Report prepared by Caltrans dated July 2023, and the Air Quality, Noise, and Water Quality Addendum memo dated June 18, 2024.

The project site consists of nine signalized intersections along 8.9 miles (post mile 4.8 to post mile 13.7) of the State Route 68 corridor between Monterey and Salinas.

Short-Term Measurements for Model Calibration

Short-term noise measurements were taken at each of the four representative monitoring locations for 10 minutes each on a single day (Monday, December 19, 2022) to obtain data needed for calibration of the traffic noise model. Measurements were taken during off-peak hours when traffic was observed to be flowing at approximately the posted speed limit (55 miles per hour). Figure 2.2.7.2 shows the short-term monitoring locations.

Existing Noise Environment for Identified Sensitive Receptors

Though the Noise Study Report evaluates all developed land uses within the project site, noise impact analysis is considered only for areas of frequent human use that would benefit from a lowered noise level (“sensitive receptors”). Specifically, these are locations with defined outdoor activity areas such as residential backyards, common use areas at multi-family residences, and recreational outdoor areas like playgrounds, where project activities could potentially exceed noise abatement criteria (thresholds) and cause undesirable impacts to public use and enjoyment.

Because four of the nine project intersections did not meet the criteria to be considered sensitive receptors, noise impact analysis was conducted for the following five intersections:

- State Route 68/Josselyn Canyon Road
- State Route 68/Olmsted Road
- State Route 68/Pasadera Drive
- State Route 68/Laureles Grade
- State Route 68/San Benancio Road

Across these five intersections, a total of 19 sensitive receptors (designated R-1 through R-19) were identified. Figures 2.2.7.3 to 2.2.7.7 show the locations of these receptors near each of the five intersections listed above.

Figure 2.2.7.2 Short-Term Noise Monitoring Locations



Figure 2.2.7.3 Sensitive Receptors – State Route 68/Josselyn Canyon Road Intersection



Figure 2.2.7.4 Sensitive Receptors – State Route 68/Olmsted Road Intersection

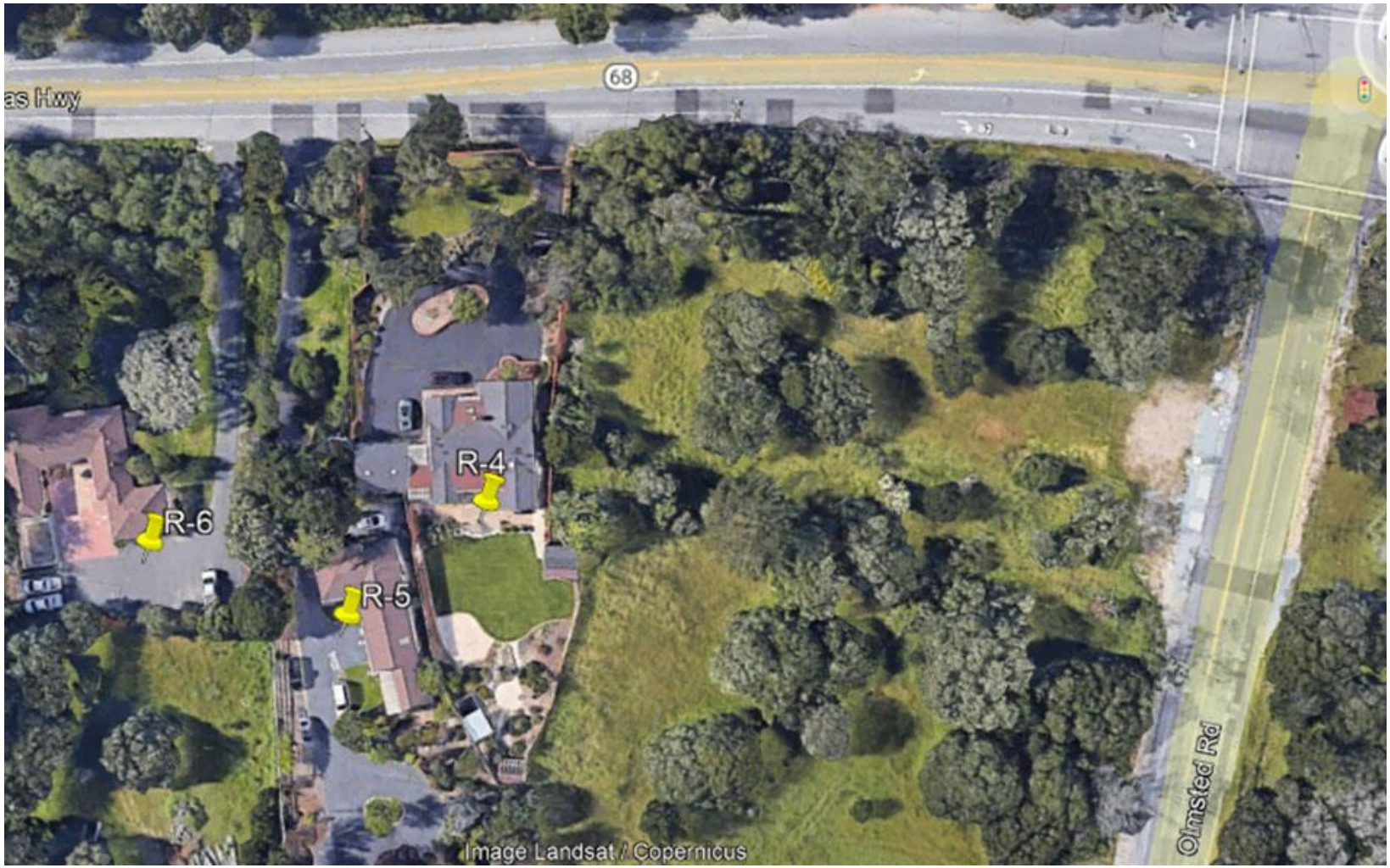


Figure 2.2.7.5 Sensitive Receptors – State Route 68/Pasadera Drive Intersection



Figure 2.2.7.6 Sensitive Receptors – State Route 68/Laureles Grade Intersection

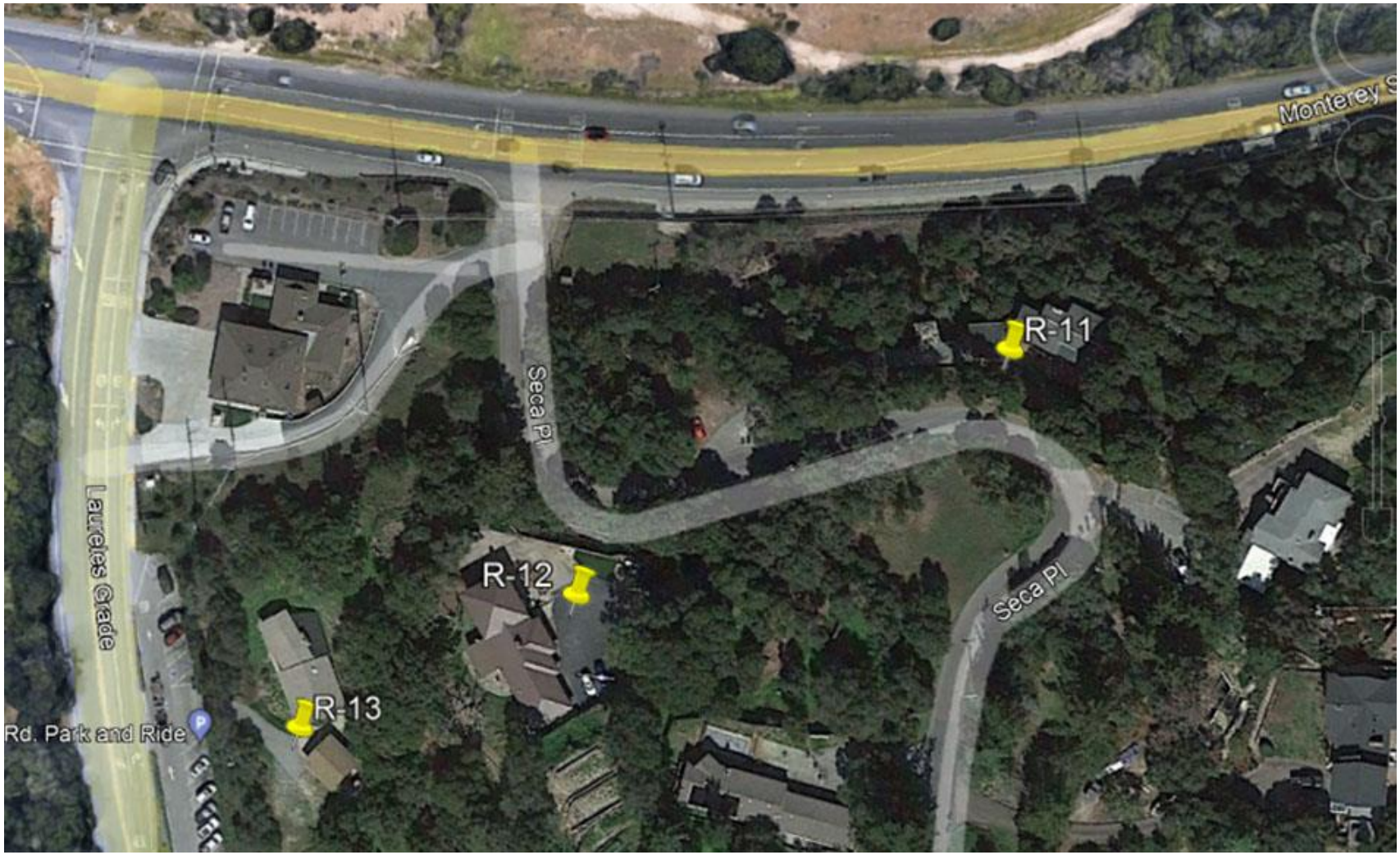


Figure 2.2.7.7 Sensitive Receptors – State Route 68/San Benancio Road Intersection



Environmental Consequences

Build Alternatives

Alternative 1 – Roundabouts

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Alternative 1, converting intersections to roundabouts, would not involve any substantial widening of State Route 68 or the addition of auxiliary lanes. Under this alternative, single-lane, multi-lane, and hybrid roundabouts would be placed with minimal change from the original intersection configuration, leading to no extensive substantial change in distance between the sensitive receptors and noise sources. In addition, the absence of acceleration and deceleration cycles from a dead stop, in combination with slower, freely moving traffic (most of the time) through the roundabout, would lead to lower noise than that for Future No-Build conditions. Therefore, Alternative 1 would be classified as a Type III project, and would not require implementation of any noise abatement measures.

This paragraph was added after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The updated design in Alternative 1 with hybrid roundabouts at the easterly three intersection locations would add only a minor amount of lane miles (about 0.40 mile or less than one-half mile total) to the project area as the additional lane on two sides of the circles would provide additional vehicle storage (space to accommodate vehicles) for enhanced movement through the roundabouts at these three locations. The design change at the eastern one-third of the project would not increase highway capacity overall and therefore would not cause increased traffic volumes and related vehicle noise on the project corridor. Therefore, updated Alternative 1 would not add new or worsening long-term noise impacts.

Alternative 2 – Signals and Lane Channelization

Like Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would not increase roadway capacity or traffic volume. However, because Alternative 2 would add auxiliary lanes in some locations, shifting traffic noise closer to certain sensitive receptors, Alternative 2 would be classified as a Type I project and would therefore be subject to consideration of noise abatement measures.

The project Noise Study Report identified 19 potential sensitive receptors (R-1 through R-19) at five of the project intersections. However, the report found that thresholds for excessive noise resulting from the project (noise increases of 12 or more decibels [dBA], or increases exceeding the noise abatement criteria threshold of 67 decibels) would be exceeded at only one of these receptors: the outdoor recreational area (basketball court)/parking area at the Living Hope Church of the Nazarene (Receptor R-1) at 1375 Josselyn Canyon Road, Monterey. Specifically, the Noise Study Report found that implementation of Alternative 2 could increase noise levels at that location by up to 1 decibel (1 dBA). That is, the existing 67-decibel noise level at that

location could potentially increase to 68 decibels. A noise level increase of less than 3 decibels (3 dBA) is considered to be imperceptible.

Receptor R-1 was studied further, and a Noise Abatement Decision Report was produced by Caltrans. The other 18 sensitive noise receptors identified in the Noise Study Report (R-2 through R-19) were predicted not to experience noise increases of 12 or more decibels, nor to exceed the noise abatement criteria threshold of 67 decibels. Therefore, noise abatement measures for those receptors were not considered in the noise analysis.

The Noise Abatement Decision Report for Receptor R-1 notes that, though installation of an 8- to 12-foot sound barrier would reduce Alternative 2-associated traffic noise to acceptable levels at the basketball court/parking area, this barrier would not be feasible from a construction cost perspective because it would exceed the cost allowance for this type of structure.

Also, the roadway alignment of State Route 68 is planned for widening in that particular spot to accommodate an eastbound auxiliary through lane as well as realignment of an open channel ditch, meaning that the basketball court will likely be removed regardless, and construction of a sound barrier would not be needed.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, no intersection improvements would be made. Intersection queues would not be reduced, and delay caused by bottlenecks at the signalized intersections would continue and presumably increase over time. The overall average travel speed through the corridor during peak hours of operation would continue to slow during peak hours, with vehicles braking and alternating between slower and faster speeds, likely resulting in continuation or increase of the existing noise associated with stop-and-go traffic during peak hours.

In addition, the No-Build Alternative would not result in exceedance of noise abatement criteria at the lone sensitive receptor predicted to experience significant project-related noise impacts (under Alternative 2 only), the church-owned basketball court/parking area at 1375 Josselyn Canyon Road.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Abatement Measures

For the reasons stated above, no avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures related to noise are required under either Build Alternative.

2.2.8 Energy

Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S. Code Part 4332) requires the identification of all potentially significant impacts to the environment, including energy impacts.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15126.2(b) and Appendix F, Energy Conservation, require an analysis of a project's energy use to determine if the project may result in significant environmental effects due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary use of energy, or wasteful use of energy resources.

Affected Environment

The State Route 68 corridor is a key interregional travel route providing east-west access for travel between the coast and U.S. Highway 101 in the Salinas Valley. State Route 68 is an important travel corridor for commercial activity, regional commuters, and residential access. As a designated scenic route, State Route 68 is also a key route for tourists and visitors to the Monterey Peninsula and provides access to important attractions, including the Laguna Seca Raceway, multiple golf courses, Toro Regional Park, the Monterey Regional Airport, and the connection to State Route 218.

Within the project limits, State Route 68 is a two-lane highway containing nine lighted, signalized intersections. Many, if not most, of the nine project intersections are three-legged interchanges that each have two existing light fixtures (electroliers). At least some of these electroliers currently use energy-efficient light-emitting diode (LED) luminaires. Pavement condition of the roadway is currently considered to be acceptable and not in need of rehabilitation.

In 2016, annual average daily traffic volumes ranged from 23,000 to 25,700 trips per day along segments of the corridor. The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments' (AMBAG) Travel Demand Model projects that by 2040 annual average daily traffic volumes along the corridor will range from approximately 25,000 to 32,000 trips per day.

As noted in the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's Final State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan (Transportation Agency for Monterey County 2017), the project intersections experience recurring bottlenecks during peak travel hours that cause congestion throughout the State Route 68 corridor. This congestion likely results in inefficient energy use and increased emission of air pollutants, as the speeding and rapid acceleration/braking that characterizes stop-and-go traffic can decrease fuel economy by anywhere from 10 percent to 40 percent (U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Saver: Fuel Economy; https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/fuel-economy).The optimum speed for fuel efficiency is 50 to 55 miles per hour (U.S. Department of Energy, no date).

Greenhouse gas emissions analysis conducted for the Final State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan found that under existing conditions, the State Route 68 corridor (including stretches outside the project area) generates 30 tons of greenhouse gas emissions daily during the morning/evening peak periods. Without the modifications to intersection operations proposed by the project, it is likely that congestion and emissions of air pollutants including greenhouse gases would continue and worsen over time (see Section 2.1.8, Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities).

Environmental Consequences

Construction Energy Consumption

For both Build Alternatives, project construction would consume mostly diesel and gasoline fuels through operation of heavy-duty construction equipment, material deliveries, and debris hauling.

Projected energy consumption from construction activity was developed by obtaining fuel consumption projections in gallons from the Caltrans Construction Emission Tool (CAL-CET), using the model's default settings for a Mainline Improvement project. CAL-CET models both emissions and fuel consumption based on project-specific information.

The CAL-CET results were reported in the Caltrans project Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Memo dated July 28, 2023. Based on the estimated number of working days for each Build Alternative, as well as estimated maximum daily average fuel use, the project is estimated to result in the consumption of up to 808,500 gallons of diesel fuel and 237,160 gallons of gasoline over the duration of construction, depending on the alternative chosen (Table 2.2.8.1 and Table 2.2.8.2). Alternative 1 is projected to last 2,180 working days; Alternative 2 is expected to last 2,695 working days.

Table 2.2.8-1 Predicted Construction Phase Fuel Consumption, Alternative 1

Metric	Diesel Fuel	Gasoline Fuel
Daily Average (gallons of fuel per day)	159	43
Max Daily Average (gallons of fuel per day)	337	103
Annual Average (gallons of fuel per year)	34,613	9,302
Total Consumption over Project Duration (gallons)	734,660	224,540

Table 2.2.8-2 Predicted Construction Phase Fuel Consumption, Alternative 2

Metric	Diesel Fuel	Gasoline Fuel
Daily Average (gallons of fuel per day)	141	37
Max Daily Average (gallons of fuel per day)	300	88
Annual Average (gallons of fuel per year)	31,701	8,317
Total Consumption over Project Duration (gallons)	808,500	237,160

Long-Term Operational Energy Consumption of Build Alternatives

The project area sits within the jurisdiction of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). The project is included in the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments' Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS) as a regionally significant revenue-constrained project. The project is also identified as a priority in Monterey County's 2018 Regional Transportation Plan to address congestion.

Operational Phase – Both Build Alternatives

Reducing intersection queues and eliminating delay caused by bottlenecks at the signalized intersections would improve the overall average travel speed through the corridor during peak hours of operation, resulting in improved fuel efficiency. In general, most vehicles have an optimum traveling speed range at which the vehicle will perform at a most efficient fuel economy, approximately 50 to 55 miles per hour (U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Saver: Fuel Economy. https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/fuel-economy, no date). Projects that improve or smooth traffic flow during peak travel demand periods or reduce stop-and-go conditions improve fuel economy and therefore reduce overall energy consumption in the project area. Both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 are anticipated to improve travel flow during peak hours and reduce bottlenecks that result in stop-and-go traffic.

For both Build Alternatives, an average of one additional, high-efficiency LED (light-emitting diode) luminaire would be installed at most project intersections to provide the required amount of illumination at night. Any existing incandescent street lighting at each intersection would also be replaced with this type of lighting. LED lighting consumes about 75 percent less electricity than typical incandescent bulbs (U.S. Department of Energy 2014b). These energy conservation features are consistent with state and local policies to reduce energy use. Specific project lighting details would not be confirmed until the project's Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase.

Operational Phase – Alternative 1

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Alternative 1 proposes to modify

nine existing signalized intersections to five one-lane, one multi-lane and three hybrid roundabouts. Various studies comparing roundabout operations to signalized intersection operations show that roundabouts reduce stops and idling, resulting in a 25 to 30 percent decrease in fuel consumption. Reduction of fuel consumption is anticipated to be greater in Alternative 1 than for Alternative 2, due to the continuous traffic flow allowed by roundabouts.

Energy use would be further reduced under Alternative 1, compared to Alternative 2, due to the former's lack of traffic signal lights to operate or maintain, as these are not needed with roundabouts.

Alternative 1 also incorporates improved active transportation elements by improving pedestrian and bicycle access and safety through each of the intersection roundabouts, which could result in partial offsets to fuel consumption due to more people choosing to walk or bike rather than driving. Overall, a net reduction of energy use is anticipated under Alternative 1 due to decreased traffic congestion, leading to greater efficiency and fuel economy.

Operational Phase – Alternative 2

In Alternative 2, intersections would continue to be signalized and additional street lighting would be added. Both signals and street lighting would be designed using LEDs to minimize energy consumption. Therefore, energy requirements for the signalized intersection operation are anticipated to remain the same or less as existing use. Alternative 2 proposes to reconfigure lanes by adding additional turning lanes and deepening storage lanes to reduce stop-and-go traffic conditions and improve flow. As noted above, improving traffic flow is anticipated to improve vehicle fuel economy and reduce energy consumption.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, no intersection improvements would be made. Intersection queues would not be reduced, and delay caused by bottlenecks at the signalized intersections would continue. The overall average travel speed through the corridor during peak hours of operation would continue to slow during peak hours, and vehicles would likely use extra fuel while idling and accelerating in stop-and-go traffic and alternating between slower and faster speeds. The No-Build Alternative would not result in any improvements to energy efficiency.

Summary

The Build Alternatives do not add roadway capacity, and both would improve the flow of traffic through the State Route 68 corridor through operational improvements to existing signalized intersections. Therefore, the project is unlikely to increase direct energy consumption though increased fuel use. In addition, energy conservation features incorporated into project operation

described below, such as energy-efficient lighting, would reduce indirect energy use and are consistent with state and local policies to reduce energy use.

Project Energy-Reduction Features and Practices

Under either Build Alternative, the practices listed below would be implemented during construction to reduce potential impacts related to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary use of energy, or wasteful use of energy resources. See also the project features and practices identified in Section 2.2.6, Air Quality, which would also reduce potential impacts.

During the construction phase, the energy use required would be minimized wherever possible through scheduling, appropriate equipment operation, recycling of materials, as applicable, and implementation of greenhouse gas reduction strategies (see Section 3.3.4**,** Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies). It is anticipated that over time, the fuel conserved due to improved traffic flow through the corridor would more than offset energy use during construction. In addition, while construction would result in a short-term increase in energy use, construction design features would help conserve energy. For example, recycled materials would be used where feasible. Recycled products typically have lower manufacturing and transport energy costs since they do not use raw materials, which must be mined and transported to a processing facility.

Per Caltrans Best Management Practices, newer or well-maintained equipment that is more energy efficient will be used during construction. The following standard best management practices would be used to minimize energy use:

- The contractor would consolidate material delivery whenever possible to promote efficient vehicle and energy use. The contractor would schedule material deliveries during non-rush hours to minimize fuel lost during traffic congestion.
- The contractor would maintain equipment and machinery in good working condition and inspect it regularly. Inspection records would be maintained by the contractor.
- For diesel equipment, only California Air Resources Board-approved diesel fuel would be authorized for use during construction.
- Operators would avoid leaving equipment and vehicles idling for more than 10 minutes when said equipment is parked or not in use.
- Equipment found operating on the project that has not been inspected or has oil leaks would be shut down and subject to citation.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures for Construction Impacts

This paragraph was updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The construction-phase project features and practices outlined above will be implemented as part of the project to help address potential impacts related to air quality. No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures related to inefficient, wasteful, and/or unnecessary energy consumption are required.

2.3 Biological Environment

This paragraph was modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The discussion presented in this section of the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment is adapted from, and summarizes information provided in, the Caltrans Natural Environment Study (with Preliminary Jurisdictional Delineation report) produced for the project, dated October 2023, and the Addendum to the Natural Environment Study; Design Modifications for Hybrid Roundabouts for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project (EA 05-1J790) Monterey County, dated December 2024. The purpose of the Natural Environment Study is to assess the potential for project activities to result in adverse impacts to biological resources. Because the information presented in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment is a summary, the Natural Environment Study and the Addendum to the Natural Environment Study should be consulted for full details regarding biological resources data for the project area.

2.3.1 Natural Communities

This section of the document discusses natural communities of concern. The focus of this section is on biological communities, not individual plant or animal species. This section also includes information on wildlife corridors and habitat fragmentation. Wildlife corridors are areas of habitat used by wildlife for seasonal or daily migration. Habitat fragmentation involves the potential for dividing sensitive habitat and thereby lessening its biological value.

Habitat areas that have been designated as critical habitat under the Federal Endangered Species Act are discussed in the Threatened and Endangered Species section, Section 2.3.5. Wetlands and other waters are discussed in Section 2.3.2.

Affected Environment

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Information for this section comes from the Natural Environment Study (with Preliminary

Jurisdictional Delineation report) dated October 2023, and the Addendum to the Natural Environment Study; Design Modifications for Hybrid Roundabouts, dated December 2024.

The project lies in northern Monterey County, within and to the east of the City of Monterey. The western end of the project is approximately 1.3 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. The project is outside the state-designated Coastal Zone. Topography in the Biological Study Area is highly variable, ranging from nearly flat areas to moderate hills with elevations ranging from approximately 100 to 500 feet above mean sea level, with the lowest elevations in the west and highest in the eastern parts of the project limits. The region features a Mediterranean climate, with warm to hot, dry summers and mild to cool, wet winters. Average annual rainfall is approximately 19 inches, most of which occurs during the winter months.

Biological Study Area

The discussion presented in the Natural Environment Study and the Draft (now this Final) Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment is based on the project's Biological Study Area, which is generally defined as the area that may be temporarily or permanently, and directly or indirectly, impacted by construction and construction-related activities. For this project, the Biological Study Area is identical to the project's Area of Potential Impact.

These impact areas form a subset of (are smaller than) the overall Biological Study Area. They include proposed construction work areas, any associated access roads and staging areas, and nearby potential habitat areas. See "Environmental Consequences" in this section for additional information on how impact areas are characterized.

The Biological Study Area consists of six distinct locations that are based on groupings of the nine project intersections, which total approximately 213 acres (see Table 2.3.1.1). Refer also to Figure 1.4 in Section 1.4.1 (six sheets) for maps of the six study locations.

Vegetation Communities

The Biological Study Area supports a variety of habitat types, from dry forests to herbaceous wetlands. Coast live oak woodland and forest are dominated by coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and are the most common plant community in the Biological Study Area. Monterey pine forest and woodland habitat is dominated by Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*) trees as a forest canopy. Other native habitat types include seasonal wetlands, willow thickets, wild oats-annual brome grasslands, and coyote brush scrub.

Table 2.3.1.1 Study Area Locations and Associated Intersections in the Biological Study Area

Study Location Number	Name	Intersection(s)	Intersection Number	Area (acres)
1	Josselyn Canyon and Olmsted Roads	State Route 68/Josselyn Canyon Road, and State Route 68/Olmsted Road	1 and 2	37.63
2	State Route 218 (Canyon del Rey Boulevard) and Ragsdale Drive	State Route 68/State Route 218 (Canyon del Rey Boulevard), and State Route 68/Ragsdale Drive	3 and 4	36.50
3	York Road	State Route 68/York Road	5	28.77
4	Pasadera Drive	State Route 68/Pasadera Drive	6	30.60
5	Laureles Grade	State Route 68/Laureles Grade	7	26.91
6	Corral de Tierra and San Benancio Roads	State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road, and State Route 68/San Benancio Road	8 and 9	52.44

The entire Biological Study Area has been modified either historically or recently as part of ongoing land management activities. Biological communities are fragmented by the presence of highways and major roads as well as commercial, recreational, and residential development. Invasive plant species are abundant throughout the project area. Hydrologic modifications, development, and pollutants have more than likely substantially reduced habitat values in the region compared to less developed areas. Despite these limitations, the variety of natural communities in the Biological Study Area and large tracts of open space in the region are expected to support a wide variety of flora and fauna. Indeed, Caltrans has documented 400 different plant taxa and 60 different wildlife taxa during field surveys for the project.

The Natural Environment Study identifies 12 natural and semi-natural biological communities and four cultivated (human-made) landscapes in the Biological Study Area; see Tables 2.3.1.2a and 2.3.1.2b. Both tables have been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Cultivated landscapes are included in the Natural Environment Study because these areas also provide wildlife habitat. For notes in the tables, see the explanations listed after Table 2.3.1.2b.

Table 2.3.1.2a Natural and Semi-Natural Land Cover Types in the Biological Study Area

Vegetation Type[1]-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities	Alliance Name[1]-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities	State Status[2]-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities	Habitat Types[3]-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities	Map Code[4]-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities	Area in Biological Study Area (acres)-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities
Arroyo Willow Thickets	*Salix lasiolepis* - Shrubland Alliance	S4	Valley Foothill Riparian	AW	23.14
California Sagebrush Scrub	*Artemisia californica (Salvia leucophylla)* - Shrubland Alliance	S5	Coastal Scrub	CS	1.96
Chamise Chaparral	*Adenostoma fasciculatum* - Shrubland Alliance	S5	Chamise-Redshank Chaparral	CC	0.19
Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest	*Quercus agrifolia* - Forest and Woodland Alliance	S4	Coastal Oak Woodland	OW	54.79
Coyote Brush Scrub	*Baccharis pilularis* - Shrubland Alliance	S5	Coastal Scrub	CB	6.48
Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland	*Pinus radiata* - Forest and Woodland Alliance	S3	Closed-Cone Pine-Cypress	MP	20.4
Pale Spike Rush Marshes	*Eleocharis macrostachya* -Herbaceous Alliance	S4	Fresh emergent wetland, Wet meadow	PS	0.97
Purple Needlegrass Grassland	*Nassella pulchra* - Herbaceous Alliance	S3/S4	Perennial Grassland	PG	1.13
Red Willow Riparian Woodland and Forest	*Salix laevigata* - Forest and Woodland Alliance	S3	Valley Foothill Riparian	RW	7.4
Western Rush Marshes	*Juncus patens* - Provisional Herbaceous Alliance	S4?	Freshwater Emergent Wetland, Wet Meadow	WR	0.32

Vegetation Type[1]-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities	Alliance Name[1]-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities	State Status[2]-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities	Habitat Types[3]-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities	Map Code[4]-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities	Area in Biological Study Area (acres)-- Natural and Semi-Natural Communities
White-root Beds	*Carex barbarae* - Herbaceous Alliance	S2?	Wet Meadow	WB	0.48
Wild Oats - Annual Brome Grasslands	*Avena* spp. – *Bromus* spp. - Herbaceous Semi-Natural Alliance	NA	Annual Grassland	AG	6.8

Table 2.3.1.2b Cultivated Land Cover Types in the Biological Study Area

Vegetation Type[1]-- Cultivated Landscapes	Alliance Name[1]-- Cultivated Landscapes	State Status[2]-- Cultivated Landscapes	Habitat Types[3]-- Cultivated Landscapes	Map Code[4]--Cultivated Landscapes	Area in Biological Study Area (acres)-- Cultivated Landscapes
Lawn	NA	NA	NA	LA	3.14
Ornamental and Landscape Plantings	NA	NA	NA	OR	8.54
Ruderal	NA	NA	NA	RU	22.72
Developed	NA	NA	NA	DV	14.05

1. Plant community names generally follow classifications in A Manual of California Vegetation (California Native Plant Society) except where the Alliance names in A Manual of California Vegetation include species that were not observed in the Biological Study Area. See descriptions below for more information.

2. S1: Critically Imperiled. At very high risk of extinction or elimination due to very restricted range, very few populations or occurrences, very steep declines, very severe threats, or other factors.

S2: Imperiled. At high risk of extinction or elimination due to restricted range, few populations or occurrences, steep declines, severe threats, or other factors.

S3: Vulnerable. At moderate risk of extinction or elimination due to a fairly restricted range, relatively few populations or occurrences, recent and widespread declines, threats, or other factors.

S4 or higher: Apparently Secure. At fairly low risk of extinction or elimination due to an extensive range and/or many populations or occurrences, but with possible cause for some concern as a result of local recent declines, threats, or other factors.

?: Inexact Numeric Rank. Denotes inexact numeric rank.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife considers Ranks 1-3 rare.

3. Habitat types follow California Wildlife Habitat Relationships and are based on the cross walk between plant communities and California Wildlife Habitat Relationships in A Manual of California Vegetation (California Native Plant Society).

4. Please see Figures 10 through 15 in the Natural Environment Study.

Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest

Together, coast live oak woodland and forest is the most common plant community in the Biological Study Area, occupying 54.79 acres and typically found on dry hill slopes and canyon walls. Commonly associated woody species in this plant community include poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*), Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*), California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), and coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*). Common herbaceous species in this plant community vary depending on overstory density, with species diversity higher in open woodlands than in dense forest stands.

This plant community is common in coastal California and is not considered a sensitive natural community by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The coast live oak woodland and forest community provides a number of important ecosystem services, including wildlife habitat, air pollution removal, carbon sequestration, and natural beauty. Coast live oaks have certain legal protections under the Monterey County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 16.60: Preservation of Oak and other Protected Trees. Most of the natural plant communities found in the Biological Study Area contain examples of native coast live oak trees that are protected by this ordinance.

Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland

The Monterey pine forest and woodland community occupies 20.4 acres in the Biological Study Area, forming an open to continuous canopy. Coast live oak is co-dominant in the tree canopy, and poison oak is one of the dominant species in the understory. Shrub and herbaceous layer density in this community is variable. Common shrub species include manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos* spp.), poison oak, and French broom (*Genista monspessulana*). Invasive grasses such as common velvetgrass (*Holcus lanatus*) and Italian ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*) dominate the understory in woodland settings.

The Monterey pine forest and woodland community is a sensitive natural community within its natural range of three discrete locations in California (the Monterey Peninsula, Año Nuevo, and Cambria). Only one-half of this community's historical extent remains undeveloped on the Monterey Peninsula. Native Monterey pine stands are threatened by urban development, genetic contamination, pine pitch canker disease, and forest fragmentation. Nevertheless, Monterey pine is a common tree in the Biological Study Area, interspersed with residential and commercial development.

Other Sensitive Natural Communities

White-root Beds

Patches of Santa Barbara sedge (*Carex barbarae*; also called white-root) occupy 0.48 acre within the Biological Study Area, forming either nearly pure monocultures or occurring in mixed-species patches. These beds occur on low road shoulders throughout the Biological Study Area, often adjacent to roadside

ditches/swales and sometimes on dry hill slopes. This community is tolerant of shading and is sometimes seen adjacent to and shaded by coast live oak woodlands or arroyo willow thickets, where *Carex barbarae* plants also occur in the understory. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife considers this community to be rare.

Red Willow Riparian Forest and Woodland

The Biological Study Area contains 7.4 acres of this plant community, which within the project limits is found only along El Toro Creek in the Corral de Tierra-San Benancio project location. Red willow (*Salix laevigata*) is dominant or co-dominant in the tree canopy with arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) and black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*), accompanied by a dense understory of stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*), California blackberry, and seedling trees. Though red willow is a common species in California and elsewhere, the *Salix gooddingii-Salix laevigata* Forest and Woodland Alliance and the *Salix laevigata/Salix lasiolepis* Association are considered rare by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Purple Needlegrass Grassland

The Natural Environment Study identifies 1.13 acres of this plant community in the Biological Study Area. Purple needlegrass (*Stipa pulchra* or *Nassella pulchra*) is a native perennial bunchgrass that is widespread throughout California and is the California State Grass. Fire suppression and land management changes have likely led to reductions in overall coverage of purple needlegrass grasslands in California. The purple needlegrass grasslands in the Biological Study Area are small and co-dominated with annual grasses and forbs present in another plant community, wild oats-annual brome grasslands.

Habitat Connectivity

Habitat connectivity is the degree to which the landscape facilitates or impedes animal movement and other ecological processes, such as seed dispersal. Linkages, or movement corridors, between habitat areas provide avenues for genetic exchange, access to forage and denning areas, and access to alternative territories. These corridors can be fragmented by housing, roads, fences, energy facilities, and other human-made barriers. Regional and statewide conservation efforts have identified the Highway 68 Scenic Plan Study Area as a critical wildlife link connecting the coast of Monterey to the Sierra de Salinas Range.

Due to the high importance of habitat connectivity in the region and a desire to address the high number of wildlife-vehicle collisions on State Route 68 within the project limits, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) funded a Wildlife Connectivity Analysis study (Transportation Agency for Monterey County 2017) examining wildlife passage through existing culverts and bridges in the area. The study's

goals included quantifying wildlife roadkill incidents along the State Route 68 corridor, identifying roadkill "hotspots" (areas with particularly high numbers of collisions), and providing recommendations to reduce the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions occurring. Reducing wildlife crossing attempts on busy roadways provides a number of benefits, such as enhancing safety for both drivers and wildlife and reducing costs associated with wildlife-vehicle collisions.

Roadkill surveys conducted every two weeks throughout 2016 recorded 60 roadkill observations within the project limits, mostly near bridges and culverts. These results were then combined with data from other sources for the same area from 2005 to 2020, including Caltrans traffic safety reports and data from the Monterey County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), California Highway Patrol, and the California Roadkill Observation System, to arrive at a summary of estimated wildlife roadkill at or near the project intersections. The results are shown in Table 2.3.1.3. The project Natural Environment Study notes that, due to data limitations, these numbers are almost certainly underestimates.

Table 2.3.1.3 Summary of Wildlife Roadkill Incidents in the Project Area

Species	Josselyn/ Olmsted	State Route 218/ Ragsdale	York	Pasadera	Laureles	Corral De Tierra/San Benancio	Total
Badger	No value	1	No value	No value	No value	1	2
Bobcat	No value	No value	No value	2	No value	1	3
Coyote	1	1	2	No value	No value	1	5
Deer	5	2	14	18	19	9	67
Hawk/Owl	1	No value	4	3	5	2	15
Mountain Lion	No value	No value	1	No value	No value	No value	1
Opossum	No value	1	No value	No value	No value	No value	1
Raccoon	1	2	No value	No value	2	No value	5
Skunk	No value	No value	1	1	No value	3	5
Unknown	No value	No value	1	No value	No value	No value	1
Pond Turtle	No value	No value	No value	No value	1	1	2
Wild Turkey	No value	2	No value	No value	1	No value	3
Total	**8**	**9**	**23**	**24**	**28**	**18**	**110**

Based on the Wildlife Connectivity Analysis study's identification of roadkill hotspots, the project was designed to incorporate five wildlife passage improvements (undercrossings) in the form of enlarged culverts to be placed at

existing culvert locations. Fencing would also be installed to keep animals off the roadway and guide them into the undercrossings. At some locations, the fencing would end at a natural landform to discourage animals from walking around the end of the fence and entering the roadway. The undercrossings would incorporate gentle approach slopes at their openings to create openness and visual clearance, which should encourage wildlife to use them.

The proposed wildlife crossing improvements at each location are shown in Table 2.3.1.4 and shown in the preliminary design plan illustrations referenced in Appendix H for both Build Alternatives. For Table 2.3.1.4, see notes explained right after the table. In the table, culvert types are identified as follows: CBC = concrete box culvert; CSP = corrugated steel pipe; RCB = reinforced concrete box; RCP = reinforced concrete pipe; culvert sizes are height by width by length (in feet), except where noted.

The Wildlife Connectivity Analysis did not evaluate aquatic species movement, but many of the existing structures, streams, and riparian areas within the project limits may facilitate passage across State Route 68 for semi-aquatic species such as amphibians and reptiles. Fish passage is not considered applicable to the streams draining directly to Monterey Bay due to low flow and substantial barriers lower in the system. Steelhead trout and its habitat in El Toro Creek, which drains east from the project site into the Salinas River, are discussed in Section 2.3.5, Threatened and Endangered Species.

Table 2.3.1.4 Summary of Proposed Wildlife Connectivity Improvements

Site and Post Mile[1]	Existing Structure[2,3]	Proposed Structure[2]	Additional Design Information[3]
Site 1 – York Road Culvert post mile 8.12	4-foot by 6-foot by 60-foot concrete box culvert	8-foot by 8-foot by 85-foot reinforced concrete box	New culvert to be located 18 feet west of existing culvert, which will be abandoned in place. Excavation 90-100 feet north and 75-85 feet south to conform to existing flow lines and improve visibility for large animal movement. Install exclusionary fencing along both sides of State Route 68.
Site 2 – West of Pasadera Drive-Boots Road (roadkill hotspot) post mile 9.41 (eastbound near the Water District property across from the golf course)	3.5-foot-diameter by 60-foot-long corrugated steel pipe	12-foot by 11-foot by 90-foot reinforced concrete box	New culvert to be located 450 feet west of evaluated roadkill hotspot. No alterations to existing culvert at regulated floodway. Excavation 85-95 feet south to conform to existing flow lines and improve visibility for large animal movement. Construct 75-foot by 150-foot outlet basin to the north. Excavate a smaller pond to the south to ensure proper drainage. Install exclusionary fencing along both sides of State Route 68 from west of Pasadera Drive to the new culvert.
Site 3 - Boots Road Culvert post mile 9.67	4.5-foot-diameter by 60-foot-long corrugated steel pipe	8-foot by 8-foot by 125-foot reinforced concrete box	New culvert to be located 450 feet west of evaluated roadkill hotspot. No alterations to existing culvert at regulated floodway. Excavation 20-30 feet north and 60-70 feet south to conform to existing flow lines and improve visibility for large animal movement. Install exclusionary fencing along both sides of State Route 68.
Site 4 - Laureles Grade Culvert post mile 11.15	2-2.3-foot by 1.8-foot by 60-foot-long corrugated steel pipe	8-foot by 8-foot by 170-foot reinforced concrete box	New culvert to be located 50 feet west of existing culvert, which will be abandoned in place. Excavate 1,800-foot-long ditch 45-55 feet north and 60-70 feet south to conform to existing flow lines and improve visibility for large animal movement.
Site 5 – Box Culvert West of San Benancio Road post mile 13.19	5-foot by 5-foot by 55-foot reinforced concrete box	7-foot by 7-foot by 100-foot reinforced concrete box	New culvert to be located 50 feet west of existing culvert, which will be abandoned in place. Excavation 15-25 feet north and 25-35 feet south to conform to existing flow lines and improve visibility for large animal movement. Install exclusionary fencing along both sides of State Route 68.

Table notes:

1. Based on evaluated wildlife crossings in 2017 Wildlife Connectivity Analysis (Appendix B of the project Natural Environment Study).
2. Culvert types: CBC = concrete box culvert; CSP = corrugated steel pipe; RCB = reinforced concrete box; RCP = reinforced concrete pipe; Culvert sizes are height by width by length (in feet) except where noted.
3. See preliminary plans in Appendix A of the Natural Environment Study.

Environmental Consequences

The project would result in both temporary and permanent, and direct and indirect, impacts to natural communities and habitats within the project limits.

At each of the six project locations, permanent impact areas occupy the smallest physical area and are surrounded by the slightly larger temporary impact areas. Both of these are situated inside the larger overall Biological Study Area for each location. Temporary impacts are mostly associated with clearing and grading for cut or fill slopes and temporary construction access, while permanent impacts are locations where habitat would be permanently displaced for various project features, such as road widening or retaining walls.

Examples of direct impacts include vegetation removal and grading; examples of indirect impacts include soil compaction, erosion, pathogen or invasive species introduction, and road maintenance activities among others.

Because the project involves construction adjacent to an existing highway corridor in semi-rural developed areas, all predicted impacts would occur in areas that have already been affected by road, commercial, or residential development. Therefore, project-related effects on the natural communities described in this document are not expected to include indirect impacts such as habitat fragmentation, disruption of wildlife corridors or fish passage, or changes to the ecological function or regional/statewide distribution of these communities overall.

Several local, regional, state, and/or federal habitat protection plans overlay portions of the project area:

- Fort Ord Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (Denise Duffy and Associates, Inc. 2020)
- Resource Management Plan for the Southern Diablo Mountain Range and Central Coast of California, Record of Decision (U. S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management 2007)
- Fort Ord Reuse Plan, Conservation Element (EDAW, Inc. and EMC Planning Group, Inc. 1996)
- Monterey County (2010) General Plan Conservation Element, Fort Ord Master Plan, Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan, and Toro Area Plan

- City of Monterey (2005) General Plan Conservation Element
- General Plan Update for the City of Del Rey Oaks (Denise Duffy and Associates 1997), Conservation Element

In addition, the California Oak Woodlands Protection Act (Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 17) requests that state agencies with land use planning duties offset removal of certain oak trees when they are part of a woodland community. Monterey County and the City of Monterey also have oak tree replacement standards that Caltrans may elect to follow.

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Table 2.3.1.5 shows the estimated acreage of project-related impacts to the natural community/habitat types in the Biological Study Area. The acreage for each category is split out by Build Alternative and by temporary-versus-permanent impacts. After circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, the data in the table for Alternative 1 Roundabouts was updated to reflect the updated design of the three eastern intersection locations to hybrid roundabouts as documented in the Addendum to the Natural Environment Study.

Table 2.3.1.5 Potential Impacts to Special-Status Natural Communities in the Biological Study Area

Regulatory Authority/ Habitat Type	Total Habitat in Biological Study Area (Acres)	Alternative 1 Temporary Impacts (Acres)	Alternative 1 Permanent Impacts (Acres)	Alternative 2 Temporary Impacts (Acres)	Alternative 2 Permanent Impacts (Acres)
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands	2.78	0.536	0.352	1.038	0.222
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Other Waters of the U.S. (Streams)	3.44	0.519	0.121	1.138	0.432
California Department of Fish and Wildlife Stream Habitat	4.64	0.603	0.200	1.410	0.532
California Department of Fish and Wildlife Riparian and Streambank	30.95	3.829	0.695	9.031	1.365
California Department of Fish and Wildlife Ponds	0.16	0	0	0.019	0
Regional Water Quality Control Board Wetlands	2.78	0.536	0.352	1.038	0.222
Regional Water Quality Control Board Streams	3.44	0.519	0.121	1.138	0.432

Regulatory Authority/ Habitat Type	Total Habitat in Biological Study Area (Acres)	Alternative 1 Temporary Impacts (Acres)	Alternative 1 Permanent Impacts (Acres)	Alternative 2 Temporary Impacts (Acres)	Alternative 2 Permanent Impacts (Acres)
Regional Water Quality Control Board Riparian	30.95	3.829	0.695	8.733	1.365
Regional Water Quality Control Board Ponds	0.16	0	0	0.019	0
Regional Water Quality Control Board Stormwater Ditches	0.20	0.031	0.049	0.052	0.076
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CEQA) Coast Live Oak Woodland	54.79	6.755	1.123	15.393	3.027
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CEQA) Monterey Pine Forest	20.40	1.885	0.547	7.094	2.452
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CEQA) White-root Beds	0.48	0.013	0.043	0.153	0.001
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CEQA) Red Willow Riparian Forest	7.40	0.499	0.144	1.660	0.266
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CEQA) Purple Needlegrass Grassland	1.13	0.312	0.231	0.313	0

All wetlands in the study area are three-parameter wetlands. Some do not meet current Corps definitions of adjacency; however, for this study, Caltrans has conservatively evaluated all three-parameter wetlands as potentially subject to Corps permitting requirements for impact assessment. Stream habitat subject to California Department of Fish and Wildlife regulation includes in-stream wetlands.

The Natural Environment Study provides preliminary estimates of numbers of native trees that could be temporarily or permanently impacted (removed or otherwise adversely affected) by the project. The trees removed would vary in size from seedlings to mature trees. Areas of permanent impacts are more likely to have trees removed, as these areas are often intended for installation of new or replacement hardscape surfaces. In contrast, temporary impact areas—

though slightly larger in area than permanent impact areas—may require less tree removal depending on final project design. Temporary impact areas are typically intended for replanting/rehabilitation. Tree removals would be greater under Alternative 2 because it has a substantially larger project footprint.

The Natural Environment Study estimates that within the project limits up to 4,000 trees may be impacted under Alternative 1, and up to 5,500 trees may be impacted under Alternative 2. Up to approximately 3,600 of these would be coast live oaks and Monterey pines; see the discussions of Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest, and Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland, below for more details. The balance would consist of other tree species. Seventy to 80 percent of these impacts would be considered temporary, with the remainder considered permanent.

These estimates came from sampling in representative tree stands per habitat type in the project area. More detailed numbers are not available at this stage of project development because mapping of all individual trees in the project limits has not been done. The sampling results were used to calculate average numbers of trees per unit area and habitat type, and then extrapolated to the total area of the habitat type within the project limits. The resulting numbers given in the preceding paragraph therefore represent estimates from average densities of trees in similar habitat types.

Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest

The project would result in both temporary and permanent, and direct and indirect, impacts to the coast live oak woodland and forest natural community. As noted above, Alternative 1 would result in direct impacts to approximately 1,100 to 1,200 coast live oak trees (up to 900 temporary and 300 permanent impacts), while Alternative 2 would result in impacts to approximately 2,600 to 2,700 coast live oaks (up to 2,200 temporary and 500 permanent impacts).

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Despite the anticipated oak removals, the project is not expected to substantially degrade the quality or quantity of coast live oak woodland habitat in the eco-region from a biological perspective due to its abundance and health. Because the project involves widening adjacent to an existing highway corridor and typically in semi-rural developed areas, all predicted impacts would occur within stands that have already been impacted by road, commercial, or residential development. Also, Avoidance and Minimization Measures BIO-1 and BIO-2, and Mitigation Measure BIO-6 (planting of coast live oak and Monterey pine forest natural communities) would be implemented to reduce long-term impacts to oak woodlands and coast live oak trees in the project area.

Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland

The project would result in both temporary and permanent impacts to the Monterey pine forest and woodland natural community. This is considered a

sensitive natural community due to the limited native range of Monterey pine and ongoing threats, including urban development, genetic contamination, pine pitch canker disease, and forest fragmentation.

As noted above, Alternative 1 would result in impacts to as many as 300 to 400 Monterey pines (up to 200 temporary and 200 permanent impacts), while Alternative 2 would result in the removal of approximately 800 to 900 Monterey pines (up to 650 temporary and 250 permanent impacts).

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Because the project involves widening adjacent to an existing highway corridor and typically in semi-rural developed areas, all predicted impacts would occur within stands that have already been impacted by road, commercial, or residential development. Also, Avoidance and Minimization Measures BIO-3 and BIO-4, and compensatory Mitigation Measure BIO-6, would be implemented to reduce long-term impacts to Monterey pine forest and woodland in the project area.

Other Natural Communities

This paragraph was modified after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Temporary and permanent project-related impacts to other special-status natural communities included in Table 2.3.1.5 (purple needlegrass, white-root beds, and red willow riparian) are expected to be associated with grading, construction access, road widening, etc. as described for coast live oak woodland and forest and Monterey pine forest and woodland. All impacts would take place in areas that are already affected by road, commercial, or residential development. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures in the section below will be implemented to reduce long-term impacts to these natural communities.

The design features, standard measures, and Best Management Practices listed in Section 2.3.2 would be implemented to reduce project-related impacts to coast live oak woodland, Monterey pine forests, and other natural communities under either Build Alternative. In addition, the Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures listed below apply to both Build Alternatives and would be implemented to further reduce potential impacts.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Coast Live Oak and Monterey Pine Woodlands and Forests

The measures in this section have been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-1. Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest: Avoidance. Design and construct the project to avoid as many oak trees as possible.

BIO-2. Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest: Alternatives to Tree Removal. When feasible, oak trees will be trimmed or pruned rather than removed.

BIO-3. Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland: Avoidance. Design and construct the project to avoid as many Monterey pine trees as possible.

BIO-4. Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland: Alternatives to Tree Removal. When feasible, Monterey pines will be trimmed or pruned rather than removed.

Avoidance and Minimization Measure for Other Natural Communities: Purple Needlegrass and White-Root Beds

BIO-5. Purple Needlegrass and White-Root Beds: Minimization of Clearing and Grubbing. Where feasible, clearing and grubbing will be limited to the smallest footprint possible in temporary impacted areas so that roots of purple needlegrass and white-root beds can persist and potentially resprout once construction is complete.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA for Impacts to Natural Communities

The measures in this section have been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-6. Compensatory Mitigation: Coast Live Oak Woodland and Monterey Pine Forest Restoration. Compensatory mitigation in the form of planting coast live oak and Monterey pine trees and associated plant species is proposed at a 1-to-1 ratio (acreage) for temporary impacts and a 3-to-1 ratio (acreage) for permanent impacts to coast live oak woodland and forest, and Monterey pine forest and woodland. Locally sourced plant materials from these forest communities will be used as feasible. Mitigation for both temporary and permanent impacts to each of these natural communities is expected to be completed onsite, within or adjacent to existing habitat of the same type on Caltrans right-of-way within the project area, as well as offsite if sufficient area is not available onsite. Offsite mitigation would be conducted in coordination with a local land conservancy or restoration group.

Please refer to Section 3.2.2 for additional discussion regarding mitigation for impacts to coast live oak woodland and Monterey pine forest.

BIO-7. Compensatory Mitigation: Purple Needlegrass and White-Root Beds Habitat Restoration. Purple needlegrass grassland and white-root beds communities that are temporarily impacted will be restored with native plant species that occur in respective communities in the region.

Mitigation for both temporary and permanent impacts to each of these natural communities is expected to be completed onsite, within or adjacent to existing habitat of the same type on Caltrans right-of-way within the project area, as well as offsite if sufficient area is not available onsite. Offsite mitigation would be conducted in coordination with a local land conservancy or restoration group.

Red Willow Riparian Woodland and Forest Habitat

This paragraph has been revised since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Compensatory mitigation for riparian impacts described in Mitigation Measure BIO-14 (Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters) will offset project impacts to red willow riparian woodland and forest habitat.

2.3.2 Wetlands and Other Waters

Regulatory Setting

Wetlands and other waters are protected under a number of laws and regulations. At the federal level, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, more commonly referred to as the Clean Water Act (33 U.S. Code 1344), is the main law regulating wetlands and surface waters. One purpose of the Clean Water Act is to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S., including wetlands.

Waters of the U.S. include navigable waters, interstate waters, territorial seas, and other waters that may be used in interstate or foreign commerce. The lateral limits of jurisdiction over non-tidal water bodies extend to the ordinary high water mark, in the absence of adjacent wetlands. When adjacent wetlands are present, Clean Water Act jurisdiction extends beyond the ordinary high water mark to the limits of the adjacent wetlands. To classify wetlands for the purposes of the Clean Water Act, a three-parameter approach is used that includes the presence of: hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation, wetland hydrology, and hydric soils (soils formed during saturation/inundation); all three parameters must be present, under normal circumstances, for an area to be designated as a jurisdictional wetland under the Clean Water Act.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act establishes a regulatory program that provides that discharge of dredged or fill material cannot be permitted if a practicable alternative exists that is less damaging to the aquatic environment or if the nation’s waters would be significantly degraded. The Section 404 permit program is run by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with oversight by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issues two types of 404 permits: General and Individual. There are two types of General permits: Regional and Nationwide. Regional permits are issued for a general category of activities

when they are similar in nature and cause minimal environmental effect. Nationwide permits are issued to allow a variety of minor project activities with no more than minimal effects.

Ordinarily, projects that do not meet the criteria for a Regional or Nationwide Permit may be permitted under one of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Individual permits. There are two types of Individual permits: Standard permits and Letters of Permission. For Individual permits, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' decision to approve is based on compliance with U.S. EPA's Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 230), and whether permit approval is in the public interest. The Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines were developed by the U.S. EPA in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and allow the discharge of dredged or fill material into the aquatic system (waters of the U.S.) only if there is no practicable alternative which would have less adverse effects. The guidelines state that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may not issue a permit if there is a "least environmentally damaging practicable alternative" (LEDPA) to the proposed discharge that would have lesser effects on waters of the U.S., and not have any other significant adverse environmental consequences.

The Executive Order for the Protection of Wetlands (Executive Order 11990) also regulates the activities of federal agencies with regard to wetlands. Essentially, the order states that a federal agency, such as the Federal Highway Administration and/or Caltrans, as assigned, cannot undertake or provide assistance for new construction located in wetlands unless the head of the agency finds: (1) that there is no practicable alternative to the construction and (2) the proposed project includes all practicable measures to minimize harm. A Wetlands Only Practicable Alternative Finding must be made.

At the state level, wetlands and waters are regulated mainly by the State Water Resources Control Board, the Regional Water Quality Control Boards and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. In certain circumstances, the Coastal Commission (or Bay Conservation and Development Commission or the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency) may also be involved. Sections 1600-1607 of the California Fish and Game Code require any agency that proposes a project that will substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of or substantially change the bed or bank of a river, stream, or lake to notify the California Department of Fish and Wildlife before beginning construction. If the California Department of Fish and Wildlife determines that the project may substantially and adversely affect fish or wildlife resources, a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement will be required. California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdictional limits are usually defined by the tops of the stream or lake banks, or the outer edge of riparian vegetation, whichever is wider. Wetlands under jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may or may not be included in the area covered by a Streambed Alteration Agreement obtained from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Regional Water Quality Control Boards were established under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act to oversee water quality. Discharges under the Porter-Cologne Act are permitted by Waste Discharge Requirements and may be required even when the discharge is already permitted or exempt under the Clean Water Act. In compliance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, the Regional Water Quality Control Boards also issue water quality certifications for activities that may result in a discharge to waters of the U.S. This is most frequently required in tandem with a Section 404 permit request. See the Water Quality section for more details.

Affected Environment

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Information for this section comes from the Preliminary Jurisdictional Delineation Report appended to the project Natural Environment Study, dated October 2023, and the Addendum to the Natural Environment Study, dated December 2024.

Jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat in the project area are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the Clean Water Act, California's Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, and/or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Delineation refers to the process of identifying and locating aquatic resources (including wetlands) on a property or in a specific area. Areas that meet the triple criteria of containing hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology may be classified as wetlands.

To determine potential impacts of the project on jurisdictional wetlands and other waters within and near the project limits, Caltrans biologists conducted wetland delineation studies at six locations within three watersheds in the Biological Study Area (see Figure 2.3.2.1; see also Table 2.3.1.1 in Section 2.3.1). Project boundaries for each of the six proposed work locations (nine intersections), as well as project area waterways as taken from National Hydrography Dataset and National Wetland Inventory databases, are shown in Figure 2.3.2.2 (six sheets).

Jurisdictional features that were identified in the Jurisdictional Delineation Study Area include in-stream and adjacent wetlands, as well as some three-parameter wetlands that are not immediately adjacent to streams or other waterways; multiple ephemeral and intermittent streams (including named streams such as Canyon del Rey Creek and El Toro Creek); streambanks and riparian zones; stormwater ditches; and artificial ponds. In total, Caltrans identified wetland resources totaling 2.78 acres, including 1.2 acres of in-stream wetlands and 1.58 acres of adjacent wetlands not directly within a stream channel. Non-wetland streambeds measured to ordinary high water mark total 3.44 acres (see Table 2.3.1.5 in Section 2.3.1).

All wetlands within the study area are either within a stream or adjacent to a stream that has a traceable connection to the Pacific Ocean, and therefore they

are assumed to be subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction. Also, 1.27 acres of three-parameter wetlands that do not meet the current definition of adjacency were also mapped and are shown as state wetlands in mapping and tables. Caltrans expects that the project would impact both waters of the U.S. and waters of the State. Therefore, the project would require a Water Resources Discharge permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, which would include the Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certification. Because rules defining the extent of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdiction have changed over the course of this project, further evaluation of jurisdictional status would be updated with permit applications if needed.

In general, streams in the western three-quarters of the Biological Study Area flow west or northwest directly into the Pacific Ocean, while those in the eastern one-quarter flow east into the Salinas River (via El Toro Creek) and then into the Pacific Ocean. Some of these drainage reaches are wetland waters; others are non-wetland streams.

While the drainages and wetlands in the Biological Study Area are not known to be traditionally navigable, the streams have a continuous surface connection to the Pacific Ocean and meet federal and/or state criteria as Wetlands and Waters of the U.S., and Waters of the State. Also, the Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife assert jurisdiction over riparian habitat and streambanks. The Regional Water Quality Control Board may also assert jurisdiction over artificial ponds and stormwater ditches that contain water and have the potential to affect beneficial uses of waters of the State. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife may also assert jurisdiction over artificial ponds due to the potential for the presence of special-status wildlife.

In addition to potential Clean Water Act waters, during the Jurisdictional Delineation Study, Caltrans also mapped 29.37 acres of woody riparian areas, 0.98 acre of other, herbaceous or unvegetated, streambanks, and 0.6 acre of vegetated rock slope protection streambanks potentially subject to Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction. Caltrans also identified three artificially constructed ponds, which occupy 0.16 acre of the study area. Some roadside ditches constructed in uplands that regularly contained water during the wet season occupy about 0.2 acre of the study area and may be subject to Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdiction as waters of the State.

Environmental Consequences

The purpose of the project is to improve intersection operations and wildlife connectivity along an 8.9-mile stretch of State Route 68 in Monterey County. Two build alternatives are under consideration in this project. Alternative 1 would replace nine existing signalized intersections with roundabouts; Alternative 2 would retain the signalized intersections, but with enhanced lane

configurations. See Section 1.7 for discussion regarding other alternatives that were considered but ultimately dismissed.

Under either Build Alternative, the project would have the potential to adversely affect jurisdictional features in the watersheds of Del Monte Lake, Canyon Del Rey Creek, and El Toro Creek, including in-stream and adjacent wetlands, as well as some three-parameter wetlands that are not immediately adjacent to streams or other waterways; multiple ephemeral and intermittent streams (including named streams such as Canyon del Rey Creek and El Toro Creek); streambanks and riparian zones; stormwater ditches; and artificial ponds.

Temporary impacts would be associated mostly with clearing and grading for cut or fill slopes and temporary construction access; permanent impacts would occur in locations where habitat would be displaced for various project features such as roadway or retaining walls. Because Alternative 2 has a larger construction footprint and contains more jurisdictional features and area than Alternative 1, impacts to jurisdictional features under Alternative 2 are anticipated to be greater than those under Alternative 1.

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. As shown in Table 2.3.1.5 (Section 2.3.1), the project's Biological Study Area contains approximately 2.78 acres of wetlands and 3.44 acres of other waters (streams) that are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and up to 4.64 acres of stream habitat, 30.95 acres of riparian and streambank habitat, and 0.16 acre of ponds under California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction.

Figure 2.3.2.1 Project Area Watersheds and Major Streams

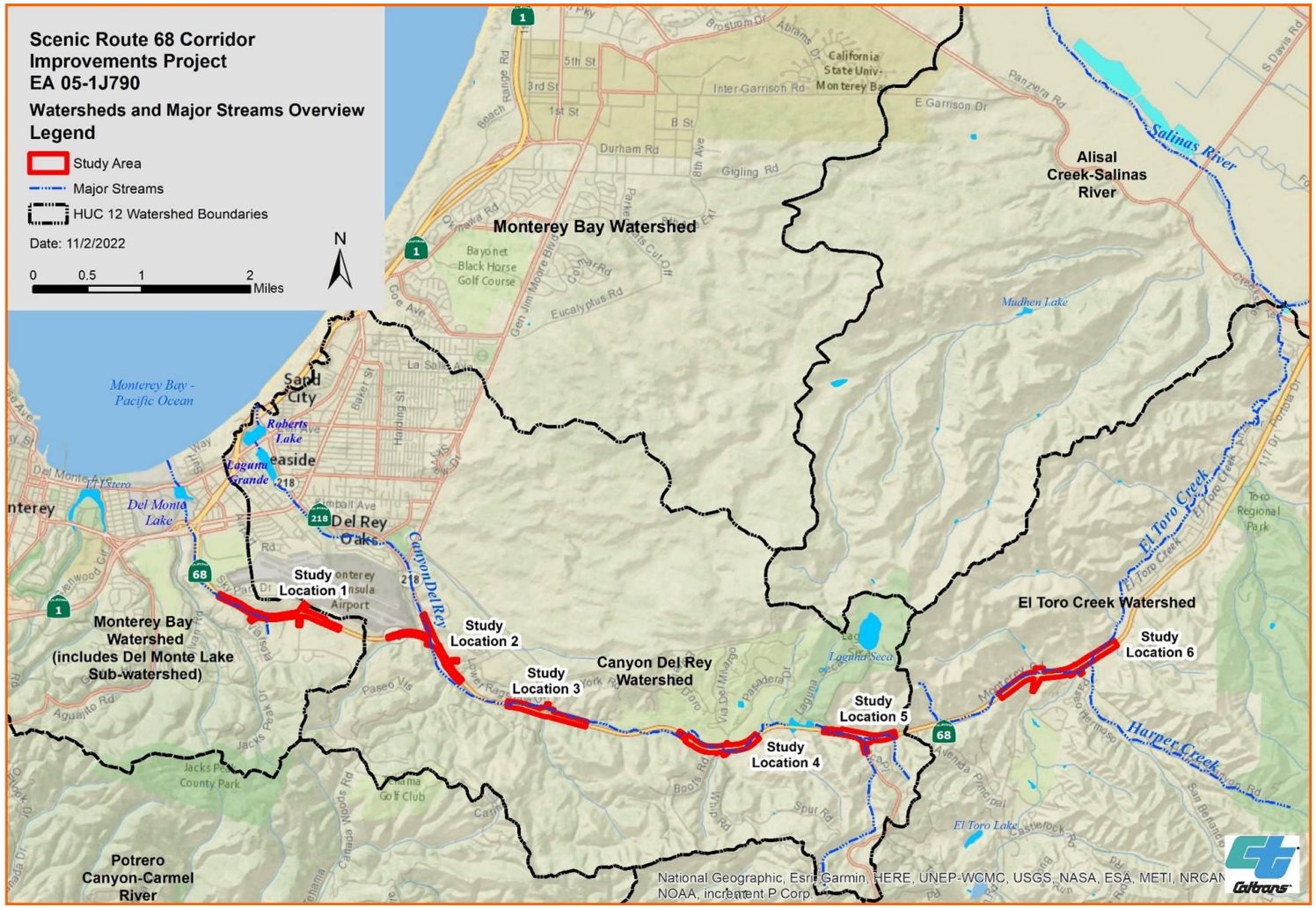


Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 1 (Sheet 1 of 6)

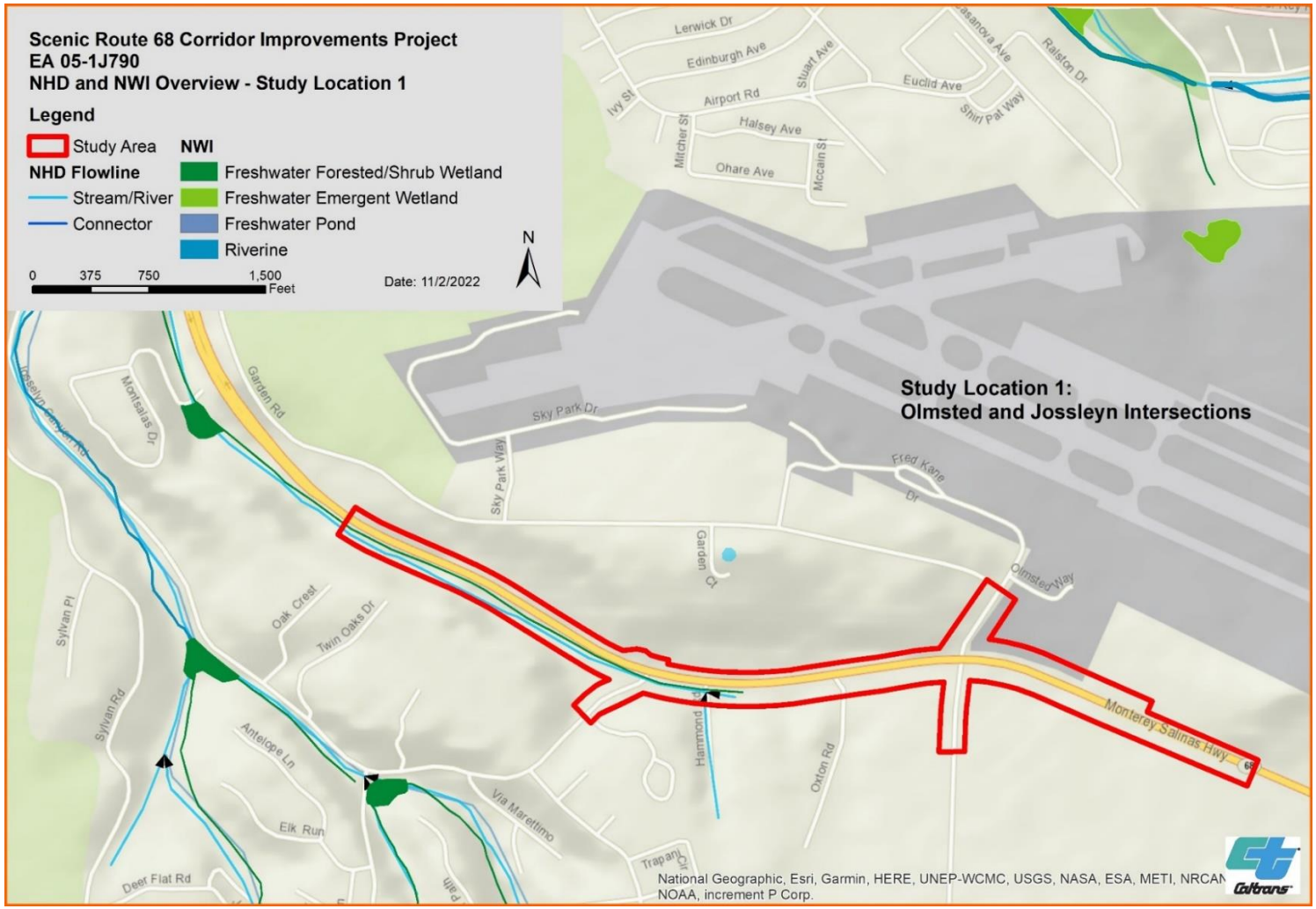


Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 2 (Sheet 2 of 6)

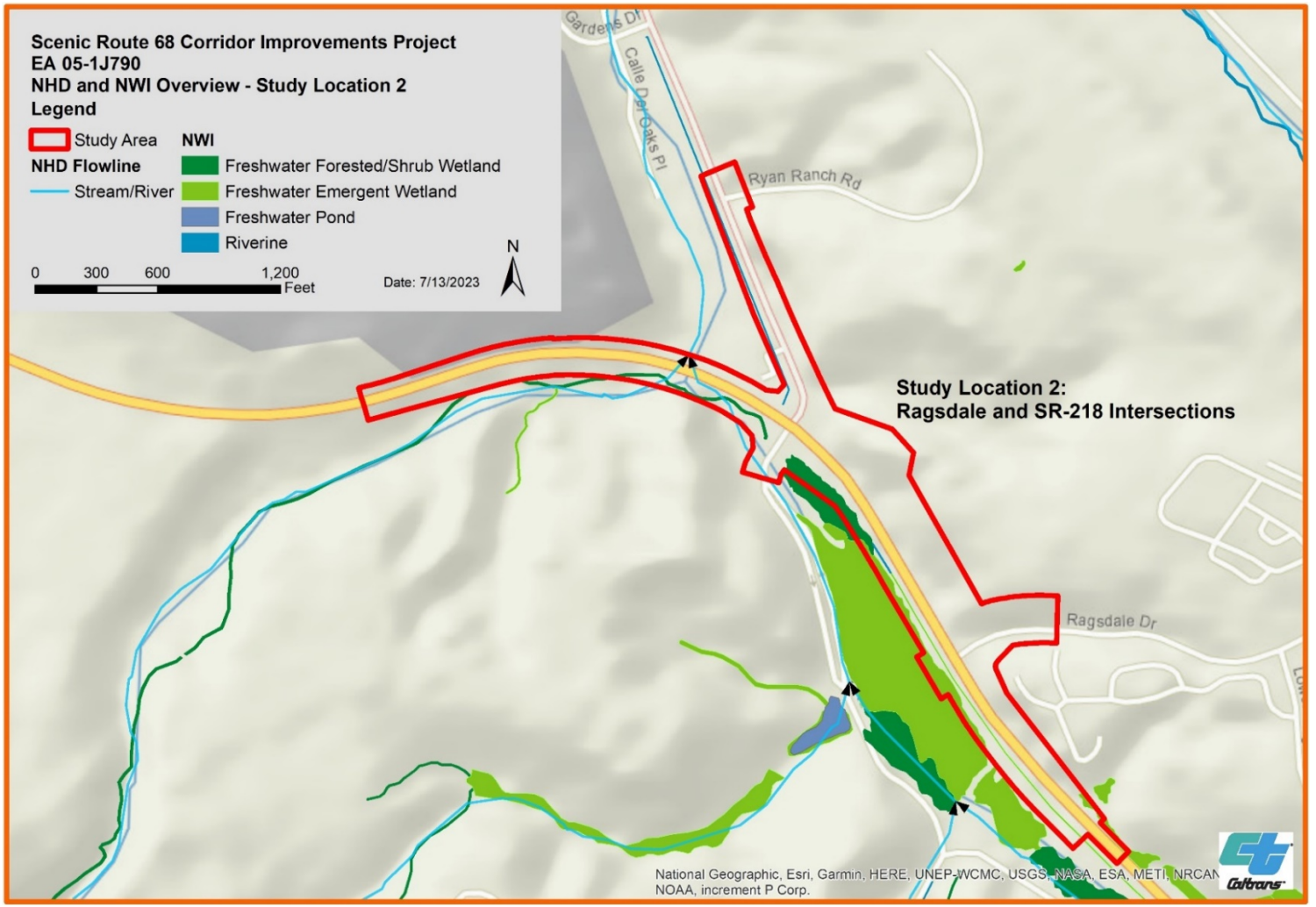


Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 3 (Sheet 3 of 6)

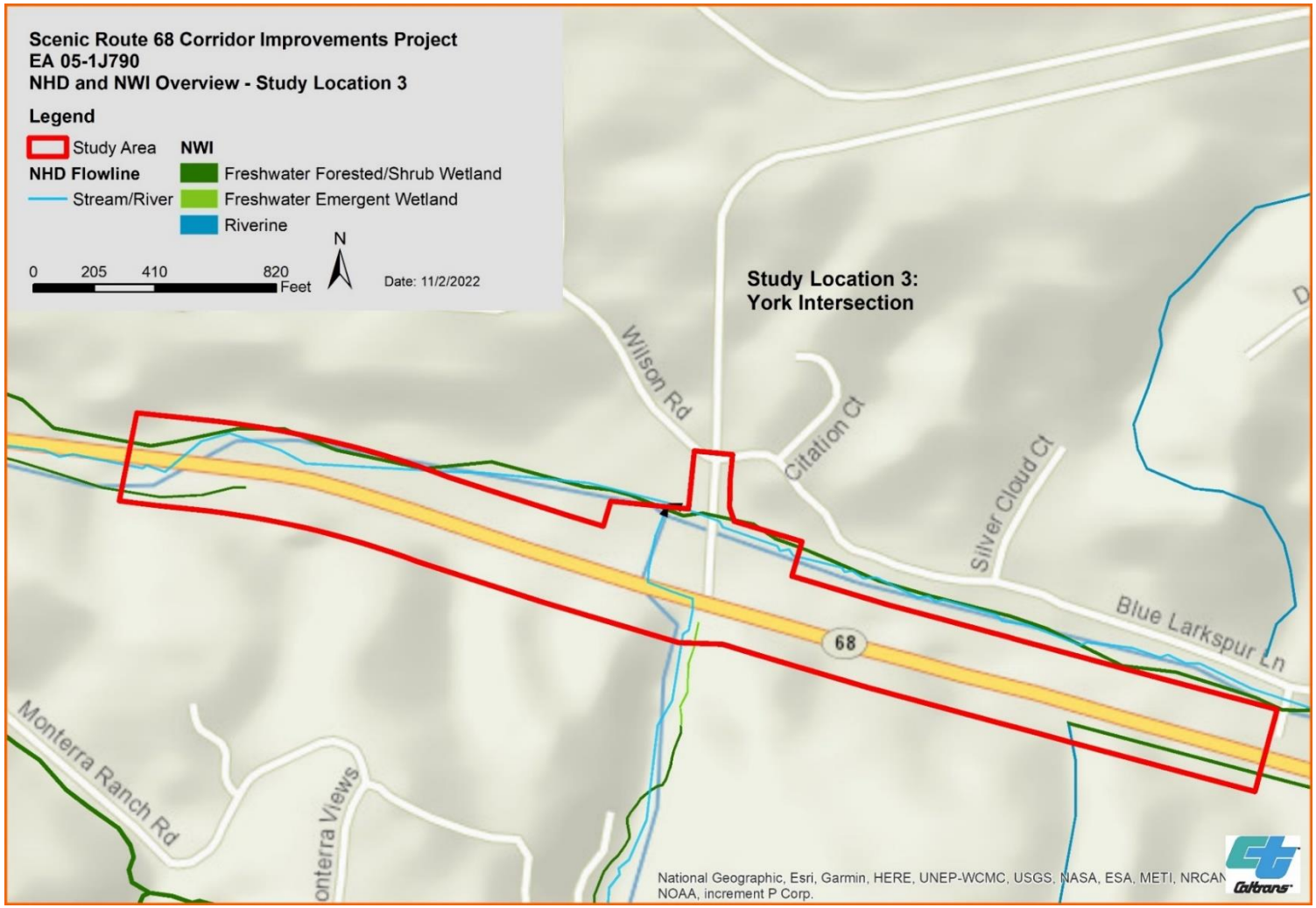


Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 4 (Sheet 4 of 6)

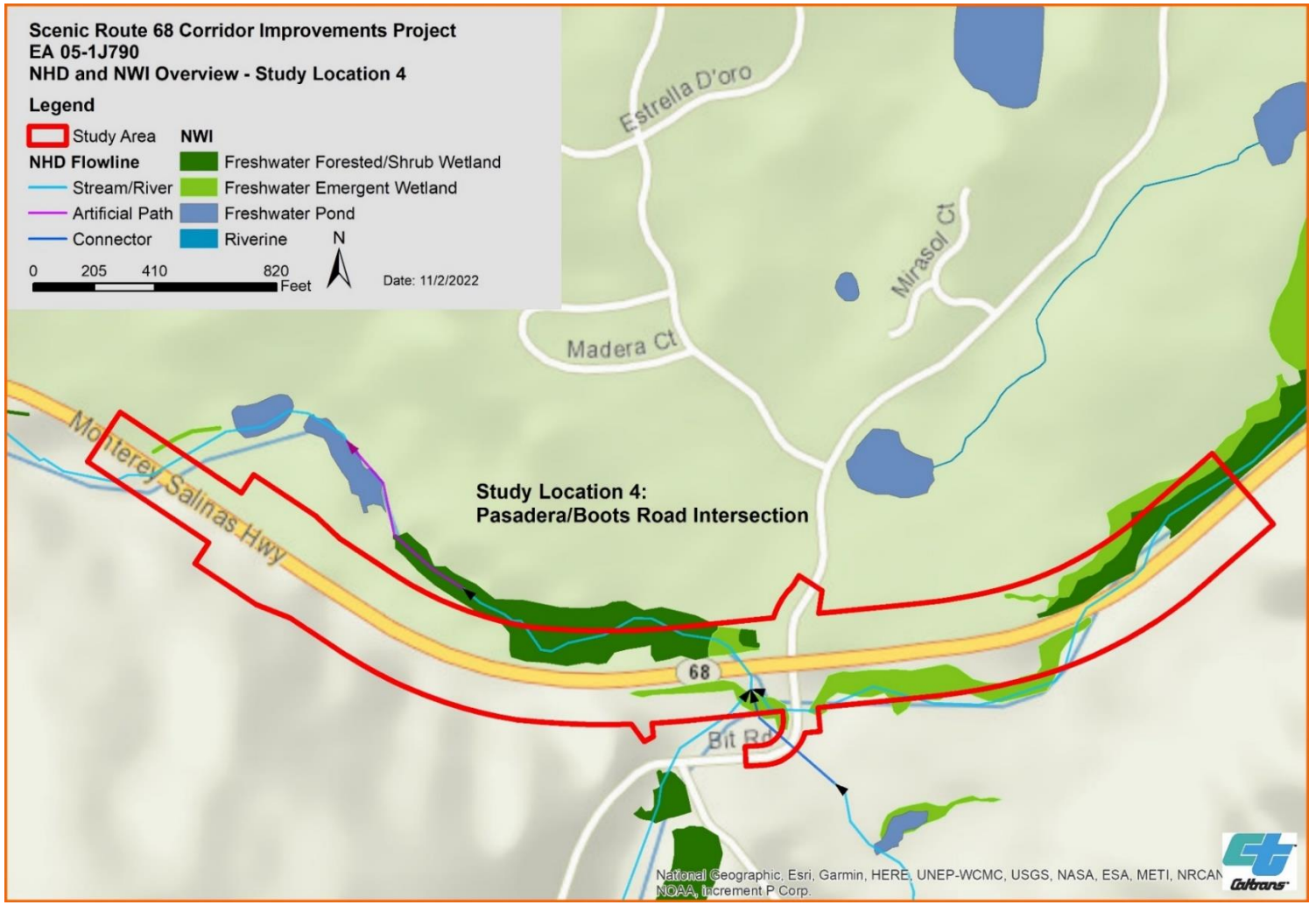


Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 5 (Sheet 5 of 6)

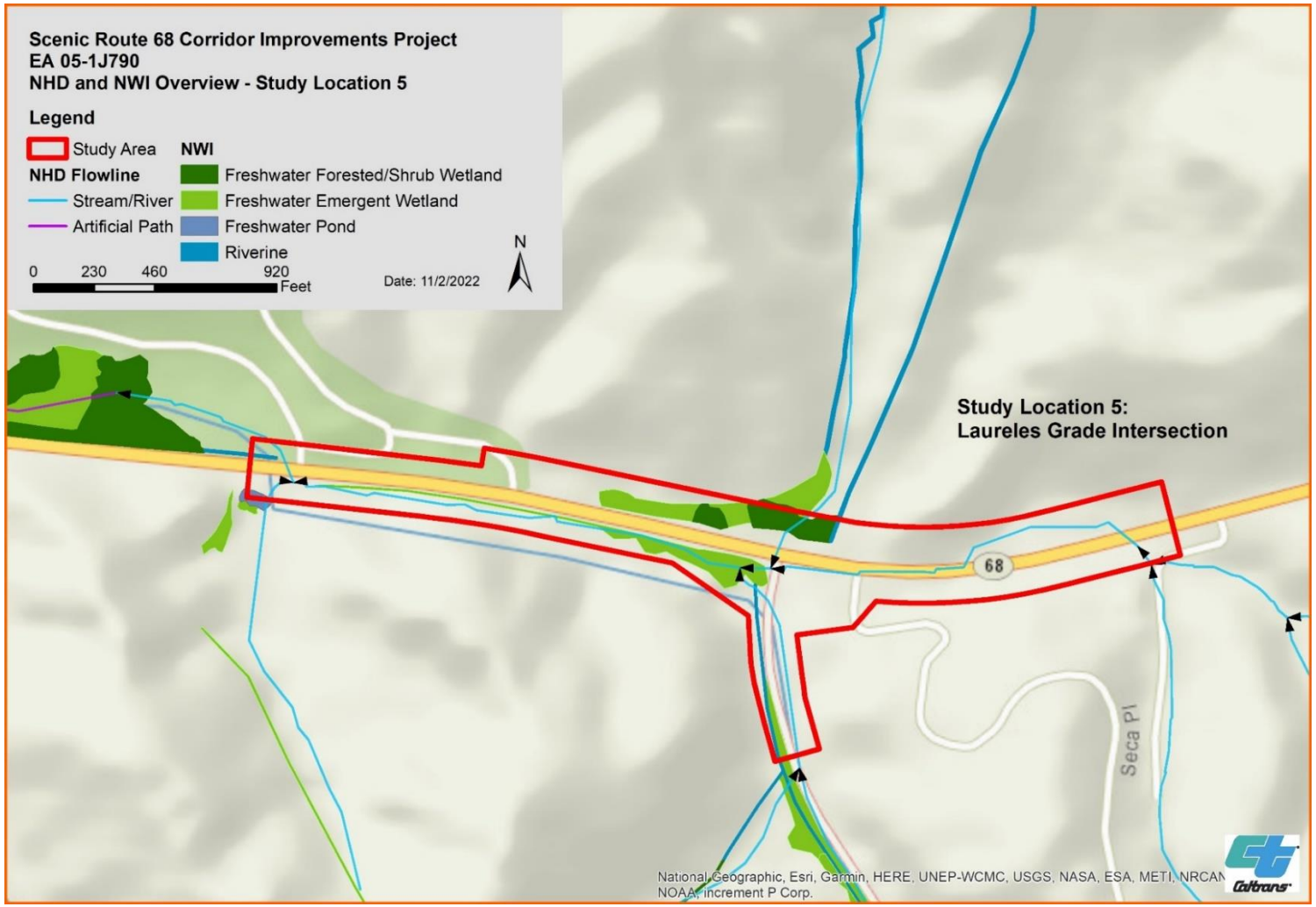
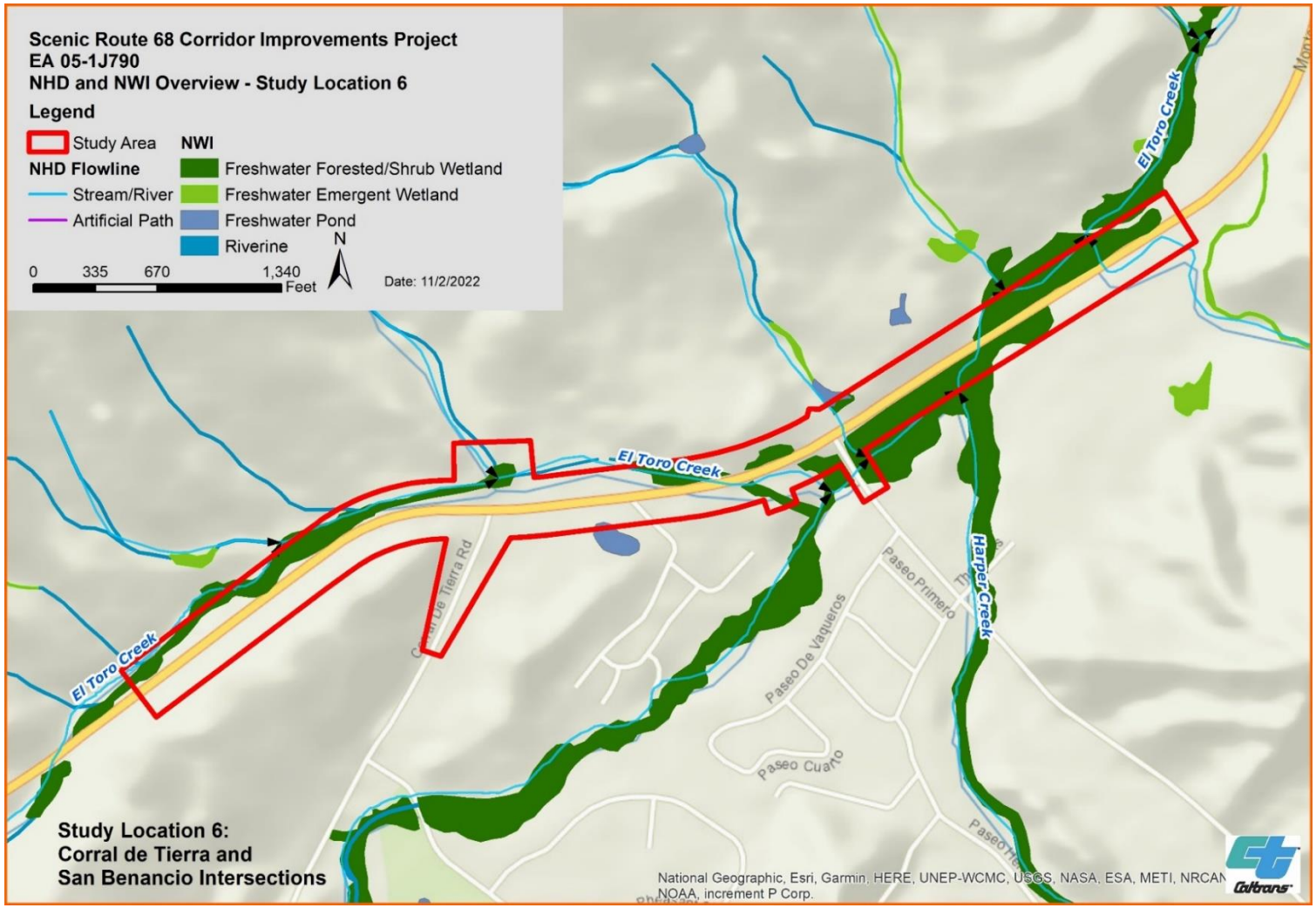


Figure 2.3.2.2 National Hydrography Dataset/National Wetland Inventory Data, Study Location 6 (Sheet 6 of 6)



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This paragraph was added after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. After circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, Caltrans selected the preferred alternative as Alternative 1, Roundabouts, to move forward with for final design and construction (refer to discussion in Section 1.6). As shown in Table 2.3.1.5, the roundabouts are estimated to have permanent impacts of about one-third of an acre and one-tenth of an acre to U.S. Army Corps wetlands and other waters, respectively. Temporary impacts of about one-half of an acre each would occur to both Corps' wetlands and other waters. The roundabouts would have permanent impacts of about two-tenths of an acre and temporary impacts to six-tenths of an acre to stream habitat, and seven-tenths of an acre of permanent impact to riparian and streambank habitat, with 3.8 acres of temporary impact. The roundabouts would not impact pond habitat.

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Caltrans will submit applications for permits during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project. Applications will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board for project impacts related to wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the U.S., impacts to listed species and their habitats, and water quality certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, as follows:

- This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Programmatic Biological Opinion and Take Permit for California red-legged frog; project-specific Biological Opinion and Take Permits for California tiger salamander and Yadon's Piperia. Caltrans has initiated Technical Assistance coordination with the Service for federally listed species.
- This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. California Department of Fish and Wildlife: 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement; and 2081 Incidental take permits for California tiger salamander; geotechnical subsurface drilling in jurisdictional waters, and for completion of archaeological field studies.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: 404 Nationwide or Individual Permit.
- Regional Water Quality Control Board: 401 Certification.

See Section 4.2 for additional information regarding coordination with other public agencies.

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The San Benancio

Road Bridge will require installation of abutment piles as part of the roundabout improvements at that intersection with State Route 68. Further geotechnical study and the specific details about the type of piles and method of installation will be determined during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project. However, if work in the stream channel will be necessary for exploratory subsurface geotechnical investigation for the piles, it would be limited to the dry season or when no surface water is present. In addition, for the pile driving work required at the bridge abutments as part of the roundabout construction, an avoidance/minimization measure will be implemented that requires use of a vibratory pile driving hammer to minimize potential harmful effects on sensitive aquatic wildlife species. See avoidance and minimization measures BIO-12 and BIO-13.

The Build Alternatives have been designed to reduce potential impacts to wetlands and other waters to the extent feasible, in part through the use of standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and which were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project. For issues pertaining to wetlands and other waters (both waters of the U.S. and waters of the State), these include the following:

- Prior to construction, Caltrans will obtain permits and agreements from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as applicable to project impacts.
- Prior to developing project plans and specifications and regulatory permit applications, Caltrans will obtain survey data on native trees within the jurisdictional boundary and proposed grading limits, including species and size.
- Caltrans will minimize impacts to protected habitats wherever feasible by developing project plans and specifications to minimize native vegetation removal, specifying that vegetation in wetlands and riparian areas be trimmed above the ground surface rather than grubbing out roots wherever feasible, limiting temporary impact areas, removing invasive species, and revegetating temporary impact areas with a diversity of native species appropriate to habitats to be restored.
- Caltrans will prepare a Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (MMP) to offset impacts to natural vegetation and protected habitats, including aquatic resources. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will be consistent with federal and state regulatory requirements and will be amended with regulatory permit conditions, as required. Where feasible, jurisdictional resources areas will be restored, enhanced, and re-established within the right-of-way. Caltrans will implement the Mitigation and Monitoring Plan as necessary during construction and immediately following project completion.
- Prior to construction, the Contractor will prepare and sign a Water Pollution Control Plan or a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan that complies with the Caltrans Stormwater Quality Handbook. 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.

- No construction activities shall be conducted in drainages between November 1 through April 30 without prior written approval by the State Water Resources Control Board or Regional Water Quality Control Board. If work will be conducted in drainages during this timeframe, detailed plans and descriptions for proposed activities to occur in drainages must be submitted to the Regional Water Quality Control Board at least 21 working days prior to the start of the proposed work.
- Staging areas for equipment and vehicle fueling and storage will be located at least 100 feet away from the top of bank of any stream or aquatic area, and in a location where fluids or accidental discharges cannot flow into the stream or aquatic area. Stationary equipment must have secondary containment while operating within or less than 100 feet from jurisdictional areas.

See Table 1-5 in Section 1.4.1 for a complete listing of Standard Measures and Best Management Practices intended to reduce project-related environmental impacts.

Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative

This section was added after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

The least environmentally damaging practicable alternative, or LEDPA, for the project is Alternative 1, roundabouts, because this Build Alternative would have the least overall environmental impacts between the two Build Alternatives evaluated for the project, both of which would meet the majority of the purposes of the project. Because of the larger physical footprint of Alternative 2 designs at the nine project intersection locations for the addition of turn lanes and auxiliary lanes, Alternative 2 would have larger permanent impacts overall on sensitive biological resources, including wetlands and jurisdictional waters, natural biological communities, trees, sensitive archaeological areas, recreational properties; greater adverse visual impacts in the Scenic Highway corridor; potential for impact to the South-Central California coast steelhead; greater adverse impacts to floodplain areas, and impacts to adjacent properties for highway right-of-way expansion needs, among other resources. Conversely, Alternative 2 would have greater benefit than Alternative 1 in reducing travel delay during peak traffic periods through the project corridor.

The No Build Alternative would not have any of the physical environmental impacts that Alternatives 1 and 2 would have, as summarized in the Summary chapter of this document, however, the No-Build Alternative would not meet the project's purpose and need to improve traffic operations by reducing

travel delay and to reduce the rate and severity of collisions with vehicles and wildlife through the project highway corridor.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The measures in this section have been updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The following avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures will be implemented to address potential project-related impacts to jurisdictional wetland and other waters areas (both waters of the U.S. and waters of the State).

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Impacts to Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters

BIO-8. Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters: Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Prior to ground-disturbing activities, Environmentally Sensitive Area boundary markers or fencing will be installed around jurisdictional resources, habitat for special-status animals designated to be protected, and the dripline of trees to be protected within the project limits. Caltrans-defined Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be noted on design plans and delineated in the field prior to the start of construction activities.

BIO-9. Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters: Hazardous Material Spill Cleanup. During construction, all project-related hazardous materials spills within the project site will be cleaned up immediately. Readily accessible spill prevention and cleanup materials will be kept onsite at all times by the contractor during construction.

BIO-10. Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters: Pollution and Erosion Control. During construction, pollution and erosion control measures will be implemented. Fencing, fiber rolls, or barriers will be installed as needed between the project construction features and any stream, waterbody, or riparian habitat. Discharge of wet concrete, concrete dust, sediment, construction debris or other pollutants into any stream or waterbody would be prevented.

BIO-11. Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters: Invasive Plant and Pathogen Removal/Avoidance. During construction, the project will avoid spreading invasive species and pathogens by requiring that weeds designated for removal will be removed prior to disturbing surface soils and disposed of the same day they are removed. All nursery stock and imported soil will be certified free of weeds, *Phytophthora* (fungus-like plant damaging microorganisms), and other plant diseases. Construction equipment will be confirmed clean and free of soil containing seeds and and/or invasive plant material prior to entering the construction site to avoid/minimize the spread of invasive species within the construction area.

The following avoidance and minimization measures were added after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment:

BIO-12. Abutment Pile Driving at San Benancio Road Bridge. Pile driving at the abutments of the State Route 68 bridge over Toro Creek south of San Benancio Road shall be restricted to the dry season when the creek is not flowing. If pile driving work must occur in the wet season or when water is present in the creek, a vibratory pile driving hammer will be used to install abutment piles to minimize potential harmful effects on aquatic species.

BIO-13. Geotechnical Subsurface Exploration Drilling at San Benancio Road Bridge. Geotechnical exploration within the creek channel at San Benancio Road will be restricted to the dry season.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA for Impacts to Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters

The following mitigation measure has been revised since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-14. Compensatory Mitigation: Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters Habitat Restoration. Compensatory mitigation to offset impacts to wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat will be implemented to prevent a net loss of wetlands or other aquatic resource acreage, functions, and values. Compensatory mitigation will include creation, rehabilitation, and enhancement of wetland, stream, streambank, and riparian aquatic resources, proposed at a 1-to-1 ratio (acreage) for temporary impacts and a 3-to-1 ratio (acreage) for permanent impacts to these habitat types. After construction has been completed in the affected areas, natural contours and vegetation will be restored as closely as possible to their original condition, following landscaping plans and a Mitigation and Monitoring Plan to be prepared for jurisdictional wetlands and other waters.

Habitat restoration to mitigate for temporary impacts and possibly for permanent impacts is expected to be completed onsite within suitable habitat areas on Caltrans right-of-way. Additional mitigation for permanent impacts may also need to be completed offsite at an existing mitigation bank or in coordination with a local land conservancy or restoration group in accordance with consultation for permits from the resources agencies during the permitting process.

Wetlands Only Practicable Alternative Finding

This section was added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. In accordance with the requirements of Executive Order 11990, the preferred alternative, Alternative 1 is the wetlands only practicable alternative for the project. Alternative 1, which will convert the nine existing signalized intersections to roundabouts,

would have fewer overall impacts to wetlands and jurisdictional waters as well as other environmental resources than Build Alternative 2, which would have a larger footprint at each project intersection. Other Build Alternatives were considered but removed from further consideration for the reasons discussed in Section 1.7. In addition, the No-Build Alternative would not meet the stated purpose and need of the project. Therefore, there are no practicable alternatives that would meet the stated purpose and need of the project.

The project will implement avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures in accordance with the conditions of approval of the required regulatory permits from the resources agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands and aquatic resources and including the measures prescribed herein. Compensatory mitigation for jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat will include creation, rehabilitation, and enhancement of jurisdictional aquatic resources such that there would be no net loss of the aquatic resources acreage, functions, and values. In addition, avoidance and minimization measures as contained in this section, including protection of jurisdictional wetlands and waters during construction from hazardous materials spills, sedimentation, erosion, and invasive plant and pathogen removal, and preparation of a comprehensive mitigation monitoring plan, will be implemented.

Based on the above considerations, it is determined that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands and that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm that may result from such use.

2.3.3 Plant Species

Regulatory Setting

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife have regulatory responsibility for the projection of special-status plant species. “Special-status” species are selected for protection because they are rare and/or subject to population and habitat declines. Special-status is a general term for species that are provided varying levels of regulatory protection. The highest level of protection is given to threatened and endangered species; these are species that are formally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act and/or the California Endangered Species Act. Please see the Threatened and Endangered Species section (Section 2.3.5) in this document for detailed information about these species.

This section of the document discusses all other special-status plant species, including California Department of Fish and Wildlife species of special concern, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service candidate species, and California Native Plant Society rare and endangered plants.

The regulatory requirements for the Federal Endangered Species Act can be found at 16 U.S. Code Section 1531, et seq. See also 50 Code of Federal Regulations Part 402. The regulatory requirements for the California Endangered Species Act can be found at California Fish and Game Code, Section 2050, et seq. Caltrans projects are also subject to the Native Plant Protection Act, found at California Fish and Game Code, Sections 1900-1913, and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), found at California Public Resources Code, Sections 21000-21177.

Affected Environment

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Information for this section comes from the Natural Environment Study (with Preliminary Jurisdictional Delineation report) dated October 2023 and the Addendum to the Natural Environment Study dated December, 2024.

All species discussed in this section are listed by the California Native Plant Society as having special status in the California Rare Plant Ranks database. For discussion regarding the federally listed as endangered Yadon's piperia, see Section 2.3.5.

Special-Status Manzanitas

Four special-status manzanitas were found during surveys of the Biological Study Area by Caltrans biologists: Hooker's manzanita (*Arctostaphylos hookeri*), toro manzanita (*Arctostaphylos montereyensis*), sandmat manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pumila*), and Pajaro manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pajaroensis*). All four manzanitas are evergreen shrubs endemic to the northern Central Coast of California (Santa Cruz to northern Monterey and western San Benito counties). These species are considered rare in California and elsewhere and fairly or seriously endangered in California (California Rare Plant Ranks 1B.1 or 1B.2) due to causes including development, urbanization, military activities at Ford Ord, agriculture, fire suppression, and competition with *Eucalyptus* species and other non-native plants.

Pajaro and sandmat manzanitas were found in the western portion of the Biological Study Area, growing in sandy soil and associated with the coast live oak woodland or Monterey pine forest plant communities. Hooker's manzanita is a common ornamental plant throughout the State Route 68 corridor and was observed in landscaped areas at many of the project intersections. However, these were cultivated individuals and therefore not considered rare plants. Only one example of a potentially non-cultivated Hooker's manzanita was seen. Toro manzanita was observed only at the Laureles Grade location.

Congdon's Tarplant

Congdon's tarplant (*Centromadia parryi* ssp. *congdonii*) is a California Rare Plant Rank 1B.1 species that is seriously endangered in California. This subspecies of tarplant is found on the western part of the Central California Coast from the western Bay Area to San Luis Obispo County. Congdon's tarplant often grows on disturbed sites in sparsely vegetated, low-lying grassland habitats that are seasonally flooded or saturated.

In the Biological Study Area, Congdon's tarplant was found near the State Route 68 intersections with Laureles Grade and Corral de Tierra Road. Approximately 70 to 150 individuals were seen, though as an annual plant its distribution and abundance can vary from year to year.

Lewis' Clarkia

Lewis' clarkia (*Clarkia lewisii*) is a California Rare Plant Rank 4.3 watch list species of limited distribution and is not very threatened in California. It is found mostly west of the Coast Ranges from Monterey to San Diego counties in coastal scrub, woodland, and chaparral habitats. Several clusters of Lewis' clarkia were observed in the northwest portion of the State Route 218/Ragsdale Drive location among annual grasses in openings around coast live oak trees. This species is an annual plant, and its distribution and abundance can vary considerably from year to year.

Monterey Pine

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*) is found throughout the Biological Study Area but is considered rare (California Rare Plant Rank 1B.1 species) only in its natural stands, as described in Section 2.3.1. The only natural stands of Monterey pine within the Biological Study Area are near the State Route 68 intersections with Josselyn Canyon Road and Olmsted Road.

Environmental Consequences

Special-Status Manzanitas

Both Build Alternatives would result in temporary impacts to toro, Pajaro and sandmat manzanitas and permanent impacts to sandmat manzanita. Alternative 2 has a substantially larger permanent and temporary footprint than Alternative 1, and therefore Alternative 2's impacts to special-status manzanitas would be greater. Potential direct impacts to manzanitas from the project include removal of vegetation and grading activities; indirect impacts may include soil compaction, erosion, pathogen or invasive species introduction, and road maintenance activities, among others.

Congdon's Tarplant

Both Build Alternatives could result in temporary impacts to approximately half of the Congdon's tarplant populations near the State Route 68/Laureles

Grade and State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road intersections. The project has the potential to directly impact Congdon's tarplant through vegetation removal and grading activities, and indirectly impact this plant through spread of invasive species and road maintenance activities.

Lewis' Clarkia

Both Build Alternatives could result in temporary impacts to the populations of Lewis' clarkia at the State Route 68/State Route 218 and State Route 68/Ragsdale Drive intersections. The project has the potential to directly impact Lewis' clarkia through vegetation removal and grading activities, and indirectly impact this species through spread of invasive species and road maintenance activities.

Monterey Pine

Based on the subsampling described in Section 2.3.1, Alternative 1 may result in a total removal of approximately 300 to 400 Monterey pine trees, and Alternative 2 may result in a total removal of approximately 800 to 900 Monterey pine trees, varying in size from seedlings (less than 2 inches in diameter) to very mature trees greater than 24 inches in diameter.

Alternative 2 has a much larger permanent and temporary footprint compared with Alternative 1, and therefore impacts to Monterey pines for Alternative 2 would be greater. Temporary impacts would primarily be associated with clearing and grading for cut or fill slopes and temporary construction access; permanent impacts would occur where habitat would be displaced for various project features such as road widening or retaining walls. Direct impacts to Monterey pine would include tree removal and grading; indirect impacts could include soil compaction, erosion, pathogen or invasive species introduction, and road maintenance activities, among others.

For all special-status plant species discussed in this section, the design features, standard measures, and Best Management Practices listed for jurisdictional areas (see Section 2.3.2) would also help reduce project-related impacts to special-status plants.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The following avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to special-status plant species. Compensatory mitigation under CEQA would not be required. The avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures below have been renumbered since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment pursuant to content updates in the prior sections of Chapter 2.3.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Special-Status Plants - Manzanitas

BIO-15. Special-Status Manzanitas: Avoidance. Design and construct the project to avoid as many special-status manzanitas as possible.

BIO-16. Special-Status Manzanitas: Alternatives to Removal. When feasible, special-status manzanitas will be trimmed or pruned rather than removed, preserving the root system as much as possible.

BIO-17. Special-Status Manzanitas: Preconstruction Surveys. A qualified biologist will perform additional botanical surveys between two and three years prior to construction to update species presence, area of occupied suitable habitat, and restoration and Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries. The limits of Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be established to avoid crushing sensitive roots.

Compensatory Mitigation Measure under CEQA for Special-Status Plants - Manzanitas

BIO-18. Compensatory Mitigation: Special-Status Manzanita Replanting and Habitat Restoration. Using locally sourced material if feasible, special-status manzanitas will be planted in suitable habitat areas along with other native species appropriate for those habitats.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA for Special-Status Plants - Congdon's Tarplant

BIO-19. Compensatory Mitigation: Congdon's Tarplant Preconstruction Surveys and Seed Collection. A qualified biologist will perform additional botanical surveys between two and three years prior to construction to update species presence, area of occupied suitable habitat, and restoration and Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries. Additionally, seeds from individuals within the impact areas will be collected for replacement planting/restoration at the end of construction.

BIO-20. Compensatory Mitigation: Congdon's Tarplant Soil and Duff Salvage. Caltrans will develop plans and specifications to minimize impacts to Congdon's tarplant by salvaging the top 3 inches of soil and duff from permanent and temporary impact areas and replacing it to the same general location or suitable landscape settings (within 500 feet).

BIO-21. Compensatory Mitigation: Congdon's Tarplant Habitat Restoration. Annual grassland habitats that are temporarily impacted and within range of Congdon's tarplant will be restored with native grass and forb species at a ratio of 1 to 1, and in accordance with landscape plans and a Mitigation Monitoring Plan for grassland habitats.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Special-Status Plants

Lewis' Clarkia'

BIO-22. Lewis' Clarkia: Soil and Duff Salvage. Caltrans will develop plans and specifications to minimize impacts to Lewis' clarkia by salvaging the top 3 inches of soil and duff from permanent and temporary impact areas and replacing it to the same general location and suitable habitat conditions (within 500 feet).

BIO-23. Lewis' Clarkia: Seed Collection. Depending on timing of potential impacts, mature seed may be collected from impacted plants and redistributed in suitable habitat areas in the right-of-way.

Monterey Pine

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Applicable general avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures included for Monterey pine forest will be implemented to reduce potential impacts to Monterey pine trees from the proposed project under either Build Alternative. Refer to measures BIO-3, BIO-4 and BIO-6.

2.3.4 Animal Species

Regulatory Setting

Many state and federal laws regulate impacts to wildlife. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife are responsible for implementing these laws. This section discusses potential impacts and permit requirements associated with animals not listed or proposed for listing under the federal or state Endangered Species Act. Species listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered are discussed in the Threatened and Endangered Species Section 2.3.5. All other special-status animal species are discussed here, including California Department of Fish and Wildlife fully protected species and species of special concern, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service candidate species.

Federal laws and regulations relevant to wildlife include the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

State laws and regulations relevant to wildlife include the following:

- California Environmental Quality Act
- Sections 1600—1603 of the California Fish and Game Code
- Sections 4150 and 4152 of the California Fish and Game Code

The federal Bureau of Land Management manages Fort Ord National Monument, which shares approximately 2.5 miles of border with the proposed project on the north side of State Route 68, east of the State Route 68/Laureles Grade intersection. This area consists of large contiguous open space that is designated by Monterey County for habitat management and public recreational use. The Bureau of Land Management manages the property to protect numerous unique features, including rare and unique flora and fauna. The property is not an officially designated wildlife or waterfowl refuge. The U.S. Department of the Army also continues to manage approximately half of the former military base.

Where the project would require work on Bureau of Land Management property, all applicable conservation planning and resource management regulations would be followed (see Environmental Consequences, Section 2.3.1).

Affected Environment

This paragraph was updated after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Information for this section comes from the Natural Environment Study (with Preliminary Jurisdictional Delineation report) dated October 2023 and the Addendum to the Natural Environment Study dated December 2024.

Special-Status and Other Nesting Birds

All migratory birds that are native to the United States are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, while California Fish and Game Code Section 3503 protects all nesting birds (including non-native species).

Focused nesting bird surveys were not performed for the project. The Biological Study Area has suitable nesting habitat for many bird species, including some special-status species, but no state or federally listed bird species are known or expected to occur in or near the Biological Study Area. Nor does the Biological Study Area contain designated critical habitat for any listed bird species. All bird observations during the numerous biological survey efforts for this project were documented; refer to Appendix E of the Natural Environment Study.

Monarch Butterfly

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. After the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was circulated for public review, the federal listing status of the Monarch butterfly (*Danaus*

plexippus) was changed from a candidate for listing to a federally proposed threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Therefore, the discussion of this species has been relocated to Section 2.3.5, Threatened and Endangered Species.

Roosting Bats

Roosting bat species are addressed as a group in the project's Natural Environment Study because they have similar habitat requirements, vulnerabilities, and needs in terms of protective measures. Day roosts and maternity roosts are often regarded as the most important habitat to protect because they allow for reproduction that perpetuates colonies. Availability of this type of habitat may be a limiting factor for many bat populations and may influence species distribution.

There are no records of roosting bats within or in near the Biological Study Area. No focused surveys for bats were performed, and no bats were observed during the various biological survey efforts for the project. Roosting habitat was evaluated only near possible impact areas. Suitable habitat for crevice-roosting bats may be present in the woodland and forest habitats of the Biological Study Area in trees with snags, cavities, or sloughing bark. The El Toro Creek Bridge (Alternative 2 only) may also have suitable crevice roosting habitat. In addition, the five State Route 68 culverts proposed for replacement as part of the wildlife crossing improvements are of suitable size and may contain suitable habitat for cave-roosting bats.

Special-status bat species that may roost within the Biological Study Area include the pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) and western red bat *(Lasiurus blossevillii*), both of which are State of California Species of Special Concern. Other non-special-status bat species may also roost in the Biological Study Area; these are also protected under State law.

Monterey Dusky-Footed Woodrat and American Badger

The Monterey dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma macrotis luciana*) and American badger (*Taxidea taxus*) are both listed as State of California Species of Special Concern.

The Monterey dusky-footed woodrat, one of the 11 described subspecies of the dusky-footed woodrat, inhabits Monterey and northern San Luis Obispo counties in grasslands, scrub, and wooded areas. Dusky-footed woodrats are well known for their large stick nests typically located in dense brush and placed on the ground against or straddling a log or exposed roots of a standing tree.

The American badger is widely distributed in California and western North America, though comparatively uncommon or absent from some areas where they historically occurred. This species prefers open habitats such as grasslands, oak savannahs, and shrublands. Badgers are excellent diggers, excavating burrows in relatively loose soils to create dens for protection,

sleeping, birth, food storage, and foraging sites. Badgers have large home ranges, spanning hundreds to thousands of acres.

Focused surveys for special-status mammals were not performed for the project. During Caltrans surveys in the Biological Study Area, no woodrats were seen, but woodrat nests were noted in dense scrub and oak woodland habitats. No badgers or potential badger burrows were seen, but this species is known from portions of the Biological Study Area and suitable habitat occurs in some places along the outer edges of the highway right-of-way.

Northern California Legless Lizard and Two-Striped Garter Snake

This discussion has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Discussion of the western pond turtle has been moved to Section 2.3.5, Threatened and Endangered Species and updated to reflect the federal species name (southwestern pond turtle) and updated listing status. The Northern California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*) and the two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondii*) are both listed as State of California Species of Special Concern.

The Northern California legless lizard is found in upland habitats in the Coast Ranges from the Bay Area south to the Mexican border. Its preferred habitat is slightly moist, sandy or loose organic soils of coastal dune, valley-foothill, chaparral, and coastal scrub habitats, typically with abundant leaf litter. Legless lizards forage for insects, larvae, and spiders at the base of shrubs at or below leaf litter, taking shelter under logs, boards, or rocks.

The two-striped garter snake is distributed from the southeastern slope of the Diablo Range and the Salinas Valley south along the coast to the Mexican border. This highly aquatic species is associated with permanent or semi-permanent bodies of water in a variety of habitats from sea level to 8,000 feet. Two-striped garter snakes forage mostly in and along streams, taking fish, amphibians, and their eggs or larvae. They nest and hide in small mammal burrows near aquatic habitat.

Focused surveys for special-status reptiles were not performed for this project, and no individuals from these species were observed, but suitable habitat was noted in various locations in and near the Biological Study Area.

Environmental Consequences

The following section has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The discussions of Monarch butterfly and Crotch bumble bee have been moved to Section 2.3.5.

Special-Status and Other Nesting Birds

Both Build Alternatives could result in temporary, direct and/or indirect impacts to nesting birds; however, permanent impacts to nesting birds from the project

are not expected. Construction activities have the potential to create temporary, direct and indirect impact to nesting birds, eggs, and young birds. Direct impacts may include vegetation removal and site grading; indirect impacts may include changes to perching, foraging, and/or nesting behaviors because of construction-related disturbances such as noise or vibration.

As noted previously, the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Section 3503 protect native migratory bird species and all nesting birds, respectively. Implementation of either Build Alternative would fully comply with the applicable legal requirements.

The temporary loss of vegetation supporting potential nesting habitat would be offset by revegetation efforts for the project. Implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures listed in the following section would further reduce the potential for adverse project-related impacts to nesting bird species. These measures include scheduling vegetation removal outside the typical nesting season, using exclusionary methods to prevent birds from occupying nests in the construction zone, and conducting nesting bird surveys and establishing buffer areas around any active nests, as needed.

Roosting Bats

Permanent impacts to roosting bats are not anticipated. Bats are not expected to roost near busy road intersections when higher quality roosting habitat is available nearby. However, the project could result in temporary impacts to roosting bats as a result of clearing vegetation and grading for cut or fill slopes and temporary construction access. Injury or mortality could occur if bats are roosting when trees are removed. Bats may also be temporarily displaced, if present, during construction activities to repair culverts (Alternatives 1 and 2) and install additional bridge pilings at the State Route 68 bridge over El Toro Creek (Alternative 2 only).

Because suitable snag and tree roosting habitat are present within the Biological Study Area and tree removal is anticipated for this project, measures to protect roosting bats would be required. As detailed in the following section, these would include avoidance of tree removal during typical bat maternity roosting season, conducting pre-activity surveys, and using exclusionary measures as needed and feasible. Repair of each culvert would require bat exclusion for no more than one season. When construction is complete and exclusion is removed, potential roosting habitat would be restored.

Monterey Dusky-Footed Woodrat and American Badger

The project would result in temporary and permanent impacts to nesting and burrowing habitat for the Monterey dusky-footed woodrat and American badger, respectively. Temporary impacts are associated mostly with clearing and grading for cut or fill slopes and temporary construction access; permanent impacts occur where habitat would be displaced for various project features,

such as road widening or retaining walls. Injury or mortality could occur via accidental crushing by worker foot traffic or construction equipment.

Monterey dusky-footed woodrat middens are present within the Biological Study Area, and the presence of the American badger is considered unlikely given the poor habitat conditions within the project limits and availability of higher quality habitat nearby. The risk of injury or mortality to either species is considered low with the implementation of the measures proposed to protect jurisdictional areas (wetlands and other waters), oak woodlands, the California red-legged frog, and the California tiger salamander.

The main impact that the project would have on the Monterey dusky-footed woodrat and American badger pertains to habitat connectivity. Wider intersections and roadways would reduce the chances for successful highway crossings. However, the existing condition is already poor due to high levels of traffic. The wildlife crossings included in the project may help improve habitat connectivity for both species.

Northern California Legless Lizard and Two-Striped Garter Snake

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project has the potential to adversely affect the Northern California legless lizard and two-striped garter snake if these species are found burrowing or nesting in the Area of Potential Impact. However, the chances are low that these special-status reptile species would occur within the Area of Potential Impact based on lack of documented observations of the species, poor habitat conditions, higher quality burrowing and nesting habitat outside of the Biological Study Area, and limited access between the higher quality habitat and the Area of Potential Impact. The project is not expected to appreciably reduce the quality or amount of suitable habitat for any of these special-status reptiles.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The following avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures apply to the project and would be implemented to reduce potential impacts to special-status animal species. Compensatory mitigation under CEQA would not be required for special-status and other nesting birds and roosting bats. The following measures have been renumbered according to changes in the preceding and following sections of Chapter 2.3.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Special-Status and Other Nesting Birds

BIO-24. Special-Status and Other Nesting Birds: Construction Scheduling, Preconstruction Surveys, and Buffer Areas. Schedule

vegetation removal between September 1 and February 14, outside of the typical bird nesting season. If construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the nesting season (February 15 to August 31), a nesting bird survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than three days prior to construction. If an active nest is found, the Caltrans biologist will determine an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area will be avoided until a qualified biologist has determined that juveniles have fledged and are no longer dependent on the nest.

BIO-25. Special-Status and Other Nesting Birds: Observance of Legal Protections. Active bird nests shall not be disturbed, and eggs or young birds covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Section 3503 shall not be killed, destroyed, injured, or harassed at any time.

BIO-26. Special-Status and Other Nesting Birds: Exclusionary Methods. During construction before typical nesting season, active exclusionary methods will be implemented to prevent birds from occupying nests in the construction zone. Removal of inactive nests will be monitored by a qualified biologist.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Roosting Bats

BIO-27. Roosting Bats: Construction Scheduling, Roost Surveys, Exclusionary Methods, and Buffer Areas. Tree removal shall be scheduled to occur from September 2 to January 31, outside of the typical bat maternity roosting season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts to roosting bats. If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the bat maternity roosting season (February 1 to September 1), a bat roost survey shall be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans within 14 days prior to construction. The biologist(s) conducting the preconstruction surveys will also identify the nature of the bat utilization (i.e., no roosting, night roost, day roost, maternity roost) and determine if passive bat exclusion will be necessary and feasible. If an active day roost is found, a qualified Caltrans biologist shall determine an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area shall be avoided until a qualified biologist has determined that roosting activity has ceased, or exclusionary methods have successfully evicted roosting bats.

BIO-28. Roosting Bats: Preconstruction Surveys of Culverts. Prior to culvert construction activities for the proposed wildlife crossing improvements, a preconstruction survey for roosting bats shall be conducted by a biologist determined to be qualified by Caltrans within 14 days prior to construction. The biologist(s) conducting the preconstruction surveys will identify the nature of the bat utilization (i.e., no roosting, night roost, day roost, maternity roost) and determine if passive bat exclusion will be necessary and feasible. The qualified biologist will provide oversight on exclusion methods and installation

and will determine whether exclusionary methods have successfully evicted roosting bats.

BIO-29. Roosting Bats: Avoidance of Active Maternity Roosts. If bats are found by a qualified biologist to be maternity roosting, active bat maternity roosts shall not be disturbed or destroyed until pups are volant (capable of flight).

BIO-30. Roosting Bats: Exclusion Zones. In areas where an occupied roost can be avoided, readily visible exclusion zones shall be established using Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing. The size/radius of the exclusion zone(s) shall be determined by a qualified biologist.

BIO-31. Roosting Bats: Habitat Incorporation into Wildlife Crossings. Where feasible, bat habitat may be incorporated into the large wildlife crossing culverts within the project area.

Monterey Dusky-Footed Woodrat and American Badger

This paragraph was modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Impacts to potential habitat for Monterey dusky-footed woodrat and American badger would be offset by site restoration within the project limits using native plant species or at offsite mitigation areas associated with compensatory mitigation for jurisdictional areas, oak woodlands, and Monterey pine forest. No additional compensatory mitigation is necessary or proposed.

Northern California Legless Lizard and Two-Striped Garter Snake

This paragraph was modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Applicable avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures included for jurisdictional areas, California red-legged frog, and California tiger salamander in Section 2.3.5 would be implemented to reduce potential impacts to Northern California legless lizard and two-striped garter snake under either Build Alternative of the project.

This paragraph was modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Impacts to potential habitat for Northern California legless lizard and two-striped garter snake would be offset by site restoration within the project limits or at offsite mitigation areas associated with compensatory mitigation for jurisdictional areas. No additional compensatory mitigation is necessary or proposed.

2.3.5 Threatened and Endangered Species

Regulatory Setting

The main federal law protecting threatened and endangered species is the Federal Endangered Species Act: 16 U.S. Code Section 1531, et seq. See

also 50 Code of Federal Regulations Part 402. This act and later amendments provide for the conservation of endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. Under Section 7 of this act, federal agencies, such as the Federal Highway Administration (and Caltrans, as assigned), are required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) to ensure that they are not undertaking, funding, permitting, or authorizing actions likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat. Critical habitat is defined as geographic locations critical to the existence of a threatened or endangered species. The outcome of consultation under Section 7 may include a Biological Opinion with an Incidental Take Statement or a Letter of Concurrence. Section 3 of Federal Endangered Species Act defines take as "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect or any attempt at such conduct."

California has enacted a similar law at the state level, the California Endangered Species Act, California Fish and Game Code Section 2050, et seq. The California Endangered Species Act emphasizes early consultation to avoid potential impacts to rare, endangered, and threatened species and to develop appropriate planning to offset project-caused losses of listed species populations and their essential habitats. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is the agency responsible for implementing the California Endangered Species Act. Section 2080 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits "take" of any species determined to be an endangered species or a threatened species. Take is defined in Section 86 of the California Fish and Game Code as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." The California Endangered Species Act allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects; for these actions, an Incidental Take Permit is issued by California Department of Fish and Wildlife. For species listed under both Federal Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act requiring a Biological Opinion under Section 7 of Federal Endangered Species Act, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife may also authorize impacts to California Endangered Species Act species by issuing a Consistency Determination under Section 2080.1 of the California Fish and Game Code.

Another federal law, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, was established to conserve and manage fishery resources found off the coast, as well as anadromous species and Continental Shelf fishery resources of the United States, by exercising (A) sovereign rights for the purposes of exploring, exploiting, conserving, and managing all fish within the exclusive economic zone established by Presidential Proclamation 5030, dated March 10, 1983, and (B) exclusive fishery management authority beyond the exclusive economic zone over such anadromous species, Continental Shelf fishery resources, and fishery resources in special areas.

Affected Environment

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Information for this section comes from the Natural Environment Study (with Preliminary Jurisdictional Delineation report) dated October 2023 and the Addendum to the Natural Environment Study dated December 2024.

Yadon's Piperia

Yadon's piperia (*Piperia yadonii*) is listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act and is listed by the California Native Plant Society as California Rare Plant Rank 1B.1 (plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; seriously threatened in California).

This species is a perennial herb in the Orchidaceae (Orchid family) endemic to northern Monterey County, occurring in maritime chapparal, Monterey pine, bishop pine, and Gowen cypress forests. Threats to the recovery of this species include habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive plants, herbivory, disease, and mowing for fuel reduction.

Caltrans biologists conducting rare plant surveys for the project observed Yadon's piperia in Monterey pine forest habitat in the vicinity of Olmsted Road. Though most of this plant population is more than 80 feet from State Route 68 and is outside the project's Biological Study Area, many individual plants were seen within the Biological Study Area, including several within 30 feet of the existing right-of-way boundary for State Route 68. Designated critical habitat for this species does not occur within or adjacent to the Biological Study Area; the nearest critical habitat is at Jacks Peak, about half a mile south of the Josselyn Canyon Road-Olmsted Road project location.

The Biological Study Area contains approximately 4.88 acres of potentially suitable habitat for Yadon's piperia, including both sides of State Route 68 in the Monterey pine forest around the Josselyn Canyon Road-Olmsted Road location. The plants currently occupy only a small portion of the available suitable habitat (most likely less than 1 percent, or 0.049 acre).

California Red-Legged Frog

The California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) is listed as Threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act and is a State of California Species of Special Concern. This species historically ranged from Marin County southward to northern Baja California; currently, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties support the largest remaining populations within California.

The California red-legged frog uses aquatic, riparian, and upland habitats and tends to breed in surface waters that exhibit little or no flow, are at least 2.3 feet deep, and persist until at least early June. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service considers all aquatic and riparian areas within the range of the species, and any landscape features that provide cover and moisture, to be potentially suitable habitat for this species.

No federally designated critical habitat for the California red-legged frog is found in or near the project area, and no individuals were seen by Caltrans biologists during surveys of the project area. However, informal observations have been previously reported in the area, and the species is presumed present based on the existence of suitable stream and pond habitats in the Biological Study Area.

California Tiger Salamander

The California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) is listed as Threatened under the California Endangered Species Act. Under the Federal Endangered Species Act, only the Central California Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of this species is listed (Threatened).

The California tiger salamander is a relatively large, stocky, terrestrial salamander than can range in size from 6 to 9.5 inches long in adulthood. Historically, the Central California population of this species was native to valleys and foothills of the San Joaquin-Sacramento River valleys and the Central Coast. At present, though widely distributed, the species is known to exist in only small pockets of its former range. The main causes of the decline are habitat loss and fragmentation, and predation by introduced predators.

The California tiger salamander requires both terrestrial and aquatic habitat. It lives most of its life in small mammal burrows found in upland grassland and oak woodland habitats, migrating up to 1.24 miles during wet season (November-April) to mate in breeding ponds before returning to its upland burrows.

Protocol surveys for the California tiger salamander were not conducted for the project, and no individuals were observed during surveys. The project vicinity does not contain any designated critical habitat for this species, but the area contains a range of potentially suitable upland habitat (grassland, ruderal and non-native vegetation areas, scrub, Monterey pine forest, coast live oak woodland, and riparian habitats). Also, though no potential breeding habitat for this species is found within the Biological Study Area, suitable breeding habitat is found nearby and within accessible distance from the upland habitat. This includes ponds on Fort Ord National Monument and U.S. Army Fort Ord property where adult and juvenile California tiger salamanders have been observed, less than 1,000 feet north of the State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road and State Route 68/San Benancio Road project intersections.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead Trout

The South-Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment of steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*) is listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act and is a State of California Species of Special Concern.

The steelhead is the anadromous (oceangoing) form of rainbow trout and is genetically identical to the latter. Steelhead historically ranged from Alaska southward to the California-Mexico border. Extensive urbanization and development of water projects during the 20th century caused large declines and extirpations (local extinctions) among steelhead populations. The South-Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment of steelhead includes naturally spawned, anadromous fish originating below natural and human-made impassable barriers from the Pajaro River south to, but not including, the Santa Maria River.

Optimal in-stream steelhead habitat consists of clear, cool water with a shallow gradient, abundant cover (submerged branches, rocks, logs), well-vegetated stream margins, relatively stable water flow, and equal amounts of pools and riffles. Steelhead migrate up coastal drainages following the first substantial seasonal rainfall, after storm runoff has breached sandbars at the mouths of water bodies and drainages, allowing fish passage to upstream spawning and rearing habitats. Spawning typically occurs during the spring in riffle areas that consist of clean, coarse gravels. Juveniles (smolts) and post-spawning adults migrate from freshwater to the ocean from March to July, depending on stream flows.

The project area does not contain any designated critical habitat for steelhead. No protocol surveys were conducted for aquatic species in the Biological Study Area, and no steelhead were observed during general habitat surveys. The streams that drain the Monterey Bay and Canyon Del Rey watersheds do not contain suitable in-stream aquatic habitat for South-Central California Coast steelhead due to low streamflow and numerous, substantial barriers lower in the watershed.

However, El Toro Creek, which drains the eastern one-quarter of the project area and connects to the Pacific Ocean via the Salinas River, does have the potential to serve as suitable steelhead habitat when the creek is flowing. Research conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Service indicates that several reaches of El Toro Creek contain potentially suitable steelhead habitat. In addition, California Department of Fish and Wildlife staff observed a dead, egg-bearing adult steelhead in El Toro Creek outside of the eastern project limits in 2020. Therefore, the presence of steelhead in El Toro Creek within the Biological Study Area is possible.

Tricolored Blackbird

The tricolored blackbird *(Agelaius tricolor)* is listed as a Threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act and is also a State of California Species of Special Concern. This species was observed during surveys for a previous Caltrans project along State Route 68 west of the Laureles Grade intersection. However, the Biological Study Area for the current project does not contain suitable nesting habitat for the tricolored blackbird and contains only marginally suitable foraging habitat.

Monarch Butterfly

This discussion of the Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) was moved to this section after circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment due to change in the species' status from being a candidate for federal listing to a federal proposed threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Western populations of this species migrate to coastal California to overwinter in wind-protected tree groves (eucalyptus, Monterey pine, cypress) within 5 miles of the coast where nectar and water sources are found nearby.

The nearest known Monarch butterfly overwintering site is in Monterey, approximately 1 mile west of the western extent of the project limits. Though potentially suitable overwintering and nectar habitat is found in the Biological Study Area, during Caltrans surveys of the Biological Study Area, no Monarch individuals or host plants, milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.), were observed.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

This discussion of the southwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys pallida)* was added to this section after circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment because the species has a new federal status as a federally proposed threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Therefore, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act will be required. The species' scientific name (*Actinemys pallida)* is used here to reflect its federal reference name and was previously referenced in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment under its State of California scientific name of *Emys marmorata*. The southwestern pond turtle also remains a California Species of Special Concern regulated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The southwestern pond turtle has been historically present in most Pacific slope drainages between the Oregon and Mexican borders. Populations are declining throughout their range. Pond turtle habitat consists of year-round ponds along foothill streams and broad washes near the coast. Though this species is mostly aquatic, upland habitat (open grassland with clay or silt soils near aquatic sites) is required for reproduction, estivation, and overwintering.

Western Burrowing Owl

This discussion of western burrowing owl was added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) is now a candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act, a change since the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was circulated. Western burrowing owls were not detected during multiple field surveys of the project Biological Study Area at various times of several years. The project Biological Study Area contains burrows, but does not support

suitable nesting habitat for this species. Data sources queried by Caltrans biologists indicate that burrowing owls may very occasionally occur in the greater Monterey Bay area as a seasonal migrant in the fall and winter months but not for nesting or breeding.

Western Spadefoot

This discussion of the western spadefoot was added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Since the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was circulated for public review, the status of the western spadefoot (*Spea hammondii*) was elevated to federally proposed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The previous status was a Species of Special Concern regulated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as addressed in the Natural Environment Study (2023). Spadefoots prefer open areas with sandy or gravelly soils in a variety of habitats in Central and Southern California and into Baja California. Breeding sites include vernal pools and other temporary rain pools, cattle water tanks and intermittent pools in streams. There are no documented occurrences of the western spadefoot within 1 mile of the project Biological Study Area and none observed during field surveys for the project. There is no suitable breeding habitat in or near the Biological Study Area.

Updated species status lists maintained by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Department of the Interior/Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service are included in Volume 2 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact.

Crotch Bumble Bee

This discussion of Crotch bumble bee was moved to this section from Section 2.3.4 since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment. The Crotch bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*) is a candidate for listing as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act. This species was historically common in the Central Valley of California, but the population has sharply declined with its overall range having been reduced by about 75 percent.

Crotch bumble bees were not observed during Caltrans surveys of the Biological Study Area, but suitable foraging habitat for this species is present throughout the Biological Study Area and they are known from the region. Suitable nesting/overwintering habitat may also be present in less disturbed parts of the Biological Study Area, however use of the area for nesting is considered unlikely given high levels of ambient disturbance, proximity to the existing highway, and the overall low quality of the habitat present when higher quality habitat is available outside the Biological Study Area.

Environmental Consequences

Yadon's Piperia

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Natural Environment Study found that Alternative 1 could result in temporary impacts to 0.136 acre of potentially suitable Yadon's piperia habitat, but no permanent impacts would occur. Alternative 2 could result in 1.987 acres of temporary impacts and 0.247 acre of permanent impacts (see Table 2.3.5.1). However, the habitat loss would not occur within designated critical habitat and would be in an area that is already highly fragmented by roads and development. Neither Build Alternative would result in permanent impacts to any Yadon's piperia plants observed in the Biological Study Area. Based on this analysis and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination for the preferred alternative, Alternative 1, is that the project may affect, is not likely to adversely affect Yadon's piperia.

Table 2.3.5.1 Impacts to Potential Yadon's Piperia Habitat

Regulatory Authority/Habitat: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Total in Biological Study Area	Alternative 1 Temporary (acres)	Alternative 1 Permanent (acres)	Alternative 2 Temporary (acres)	Alternative 2 Permanent (acres)
Potentially suitable Yadon's piperia habitat	4.884	0.136	0	1.987	0.247

The potential for adverse project-related impacts to this species would be higher under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1 due to the former's larger footprint and greater disturbance of potentially suitable habitat. Direct, temporary impacts would be associated mostly with clearing and grading for cut or fill slopes and temporary construction access; direct, permanent impacts would occur where habitat would be displaced for various project features such as road widening or retaining walls. Indirect impacts may occur through soil compaction, erosion, pathogen or invasive species introduction, and road maintenance activities among others.

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Avoidance and Minimization Measures BIO-32 and BIO-33 would be implemented for either Build Alternative, and Compensatory Mitigation Measures BIO-34 through BIO-38 would be implemented if direct and indirect impacts to Yadon's piperia were to be determined. Refer to the Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures section.

California Red-Legged Frog

The project may result in both temporary and permanent, direct and indirect impacts to the California red-legged frog, if the species is present in the work areas, through impacts to potential aquatic breeding habitat and adjacent upland riparian habitat (see Table 2.3.5.2), as well as to individual frogs.

Table 2.3.5.2 Impacts to Potential California Red-Legged Frog Habitat

Regulatory Authority/Habitat: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Alternative 1 Temporary (acres)	Alternative 1 Permanent (acres)	Alternative 2 Temporary (acres)	Alternative 2 Permanent (acres)
California red-legged frog potential breeding habitat	0.262	0.049	0.607	0.116
California red-legged frog upland habitat	1.548	0.24	3.45	0.567

Project construction could result in direct injury or mortality to California red-legged frogs during vegetation clearing and grading in riparian or wetland habitat adjacent to suitable breeding habitat or during diversion/dewatering activities in breeding habitat. Injury or mortality could occur via accidental crushing by worker foot traffic or construction equipment. These effects would be temporary, lasting during construction only.

Indirect impacts, which could be temporary or long term, may include stress to individual frogs from capture and relocation (if necessary), erosion and sedimentation affecting water quality, increased habitat fragmentation due to intersection widening, or longer distances that individual frogs would have to travel to seek shelter and new breeding areas.

Because Alternative 2 would impact more jurisdictional features (wetlands and other waters) and more suitable habitat for the California red-legged frog than Alternative 1 would, impacts to this species would be higher under Alternative 2.

The risk of injury or mortality from any of these potential impacts is considered low due to limited observations of this species and generally poor habitat conditions in the Biological Study Area. The limited number of California red-legged frog records in the region may be due to poor water quality and the presence of predators such as bullfrogs that are common in urban aquatic areas.

Nevertheless, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the California red-legged frog. The basis for this determination is that

the presence of this species has been inferred and there is a potential for adverse effects.

Proposed measures to protect the California red-legged frog during project implementation would reduce project-related impacts to this species and are listed in the following section. These measures include the requirement that only U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologists capture and handle the California red-legged frog (if needed), preconstruction surveys, worker awareness training, and more. See the Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures section below for more information.

California Tiger Salamander

The project may result in both temporary and permanent, direct and indirect impacts to the California tiger salamander, if the species is present in the work areas, through impacts to upland habitat within dispersal range of known or potential breeding sites (see Table 2.3.5.3 which has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment), and to individual salamanders. The project would not have any adverse effects on California tiger salamander breeding habitat.

Table 2.3.5.3 Impacts to Potential California Tiger Salamander Habitat

Regulatory Authority/Habitat: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Alternative 1 Temporary (acres)	Alternative 1 Permanent (acres)	Alternative 2 Temporary (acres)	Alternative 2 Permanent (acres)
California tiger salamander potential breeding habitat	0.056	0	0	0
California tiger salamander upland habitat	17.43	5.08	37.41	6.777

Project construction could result in direct injury or mortality to the California tiger salamander during vegetation clearing and grading. Construction activities have the potential to cause temporary impacts such as crushing California tiger salamanders that are in burrows, moving across the landscape, or seeking shelter in leaf litter. No impacts to potential or known breeding habitat would occur because this type of habitat is not present in the Biological Study Area.

The project could also cause indirect impacts, both temporary and long-term, to this species. These include changes in normal feeding and sheltering behavior patterns due to construction-related noise, vibration, and night lighting, which could result in stress and increased mortality due to desiccation or predation. The planned installation of protective fencing around

work areas to exclude California tiger salamanders could also disrupt their ability to travel, potentially reducing access to limited upland dispersal habitat and causing more competition for burrows and food resources. Also, if this species is present, individuals would be captured and relocated away from the work areas, causing additional stress and possible mortality.

Additional project-related indirect impacts could result from the unavailability of construction-disturbed upland habitat during construction and restoration, and habitat fragmentation as travel distances may increase between known breeding habitat (ponds) at Fort Ord and suitable upland habitat. Other potential breeding habitat exists in the general area and within dispersal range of the project Area of Potential Impact, but all are on private property and the quality of this habitat and whether these areas are used by California tiger salamanders are unknown.

Because Alternative 2 impacts more jurisdictional features and more suitable habitat for the California tiger salamander than Alternative 1 would, impacts would be higher under Alternative 2.

The risk of injury or mortality from any of these potential impacts is considered low due to numerous barriers such as large housing developments, commercial properties, and high-use recreational areas between known California tiger salamander breeding ponds and the project area. State Route 68 is also a barrier to movement of this species due to high traffic volume and limited safe crossing opportunities.

Regardless, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the California tiger salamander. The basis for this determination is that California tiger salamander presence has been inferred and there is a potential for adverse effects.

The wildlife crossing improvements included in the project may create safer opportunities for this species to cross State Route 68 to access suitable habitat. In addition, some of the proposed avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures to protect the California red-legged frog during project implementation would also benefit the California tiger salamander. These include Caltrans obtaining all needed permits and agreements from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, shielding to restrict construction lighting at night to the immediate work area, the requirement that only U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologists capture and handle California tiger salamanders, and Caltrans preparation of a species protection and relocation plan for approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Caltrans intends to perform a more in-depth habitat suitability evaluation during regulatory coordination to determine specific mitigation requirements for this species.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead

Alternative 1 of the project would not involve work within potentially suitable habitat for South-Central California coast steelhead. Although paving would occur on the San Benancio Road bridge over El Toro Creek, a potentially occupied stream, work would be confined to the top of the bridge and the contractor would be required to implement whatever measures are necessary to prevent loss of any material into the stream. Therefore, Alternative 1 is expected to have no effect on this species.

Alternative 2 would involve work within suitable habitat for South-Central California coast steelhead at the State Route 68 bridge over El Toro Creek. To support the proposed bridge widening in Alternative 2's design, four new piers would be installed within the creek channel (for a total of six piers). Stream diversion and dewatering may be necessary depending on the flow conditions at the time of construction, and heavy equipment access into the channel would also likely be required. Alternative 2 may therefore affect this species.

Potential temporary, direct impacts to South-Central California coast steelhead (if present) during the bridge work under Alternative 2 include becoming stranded in portions of the creek that must be dewatered, becoming caught in dewatering pumps, or made vulnerable to predation from foraging birds and mammals. Potential temporary or long-term, indirect impacts to steelhead from the proposed action include sediment deposition downstream of the work area, which may adversely impact downstream water quality.

These potential direct and indirect impacts to steelhead may be avoided through the use of appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures to protect the streambanks and channel of El Toro Creek during construction. Nevertheless, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the South-Central California coast steelhead. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures noted previously that pertain to jurisdictional wetlands, the California red-legged frog, and the California tiger salamander would also reduce potential impacts to South-Central California coast steelhead.

Additional measures proposed to protect steelhead during project work include monitoring by a National Marine Fisheries Service-approved biologist, worker awareness training, requiring any work in the channel to take place during the dry season when flows are at their lowest, controlling erosion on the work sites to prevent siltation in the channel, and more. See the following section for a full listing of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures that address potential impacts to this species.

Tricolored Blackbird

This paragraph has been modified since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Suitable wetland nesting habitat for the tricolored blackbird does not occur in the Biological Study Area, and

only marginally suitable foraging habitat is present. Construction activities will not occur within 300 feet of the known tricolored blackbird nesting habitat at the western end of the Laureles Grade nor at any other known nesting locations. The California Endangered Species Act determination for this species is that the project would result in no take. No additional studies are recommended.

The following discussions of the Monarch butterfly, southwestern pond turtle, western burrowing owl, and western spadefoot species have been moved to this section from Section 2.3.4 since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Monarch Butterfly

This discussion about the Monarch butterfly was moved from Section 2.3.4 since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment because of the change in the species status to federally proposed threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The project would result in temporary and permanent impacts to Monterey pine forest, grassland, and scrub habitats within the Biological Study Area, which has the potential to affect Monarch butterflies. Temporary impacts would be associated mostly with clearing and grading for cut or fill slopes and temporary construction access; permanent impacts would occur where habitat would be displaced for various project features, such as road widening or retaining walls.

However, the likelihood of Monarch butterflies being present within the Area of Potential Impact is considered low due to poor habitat conditions and higher quality overwintering and foraging habitat outside of the Biological Study Area. There are no known overwintering sites within 1 mile of the Biological Study Area, and no milkweed species were observed during botanical surveys for the project. As described in Section 2.3.1, grassland and scrub habitats that are temporarily impacted by the project will be reseeded with native grass and flowering plant species post-construction. Refer to comprehensive Mitigation Measure BIO-68. The determination of effect is that the project will have no effect on the Monarch butterfly.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

This discussion about the southwestern pond turtle was moved to this section from Section 2.3.4 and updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project may affect and will likely adversely affect the southwestern pond turtle as the species shares similar jurisdictional aquatic and upland habitat and seasonal behaviors with other sensitive species such as California red-legged frog, for which avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are included in the project. Those measures will also provide protection for the southwestern pond turtle (see measures BIO-39 through BIO-58).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently drafted additional avoidance and minimization measures for the southwestern pond turtle that are included in the measures for the project at the end of this subsection (refer to Measures BIO-69 to BIO-78). These measures include preparation of a habitat mitigation plan for the species in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, specifications for conducting preconstruction surveys, and measures pertaining to construction activities to avoid harm to southwestern pond turtles. In addition, Mitigation Measure BIO-78 prescribes habitat mitigation planning for the southwestern pond turtle.

Western Burrowing Owl

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Impacts to the western burrowing owl are not expected because the project Biological Study Area does not provide suitable nesting or breeding habitat for burrowing owls, and the species was not observed or detected during multiple biological surveys of the study area. Preconstruction biological surveys for special-status wildlife species are prescribed for the project, including preconstruction surveys for nesting birds (if construction scheduling cannot avoid the nesting season), which would also apply to the burrowing owl. Refer to measure BIO-24. A biological monitor will be onsite during construction and will notify Caltrans if a burrowing owl is detected, and Caltrans will coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for appropriate actions.

Western Spadefoot

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. After the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was circulated for public review, the status of the western spadefoot was changed from a California Species of Special Concern to a federally proposed threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act. There are no documented occurrences of this species within 1 mile of the project Biological Study Area, and the project will not impact spadefoot breeding habitat. Therefore, the determination of effect is that the project will have no effect on the western spadefoot.

Crotch Bumble Bee

This discussion about the Crotch bumble bee has been moved to this section from Section 2.3.4 and updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project would result in temporary and permanent impacts to grassland and scrub habitats within the Biological Study Area that have the potential to support foraging and nesting Crotch bumble bees. Temporary impacts would be associated mostly with clearing and grading for cut or fill slopes and temporary construction access; permanent impacts are where habitat would be displaced for various project features, such as road widening or retaining walls.

It is expected that the project would not result in state take (construction-related mortality) of this species, however, additional Crotch bumble bee surveys will be conducted during the project design phase, per California Department of Fish and Wildlife guidance. If Crotch or other special-status bumble bees are observed using the project area, Caltrans would apply to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for an Incidental Take Permit (2081 permit).

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Other measures that will be implemented to protect this species include worker awareness training, biologist examination of blooming flowering plants slated for removal, installation of Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing as needed, and onsite habitat replacement (if needed) at a minimum 1-to-1 ratio. Refer to Measures BIO-79 to BIO-84.

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The updated determination under the California Endangered Species Act for the state listed species Crotch bumble bee, tricolored blackbird, and western burrowing owl is that the project is not anticipated to have any impacts. The project is not anticipated to have impacts on the newly listed state candidate species, western burrowing owl. For all project activities, design features, standard measures, and Best Management Practices would be implemented to reduce project-related impacts to Threatened and Endangered species under either Build Alternative. These include, but are not limited to, the following actions.

- During proposed project activities, trash that may attract predators will be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, trash and construction debris will be removed from work areas.
- 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 the onset of work, Caltrans 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.
- To control sedimentation during and after proposed action implementation, Caltrans will implement the Best Management Practices outlined in any authorizations or permits issued under the authorities of the Clean Water Act that it receives for the specific proposed action. If Best Management Practices are ineffective, Caltrans will attempt to remedy the situation immediately in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In addition, the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures listed in the following section will be implemented to further reduce potential impacts.

Findings of Effect

This section has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

The changes associated with the updated design of the three eastern roundabout locations do not substantially alter the analysis of impacts presented in the 2023 Natural Environment Study. The updated designs at those locations only slightly shifted areas of impact from the single-lane roundabout design footprints. The updated analysis of potential effects on the southwestern pond turtle and associated additional avoidance and minimization measures resulted from the change in species status rather than the roundabout design updates.

The updated effects determinations under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act below are based on technical assistance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (Services). Formal consultation under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act will take place before construction begins.

In accordance with technical assistance process with the Services, the updated Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 Effects determinations for the preferred alternative (roundabouts) include the following:

- California tiger salamander – may affect, likely to adversely affect
- California red-legged frog – may affect, likely to adversely affect
- Southwestern pond turtle – may affect, likely to adversely affect
- Yadon’s piperia – may affect, not likely to adversely affect
- Western spadefoot - no effect
- Monarch butterfly – no effect
- South-Central California coast steelhead – no effect

As addressed in the Natural Environment Study, the project Biological Study Area is not within any designated critical habitat.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Yadon's Piperia

Applicable general avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures included in this document for Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland would be implemented to reduce potential project-related impacts to Yadon's piperia.

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The following avoidance and minimization measures would be implemented to reduce impacts to Yadon's piperia if preconstruction surveys result in finding Yadon's piperia plants within the impact area for Alternative 1 and avoidance of the plants is infeasible. Compensatory Mitigation Measures BIO-34 through BIO-38 would be implemented if direct and indirect impacts were to occur to Yadon's piperia.

The avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures below have been renumbered, and Measure BIO-33 has been modified, since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-32. Yadon's Piperia: Agency Consultation. Prior to construction, Caltrans will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding impacts to Yadon's piperia.

BIO-33. Yadon's Piperia: Preconstruction Surveys. A qualified biologist will perform additional botanical surveys between two and three years prior to construction to update occupied suitable habitat, to flag locations where bulbs may be collected (if necessary), and to support placement of Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries. Additionally, the surveys will identify suitable restoration sites if Yadon's piperia is found within an area to be impacted and must be relocated. Field surveys will be conducted in the early season when leaves have emerged, but grass cover is low. If Yadon's piperia plants are found in the project impact area during preconstruction surveys, Mitigation Measures BIO-34 through BIO-38 will be implemented.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA for Special-Status Plants: Yadon's Piperia

This section has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The following mitigation measures shall be implemented if Yadon's piperia plants are found in the project impact area during preconstruction surveys prescribed in Measure BIO-33.

BIO-34. Compensatory Mitigation: Yadon's Piperia. Compensatory mitigation would be required as a result of direct and indirect impacts to this species. Impacts to Yadon's piperia would be fully mitigated in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through a Biological Opinion

document. Although Caltrans has proposed measures to offset direct impacts to Yadon's piperia, final mitigation measures would be developed during coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The proposed measures are similar to those that were included in the Biological Opinion for a project at the Monterey Regional Airport (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2019).

At this time, Caltrans proposes offsetting temporary and permanent impacts to Yadon's piperia-occupied habitat at a ratio of 2 to 1 (acres impacted to acres mitigated) through the translocation efforts described above. Habitat preservation and/or enhancement may also be performed as needed to fulfill the mitigation ratio. Mitigation is expected to be completed offsite, at a location within range and suitable habitat conditions for the Monterey peninsula population of Yadon's piperia, in coordination with a local land conservancy or restoration group.

BIO-35. Compensatory Mitigation: Yadon's Piperia Soil and Duff Salvage; Seed Collection and Storage. If Yadon's piperia is found within the area to be impacted, seeds, bulbs, and topsoil containing its mycorrhizal associations will be collected by qualified individuals at the appropriate season from the project's impact areas and other collection sites approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service one to two years prior to construction. Seed will be collected in the summer, processed, and stored according to seed storage best practices for up to two years before being planted. Bulbs and soil will be collected and translocated in the late fall when the plants are most dormant (anticipated to be October to December).

BIO-36. Compensatory Mitigation: Yadon's Piperia Plant Translocation. The plant materials will be translocated into designated and suitably protected sites within range of the Monterey population. The translocation sites will be prepared in advance by clearing invasive and competing vegetation. Site preparation and translocation work will be implemented by hand to avoid compacting the soil.

BIO-37. Compensatory Mitigation: Yadon's Piperia Translocation Site Monitoring. Following completion of the seed and bulb relocation efforts, a qualified biologist will monitor the translocation site for four consecutive years to quantify and document the number of individuals that emerge, the presence of non-native vegetation, and overall success of the translocation efforts.

BIO-38. Compensatory Mitigation: Yadon's Piperia Translocation Site Maintenance. Invasive and competing vegetation will be removed from the translocation site by hand during the monitoring program.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for California Red-Legged Frog

Caltrans anticipates the proposed project would qualify for Federal Endangered Species Act incidental take coverage under the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Federal Highway Administration projects with potential

impacts to California red-legged frog (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service No. 8-8-10-F-58), which includes the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures below, in addition to measures pertaining to jurisdictional areas mentioned above (see Section 2.3.2) and which would be implemented for either project alternative.

BIO-39. California Red-Legged Frog: Biologist Qualifications for Capture/Relocation of Frogs. Only U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologists will participate in activities associated with the capture and handling 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has revoked their approval at any time during the life of the Programmatic Biological Opinion.

BIO-40. California Red-Legged Frog: Biologist Qualifications and Initiation of Construction. Ground disturbance will not begin until written approval is received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the biologist(s) is qualified to conduct the work. Caltrans will request approval of the biologist(s) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

BIO-41. California Red-Legged Frog: Preconstruction Surveys and Capture/Relocation. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will survey the proposed action 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will relocate the California red-legged frogs the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by the activities associated with the proposed action. The relocation site should be in the same drainage to the extent practicable. Caltrans will coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the relocation site prior to the capture of any California red-legged frogs.

BIO-42. California Red-Legged Frog: Worker Awareness Training. Before any activities begin on a proposed action, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-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 proposed action, and the boundaries within which the proposed action 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.

BIO-43. California Red-Legged Frog: Monitor Designation; Procedure in the Event of Unanticipated Adverse Effects to Frogs. A U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service-approved biologist will be present at the work site until California red-legged frogs have been relocated out of harm's way, workers have been instructed, and disturbance of the habitat has been completed. After this time, Caltrans will designate a person to monitor onsite compliance with minimization measures. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will ensure that this monitor receives the training outlined in the previous measure, as well as training in the identification of California red-legged frogs. If the monitor or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist recommends that work be stopped because California red-legged frogs would be affected in a manner not anticipated by Caltrans and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 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 by requiring that actions that are causing these effects be halted. If work is stopped, Caltrans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be notified as soon as is reasonably possible.

BIO-44. California Red-Legged Frog: Habitat Contours. Habitat contours will be returned to their original configuration to the greatest extent that is feasible at the end of the proposed project. This measure will be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with the proposed action, unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible, or modification of original contours would benefit the California red-legged frog.

BIO-45. California Red-Legged Frog: Construction Footprint Limitation; Environmentally Sensitive Areas. The number of access routes, size of staging areas, and the total area of activity will be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the proposed action. Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be established to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete construction and minimize the impact to California red-legged frog habitat; this goal includes locating access routes and construction areas outside of wetlands and riparian areas to the maximum extent practicable.

BIO-46. California Red-Legged Frog: Construction Scheduling. Caltrans 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 through May). Isolated pools that are important to maintain California red-legged frogs through the driest portions of the year would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the late summer and early fall. Habitat assessments, surveys, and technical assistance between Caltrans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during proposed action planning will be used to assist in scheduling work activities to avoid sensitive habitats during key times of year.

BIO-47. California Red-Legged Frog: Dewatering. If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes will be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.2 inch to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water will be released 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 proposed action.

BIO-48. California Red-Legged Frog: Water Impounding. Unless approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, water will not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.

BIO-49. California Red-Legged Frog: Invasive Wildlife Removal. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will permanently remove any individuals of invasive species, such as bullfrogs, crayfish, and centrarchid fishes, from the proposed project area to the maximum extent. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will be responsible for ensuring these activities are in compliance with the California Fish and Game Code.

BIO-50. California Red-Legged Frog: Calculation of Permanently Disturbed Area. If Caltrans demonstrates 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.

BIO-51. California Red-Legged Frog: Prevention of Disease Transfer. To ensure that diseases are not conveyed between work sites by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist, the fieldwork code of practice developed by the Declining Amphibian Task Force will be followed at all times.

BIO-52. California Red-Legged Frog: Herbicide Use Protocols. Caltrans will not use herbicides as the primary method to control invasive plants. However, if Caltrans determines the use of herbicides is the only feasible method for controlling invasive plants at a specific proposed action area, it will implement the following additional measures to protect the California red-legged frog:

a. Caltrans will not use herbicides during the breeding season for the California red-legged frog.

b. Caltrans will conduct surveys for the California red-legged frog immediately prior to the start of herbicide use. If found, the California red-legged frog will be relocated to suitable habitat far enough from the

proposed action area so that no direct contact with herbicide would occur.

c. Black locust 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 at an individual proposed action area.

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 done by qualified Caltrans staff or contractors to ensure that overspray is minimized, application is made in accordance with the label recommendations and 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 county 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 directly toward aquatic habitat. Caltrans 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-53. California Red-Legged Frog: Project Completion Report. Upon completion of the proposed action, Caltrans will ensure that a Project Completion Report is completed and provided to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ventura Field Office.

BIO-54. California Red-Legged Frog: Agency Permits/Agreements. Caltrans will obtain permits and agreements from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as applicable to project impacts.

BIO-55. California Red-Legged Frog: Shielding of Night Lighting. Project plans and specifications will ensure that temporary construction lighting and permanent night lighting are shielded from illuminating natural habitat outside of the work limits.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures Under CEQA for California Red-legged Frog

The following mitigation measure has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-56. Compensatory Mitigation: California Red-Legged Frog Habitat Restoration. Impacts to potential habitat for the California red-legged frog would be offset by site restoration within the project limits using native plant species, at offsite mitigation areas associated with compensatory mitigation for jurisdictional areas, or by purchasing mitigation credits from a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved conservation bank such as Sparling Ranch Conservation Bank. Compensatory mitigation would replace potential breeding, non-breeding aquatic, and upland habitat, in-kind.

The proposed action area will be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area, using locally collected plant materials to the extent practicable. Invasive plants will be controlled to the maximum extent practicable. This measure will be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities with the proposed action, unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans have determined that it is not feasible or practical.

BIO-57. Compensatory Mitigation: California Red-Legged Frog Handling of Special-Status Animals. Only biologists approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife will participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of the California tiger salamander and other special-status animals.

BIO-58. Compensatory Mitigation: California Red-Legged Frog Species Protection and Relocation Plan. Caltrans will prepare a species protection and relocation plan for approval by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to comply with applicable regulatory permits.

Compensatory Mitigation Measure Under CEQA for California Tiger Salamander

The measure numbers referenced in this paragraph have been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Some of the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures included in this document for the California red-legged frog would also help

protect the California tiger salamander from potential project-related impacts. Please refer to measures BIO-39 through BIO-58. In addition, the following mitigation measure for the California tiger salamander has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-59. Compensatory Mitigation: California Tiger Salamander. Compensatory mitigation would be required as a result of indirect and direct impacts to the California tiger salamander. Any impacts to this species would need to be fully mitigated in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife through the Biological Opinion and 2081 Incidental Take Permit processes, respectively. Upon completion of the project, Caltrans would restore temporarily impacted areas onsite with appropriate native vegetation.

Caltrans also anticipates permanently preserving suitable offsite habitat as compensation for the loss of California tiger salamander upland habitat. The amount of compensatory habitat is anticipated to be a minimum of 2-to-1 for permanent impacts and 1-to-1 for temporary impacts, but final compensatory mitigation would be determined in coordination with California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the permitting process.

Caltrans anticipates that California tiger salamander mitigation credits would be purchased from the Sparling Ranch Conservation Bank. Additionally, the inclusion of wildlife crossing improvements into this project has the potential to decrease road mortality, as well as the indirect benefit of reducing habitat fragmentation.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, Caltrans selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative as discussed in Section 1.6. Alternative 1 would not impact South-Central California coast steelhead or its potential habitat. Alternative 2 would potentially impact steelhead habitat for construction of additional bridge piers in Toro Creek. Therefore, the measures below for South-Central California coast steelhead would only have applied if Alternative 2 had been selected.

To minimize impacts to fish and other aquatic life, the proposed construction activities within El Toro Creek would occur during the non-rainy season when stream flows are at their lowest. Due to the low volume of summer flow (if any), a water diversion system may not be necessary. Therefore, steelhead may have continual access to the low stream channel during construction activities.

Implementation of the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures pertaining to jurisdictional areas, California red-legged frog, and California tiger salamander mentioned above as well as the additional measures listed below would serve to reduce potential project-related adverse effects from Alternative 2 (there are no anticipated adverse effects from Alternative 1) to South-Central California coast steelhead and its habitat. The measures below have been renumbered since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for South-Central California Coast Steelhead (Only if Alternative 2 was selected)

BIO-60. South-Central California Coast Steelhead: Biologist Qualifications. Caltrans would retain a National Marine Fisheries Service-approved biologist(s) with expertise in anadromous salmonid biology, including handling, collecting, and relocating salmonids; salmonid/habitat relationships; and biological monitoring of salmonids. To ensure that all biologists working on the project are qualified to conduct fish collections in a manner which minimizes all potential risks to steelhead, Caltrans would submit the resumes of candidate biologists to the National Marine Fisheries Service for review and approval prior to conducting the work. Electrofishing, if used, would be performed by a qualified biologist and conducted according to the National Marine Fisheries Service Guidelines for Electrofishing Waters Containing Salmonids Listed under the Endangered Species Act. The biological monitor(s) would monitor placement and removal of any required stream diversions/dewatering, and only the approved biologist would capture stranded steelhead and other native fish species and relocate them to suitable habitat, as appropriate. The approved biologist(s) would note the number of steelhead observed in the affected area, the number of steelhead relocated, and the date and time of the collection and relocation. Caltrans or the biologist would notify the National Marine Fisheries Service one week prior to capture activities in order to provide an opportunity for National Marine Fisheries Service staff to observe the activities.

BIO-61. South-Central California Coast Steelhead: Worker Awareness Training. Prior to construction, all personnel would participate in an environmental awareness training program conducted by a qualified biologist. The program shall include a description of steelhead, steelhead critical habitat, its legal/protected status, avoidance/minimization measures to be implemented during the project, and the implications of violating federal Endangered Species Act and permit conditions.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA for South-Central California Coast Steelhead (Only if Alternative 2 was selected)

BIO-62. Compensatory Mitigation: South-Central California Coast Steelhead - Dewatering. If pumps are needed to temporarily dewater the site, intakes would be screened according to the National Marine Fisheries Service's Pump Intake Screen Criteria for Water Drafting to prevent steelhead and other sensitive aquatic species from entering the pump system (typically wire mesh no larger than 5-millimeter). The pumps would be checked daily, at a minimum, to ensure a dry work environment and minimize adverse effects to aquatic species and habitats.

BIO-63. Compensatory Mitigation: South-Central California Coast Steelhead - Capture, Handling, and Relocation. Steelhead would be handled with extreme care and kept in water to the maximum extent possible during rescue activities. All captured fish would be kept in cool, shaded, aerated water protected from excessive noise, jostling, or overcrowding any time they are not in the stream, and fish would not be removed from this water except when released. To avoid predation, the biologists would have at least two containers and segregate young-of-year fish from larger age-classes and other potential aquatic predators. Captured steelhead would be relocated, as soon as possible, to a suitable in-stream location in which suitable habitat conditions are present to allow for adequate survival of transported fish and fish already present.

BIO-64. Compensatory Mitigation: South-Central California Coast Steelhead - Notification of Dead/Injured Steelhead to the National Marine Fisheries Service. If any salmonids are found dead or injured, the biological monitor would contact the National Marine Fisheries Service immediately. The purpose of the contact is to review the activities resulting in take, determine if additional protective measures are required, and to ensure appropriate collection and transfer of salmonid mortalities and tissue samples. All salmonid mortalities would be retained.

BIO-65. Compensatory Mitigation: South-Central California Coast Steelhead - Site Visits by (or Approved by) the National Marine Fisheries Service. Caltrans would allow any National Marine Fisheries Service employee(s) or any other person(s) designated by the National Marine Fisheries Service, to accompany field personnel to visit the project site during activities.

BIO-66. Compensatory Mitigation: South-Central California Coast Steelhead - Exclusion of Fill Material from Waterways. Fill material for cofferdams/in-stream diversions would be fully confined with the use of plastic sheeting, sandbags, or with other non-porous containment methods, such that sediment does not come in contact with stream flow or in direct contact with the natural streambed. All loose fill material for cofferdams or access ramps would be completely removed from the channel by October 31.

BIO-67. Compensatory Mitigation: South-Central California Coast Steelhead - Creek Restoration; Written Report to the National Marine Fisheries Service. Once construction is completed, all project-introduced material (pipe, gravel, cofferdam, etc.) would be removed, leaving the creek as it was before construction. Excess materials would be disposed of at an appropriate disposal site. Caltrans must provide a written report to the National Marine Fisheries Service by January 15 of the year following construction of the project. The report must contain, at a minimum, the following information:

a. Project Construction and Fish Relocation Report -- The report(s) must include the dates construction began and was completed; a discussion of design compliance including: vegetation installation, and post-construction longitudinal profile and cross sections; a discussion of any unanticipated effects or unanticipated levels of effects on salmonids, including a description of any and all measures taken to minimize those unanticipated effects and a statement as to whether or not the unanticipated effects had any effect on Endangered Species Act-listed fish; the number of salmonids killed or injured during the project action; and photographs taken before, during, and after the activity from photo reference points.

b. Fish Relocation -- The report must include a description of the location from which fish were removed and the release site including photographs; the date and time of the relocation effort; a description of the equipment and methods used to collect, hold, and transport salmonids; if an electrofisher was used for fish collection, a copy of the logbook must be included; the number of fish relocated by species; the number of fish injured or killed by species and a brief narrative of the circumstances surrounding Endangered Species Act-listed fish injuries or mortalities; and a description of any problems which may have arisen during the relocation activities and a statement as to whether or not the activities had any unforeseen effects.

c. Post-Construction Vegetation Monitoring and Reporting – Caltrans must develop and submit for National Marine Fisheries Service's review a plan to assess the success of revegetation of the site. A draft of the revegetation monitoring plan must be submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service for review and approval prior to the beginning of the in-stream work season. Reports documenting post-project conditions of vegetation installed at the site would be prepared and submitted annually for the first five years following project completion, unless the site is documented to be performing poorly, then monitoring requirements would be extended. Reports would document vegetation health and survivorship and percent cover, natural recruitment of native vegetation (if any), and any maintenance or replanting needs. Photographs must be included. If poor establishment is documented,

the report must include recommendations to address the source of the performance problems.

Tricolored Blackbird

Tricolored blackbird is not expected to be impacted by the proposed project. Therefore, no avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are proposed for this species.

Compensatory Mitigation Measure under CEQA for Monarch Butterfly

The following measure has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-68. Compensatory Mitigation: Monarch Butterfly Habitat Restoration. Grassland and scrub habitats that are temporarily impacted during construction will be replaced onsite using a seed mixture containing native grass species and locally present, native flowering species with a one-year plant establishment period.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Southwestern Pond Turtle

The following avoidance and minimization measures for the southwestern pond turtle have been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-69. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Preconstruction Surveys. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved southwestern pond turtle biologist will conduct a preconstruction survey of all portions of the project site for each life stage as appropriate to the season three times before the onset of work activities following the guidance from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) (2020; available at: https://www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy/docs/Appendix_N_VES_Protocol_April_2020.pdf).

a. Conduct one survey no more than 48 hours before the onset of work activities ideally when weather conditions are suitable to detect basking southwestern pond turtles.

b. Conduct one to two additional surveys prior to the onset of work activities with at least 3 days between surveys during suitable weather conditions during the southwestern pond turtle's active season generally March 1 to September 30 (e.g., first 4 months best) when air temperatures regularly exceed 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

BIO-70. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Halt Work if Individuals Likely to be Harmed. 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 Service-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.

BIO-71. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Night Work Restrictions. 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 spill over into occupied or assumed occupied habitat outside the work area.

BIO-72. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Onsite Biologist. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will be present at the work site until all southwestern pond turtles have been relocated out of harm's way. The biologist will also conduct inspections of installed exclusion fencing and ensure that all workers have received Worker Environmental Awareness Training and that initial ground disturbance of habitat (5 inches of topsoil [12 cm]) is completed. After this time, Caltrans may designate a person to monitor onsite compliance with all minimization measures. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will ensure that this monitor receives the Worker Environmental Awareness Training in the identification of southwestern pond turtles.

BIO-73. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Construction Equipment Areas. To the extent feasible, no equipment will be left onsite 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approves, the area must be checked for southwestern pond turtles before the equipment is moved.

BIO-74. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Construction Vehicle Speed and Areas. 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.

BIO-75 Southwestern Pond Turtle: Basking Structures. After construction, Caltrans 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). See Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Guidance for Conserving Oregon's Native Turtles including Best Management Practices (2015, pp. 31-35) for additional information on installing basking structures (available at: https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/docs/ODFW_Turtle_BMPs_March_2015.pdf).

BIO-76. Southwestern Pond Turtle: No Pets. 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.

BIO-77. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Cover Holes and Trenches. 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-to-1 slope). The Service-approved biologist or project monitor will inspect holes, trenches, and other areas that may provide refugia for the southwestern pond turtles each morning.

Compensatory Mitigation Measure under CEQA for Southwestern Pond Turtle

The following mitigation measure for the southwestern pond turtle was added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-78. Compensatory Mitigation: Southwestern Pond Turtle Habitat Mitigation Plan. If the southwestern pond turtle receives federal listing under the federal Endangered Species Act, and if the project causes permanent impacts to suitable aquatic or upland southwestern pond turtle habitat, Caltrans will submit an appropriate habitat mitigation proposal or purchase of credits in an approved conservation bank that fully offsets the proposed projects effects to the species. If appropriate, this may include a restoration, monitoring, and management plan, which will be developed in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The proposal must be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prior to initial ground disturbance. The project proponent will strive to provide mitigation within the same or nearby watershed in which the impact takes place. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will consider the proximity of proposed mitigation in relation to the impacts of a project.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Crotch Bumble Bee

The following avoidance and minimization measures for Crotch bumble bee have been renumbered since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-79. Crotch Bumble Bee: Design Phase Surveys and Agency Coordination. During the design phase, focused bumble bee surveys will be conducted to determine if Crotch bumble bee occurs in the project area. If Crotch bumble bee is identified in the project area, Caltrans will coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and, if necessary, a 2081 Incidental Take Permit will be acquired.

BIO-80. Crotch Bumble Bee: Preconstruction Surveys for Nesting Bees. Surveys will occur prior to ground disturbance for nesting bumble bees. No work will occur within 50 feet of an active Crotch bumble bee nest unless approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

BIO-81. Crotch Bumble Bee: Worker Awareness Training. A Worker Environmental Awareness Training will be provided for all construction personnel prior to the start of any ground disturbance or vegetation removal to discuss Crotch bumble bee identification, ecology, habitat, and avoidance and minimization measures.

BIO-82. Crotch Bumble Bee: Flowering Plant Inspection. Blooming flowering plants that are scoped for removal would be inspected by a qualified biologist immediately prior to work to ensure that no bumble bees are on or near the plant. If a bumble bee is identified on or adjacent to vegetation that is to be removed, work in that area would not proceed until the bumble bee leaves the area of its own accord.

BIO-83. Crotch Bumble Bee: Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing shall be installed, as appropriate, around Crotch bumble bee feeding and nesting habitat to be avoided. Environmentally Sensitive Areas shall be noted on design plans and delineated in the field prior to the start of construction activities.

Compensatory Mitigation Measure under CEQA for Crotch Bumble Bee

The following mitigation measure will be implemented if Crotch bumble bees are discovered in the project impact areas during preconstruction surveys prescribed in either Measure BIO-79 or BIO-80.

BIO-84. Compensatory Mitigation: Crotch Bumble Bee Replacement of Impacted Habitat. If Crotch bumble bees are discovered in the project impact areas during preconstruction surveys, areas of suitable Crotch bumble bee habitat that are temporarily impacted during construction will be replaced onsite at a minimum ratio of 1 to 1.

2.3.6 Invasive Species

Regulatory Setting

On February 3, 1999, President William J. Clinton signed Executive Oder 13112 requiring federal agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. The order defines invasive species as “any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” Federal Highway Administration guidance issued August 10, 1999 directs the use of the State’s invasive species list, maintained by the California Invasive Species Council to define the invasive species that must be considered as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for a proposed project.

Affected Environment

Information in this section comes from the Natural Environment Study (with Preliminary Jurisdictional Delineation report) dated October 2023.

The Natural Environment Study for the project notes that invasive plant species and noxious weeds are abundant throughout the project area and in the Biological Study Area. Sixty-five terrestrial plant species observed by Caltrans biologists in the Biological Study Area are listed as invasive in the California Invasive Plant Council's (Cal-IPC) online database. This constitutes roughly 16 percent of all vascular plants observed in the area. Eight of these species are considered "High" (of high concern) on Cal-IPC's list: hottentot fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*), cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*), French broom (*Genista monspessulana*), Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), foxtail brome (*Bromus rubens*), and pampas grass (*Cortaderia jubata*). Another 30 species observed in the Biological Study Area are considered "Moderate," and 27 species are considered "Limited."

Nine of these species are also on the California Department of Food and Agriculture's noxious weed list: bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), cape ivy, Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*), perennial pepperweed, field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), French broom, Kikuyu grass (*Cenchrus clandestinus*), and pampas grass. No invasive aquatic plant species were observed in the Biological Study Area.

Non-native wildlife was observed during surveys in the Biological Study Area, but none of the observed species are considered invasive. Though not observed, the American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) is expected to occur in the ponds and potentially other aquatic habitats, and wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*) may occur throughout the Biological Study Area.

Environmental Consequences

In compliance with the Executive Order on Invasive Species (Executive Order 13112) and guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, the landscaping and erosion control included in the project would not use plant species listed as invasive. None of the species on the California list of invasive species is used by Caltrans for erosion control or landscaping.

All equipment and materials would be inspected for the presence of invasive species and cleaned if necessary. In areas of particular sensitivity, extra precautions would be taken if invasive species are found in or next to the construction areas. These include the inspection and cleaning of construction equipment and eradication strategies to be implemented should an invasion occur.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The measures in this section have been renumbered since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The following avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented to avoid the spread of invasive plants and noxious weeds.

BIO-85. Invasive Plant Species Removal. As part of the project's landscaping, highly invasive and noxious weeds would be removed and replaced by California native plants suitable for the area (and locally collected, if possible).

BIO-86. Timing of Weed Removal. Weeds designated for removal would be removed prior to any soil disturbance.

BIO-87. Certification of Weed- and Disease-Free Materials. Nursery stock and imported soil would be certified weed- and disease-free.

BIO-88. Use of Clean Equipment. Construction equipment would be inspected and cleaned if necessary to ensure it is free of soil containing seeds and/or invasive plant material prior to entering the construction sites.

BIO-89. Invasive Aquatic Wildlife Removal. Any invasive aquatic wildlife species observed within the project limits would be permanently removed by the project's monitoring biologist(s), as feasible.

Please refer to Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation measure BIO-15 (Section 2.3.2) and measures BIO-45, BIO-46, BIO-47, BIO-58, BIO-61, and BIO-62 (Section 2.3.5), for additional details on measures to address invasive plant and animal species.

2.3.7 Cumulative Impacts

Please note: Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA Implementing Regulations that were contained in 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1500 et seq. have been removed. Included in the removal was Section 1508 that defined cumulative impacts. However, consideration of cumulative impacts was included in the analyses for the draft environmental document, prior to the removal of the CEQ regulations, and therefore has been retained in the final environmental document for informational purposes only.

Regulatory Setting

Cumulative impacts are those that result from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, combined with the potential impacts of the proposed project. A cumulative effect assessment looks at the collective impacts posed by individual land use plans and projects. Cumulative impacts

can result from individually minor but collectively substantial impacts taking place over a period of time.

Cumulative impacts to resources in the project area may result from residential, commercial, industrial, and highway development, as well as from agricultural development and the conversion to more intensive agricultural cultivation. These land use activities can degrade habitat and species diversity through consequences such as displacement and fragmentation of habitats and populations, altering of hydrology, contamination, erosion, sedimentation, disruption of migration corridors, changes in water quality, and introduction or promotion of predators. They can also contribute to potential community impacts identified for the project, such as change in community character, traffic patterns, housing availability, and employment.

California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15130 describes when a cumulative impact analysis is necessary and what elements are necessary for an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts.

Affected Environment

This section addresses the potential for the proposed project to contribute to regional cumulative impacts to the resources listed below. Information in this section comes from the project Cumulative Impact Analysis Technical Report dated October 2023. The cumulative impact analysis was conducted in accordance with the eight-step cumulative impact analysis methodology developed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Based on reporting in the technical studies conducted for the project, the Cumulative Impact Analysis report identified the following resources as potentially being at risk of adverse cumulative environmental effects when considered in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the region (the South-Central California coast steelhead and southwestern pond turtle discussions have been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment):

- Biological Resources
    - Jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat
    - California red-legged frog
    - California tiger salamander
    - South-Central California coast steelhead (Alternative 2 only)
    - Southwestern pond turtle
    - Sensitive Natural Communities and Plant Species

        - Coast Live Oak Woodland and coast live oak trees
        - Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine trees
    - Yadon's piperia
- Visual/Aesthetic Resources
- Paleontological Resources

Biological Resources

Because a cumulative impact analysis must take into account other projects within the region, the Resource Study Area (RSA) discussed for each of the biological resources listed above is much larger than the project Biological Study Area. (For this project, the Biological Study Area is identical to the project's Area of Potential Impacts, i.e., it is limited to the immediate areas of proposed construction). The Resource Study Areas for the resources listed above are shown in Figures 2.3.7.1 through 2.3.7.5.

Jurisdictional Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Habitat

The Resource Study Area for jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat for this project includes the Canyon del Rey and El Toro Creek watersheds, as well as the Monterey Peninsula portion of the Monterey Bay watershed (see Figure 2.3.7.1).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis noted that over the past few decades, the watersheds composing the wetlands/other waters/riparian habitat Resource Study Area for this project have undergone substantial changes due to land conversion for agricultural uses, residential development, and other facets of urbanization. As a result, there has been large-scale loss or degradation of wetlands and the ecological functions they support in the region, and many of the remaining wetlands in the area are in poor health. This situation has led to natural resources regulatory agencies requiring restoration and revegetation measures to offset any further depletion of wetlands and riparian habitats in projects within their respective jurisdictions.

Figure 2.3.7.1 California Red-Legged Frog and Jurisdictional Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Habitat Resource Study Area

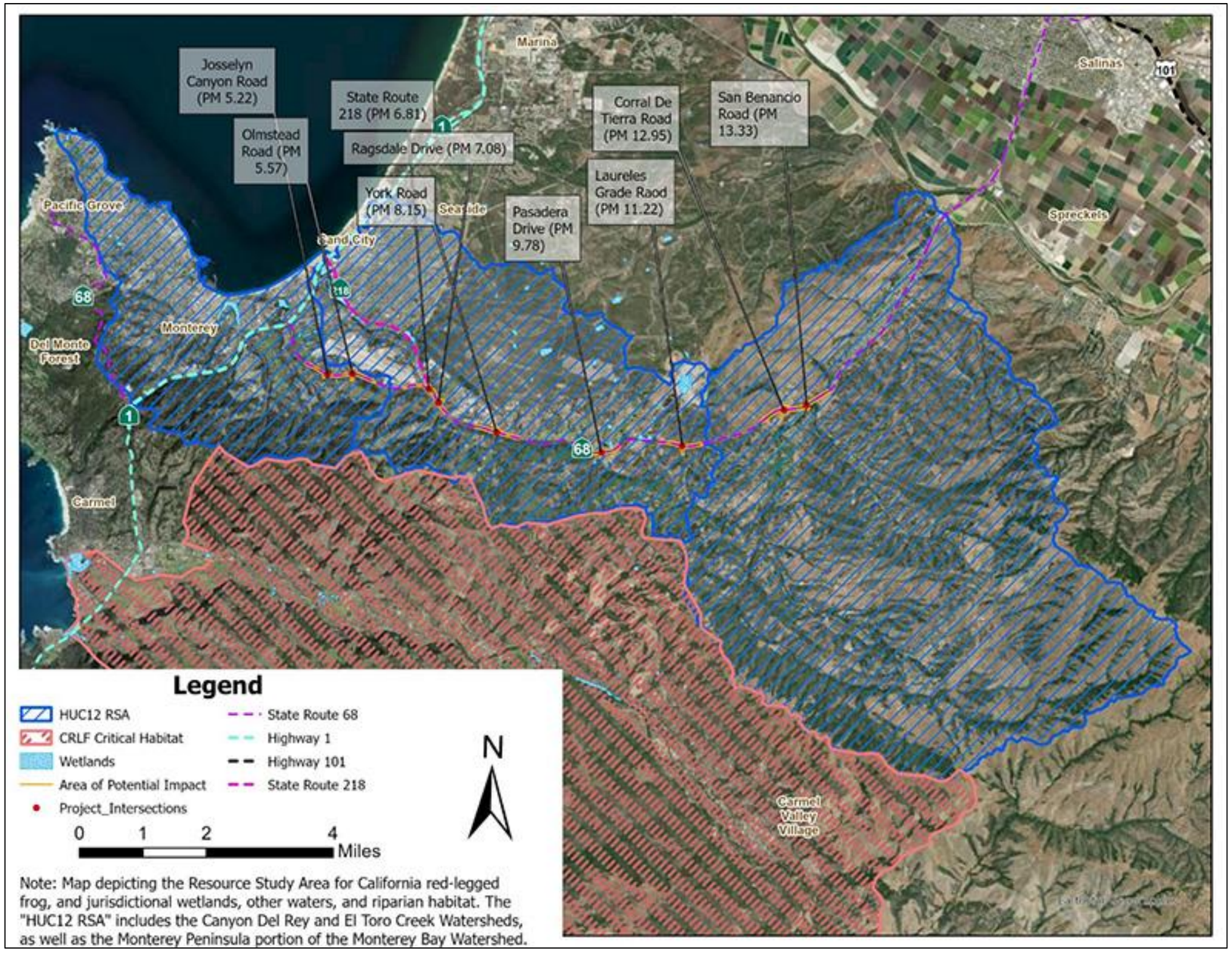
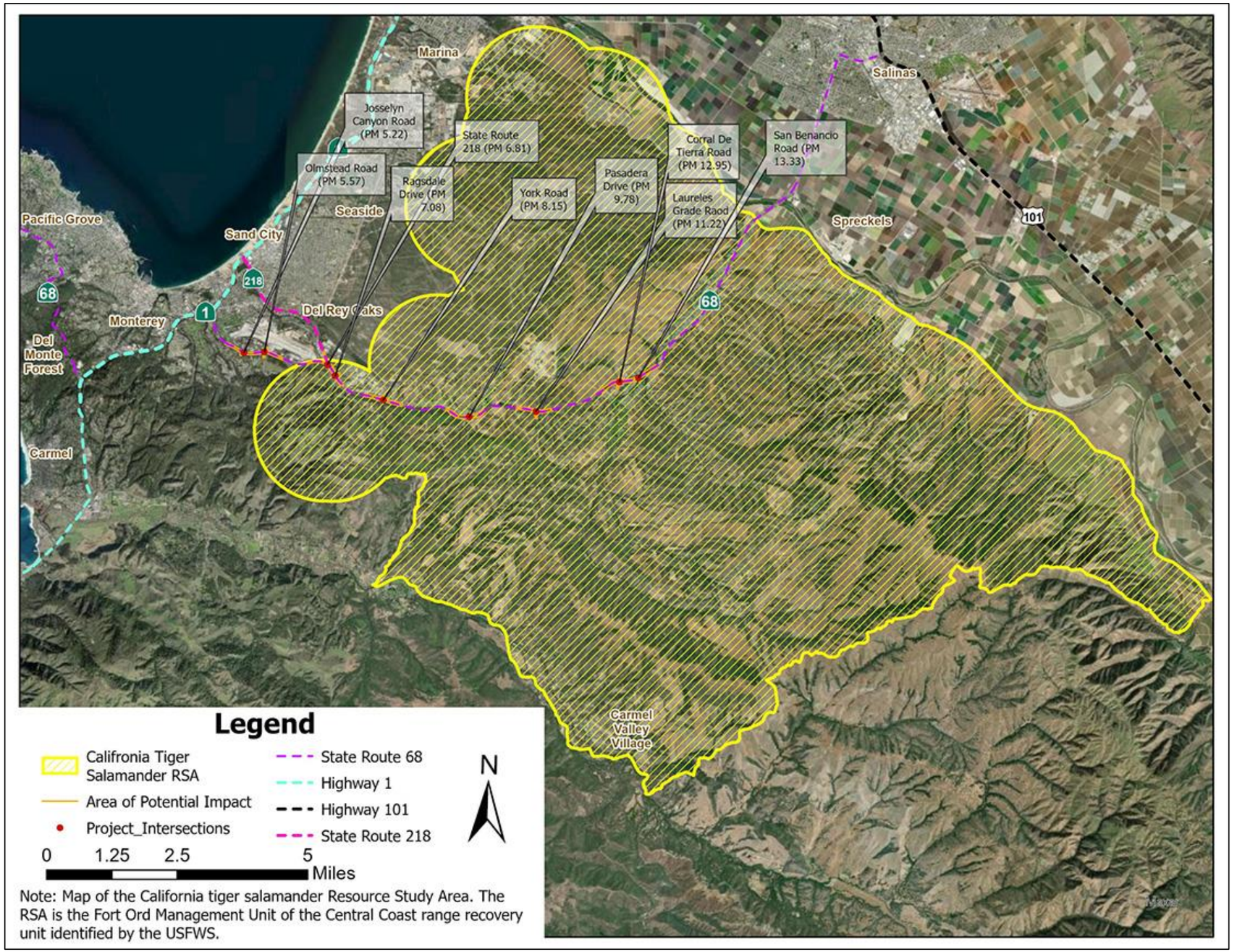


Figure 2.3.7.2 California Tiger Salamander Resource Study Area



Note: Map of the California tiger salamander Resource Study Area. The RSA is the Fort Ord Management Unit of the Central Coast range recovery unit identified by the USFWS.

Figure 2.3.7.3 South-Central California Coast Steelhead Resource Study Area

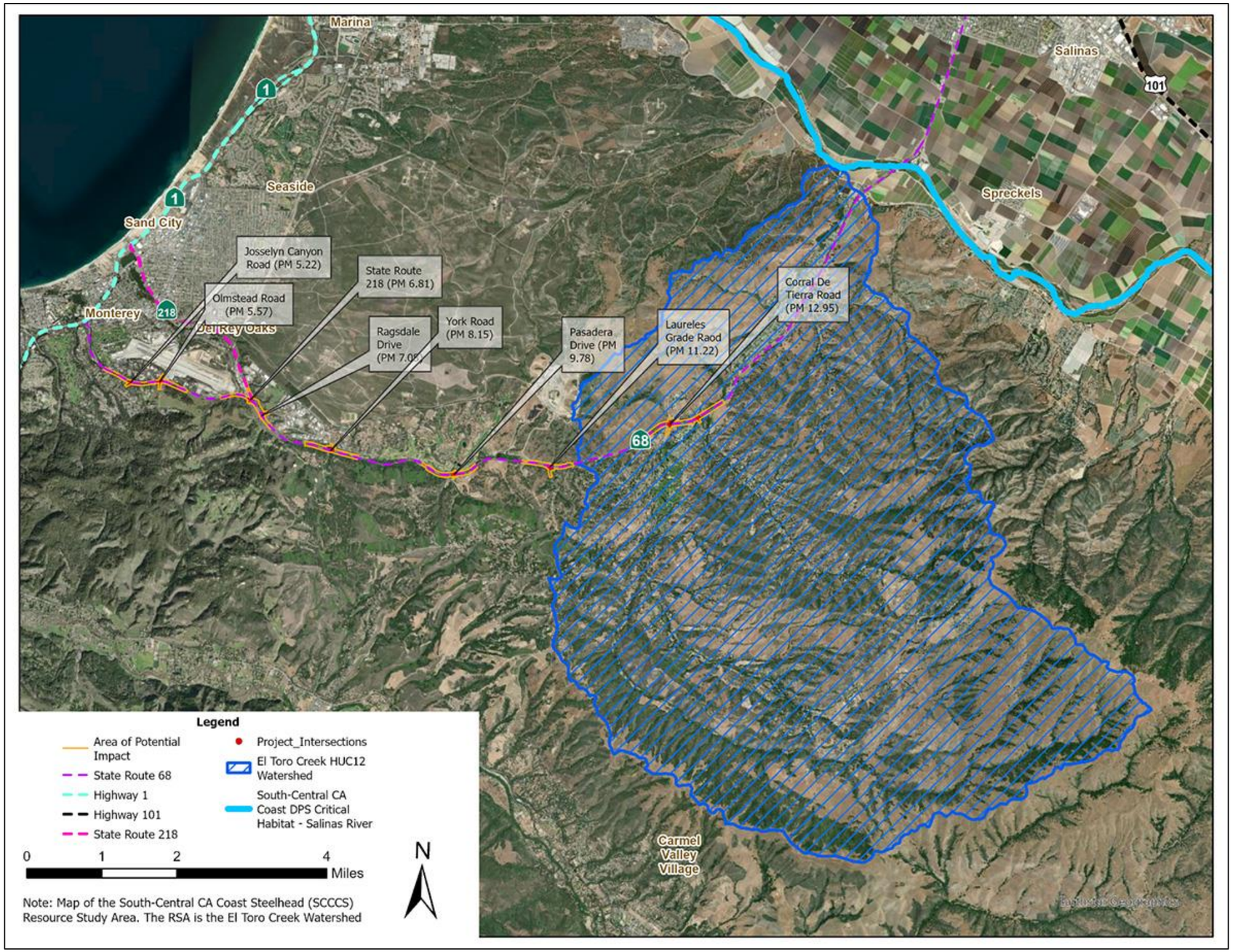
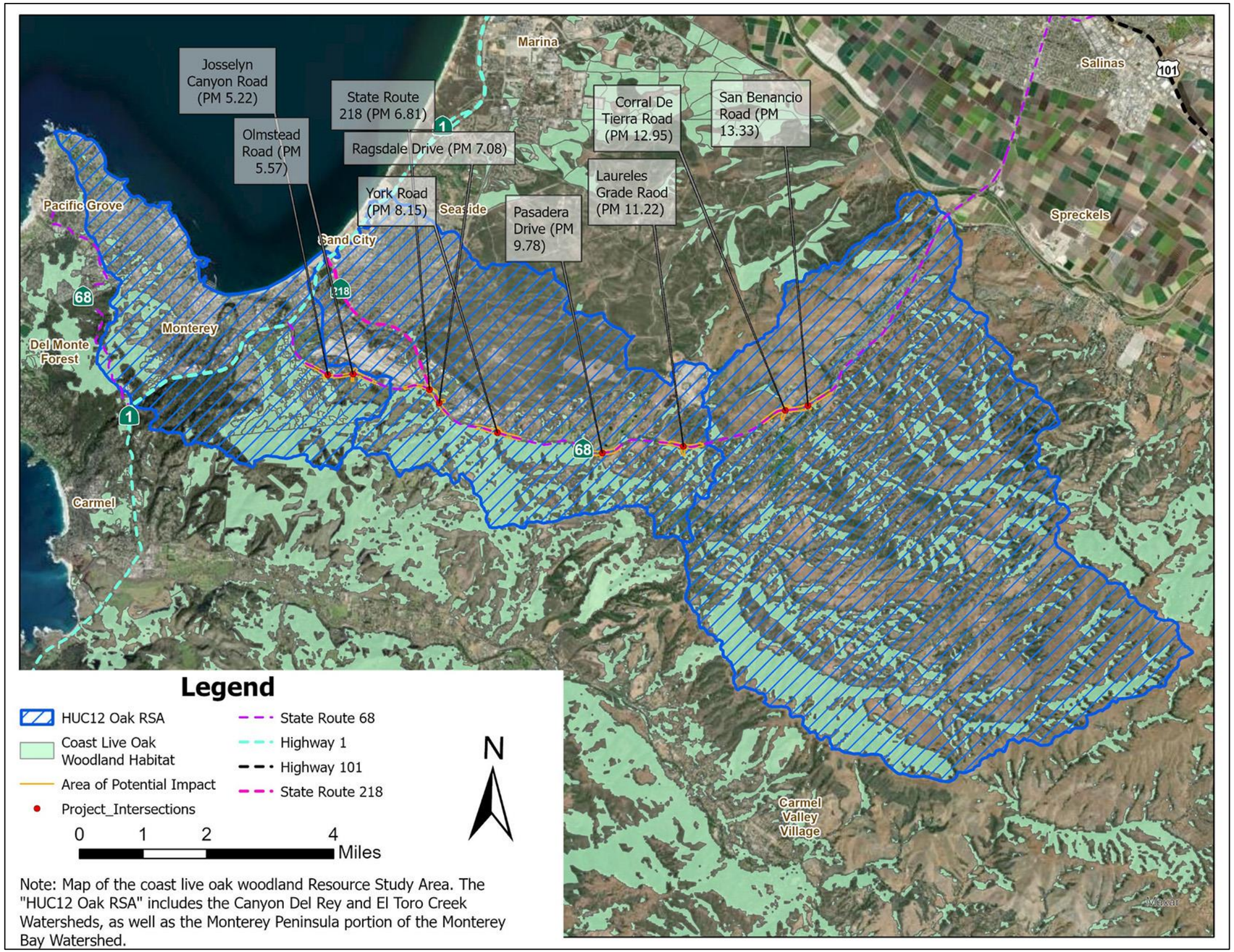
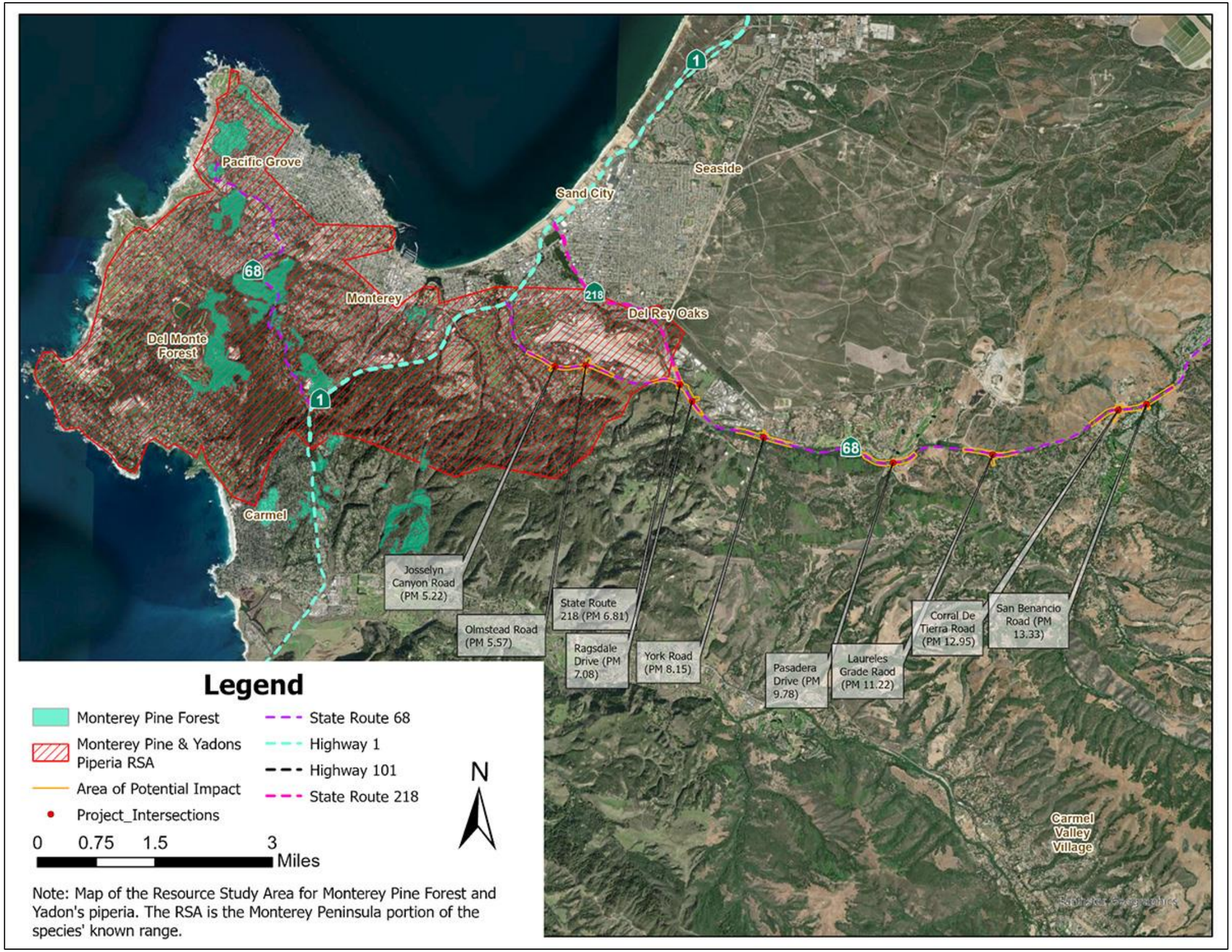


Figure 2.3.7.4 Coast Live Oak Woodland Habitat Resource Study Area



Note: Map of the coast live oak woodland Resource Study Area. The "HUC12 Oak RSA" includes the Canyon Del Rey and El Toro Creek Watersheds, as well as the Monterey Peninsula portion of the Monterey Bay Watershed.

Figure 2.3.7.5 Monterey Pine Forest Habitat and Yadon's Piperia Resource Study Area



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California Red-Legged Frog

The project's Resource Study Area for the California red-legged frog is identical to that for jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat (see Figure 2.3.7.1).

The California red-legged frog is listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act and is a State of California Species of Special Concern. This species inhabits coastal drainages and was once found from Marin County southward to northern Baja California but has been extirpated from 70 percent of its historic range. Main causes of this decline include overharvesting in the 19th century, habitat loss, and predation and competition from introduced species such as the American bullfrog. Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties support the largest remaining populations within California. The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that, overall, the California red-legged frog population is considered to be in a state of poor and declining health.

California Tiger Salamander

The project Resource Study Area for the California tiger salamander is the Fort Ord Management Unit of the Central Coast Range recovery unit identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (see Figure 2.3.7.2).

The Central California Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of this species was listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 2004, and the entire species was State listed as Threatened throughout its range by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in 2010. The Central California Distinct Population Segment was once widely found in the valleys and foothills around the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers, and along the Central California coast. Though still somewhat widely distributed, the Central California Distinct Population Segment is currently known only from scattered and limited pockets within its overall distribution range. The main causes of decline include habitat loss and fragmentation, and encroachment of non-native predators.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that in the California tiger salamander Resource Study Area for this project, habitat fragmentation—including in and near the Biological Study Area—is widespread, resulting in ongoing species decline. Though the Fort Ord Management Unit contains breeding ponds and suitable upland habitat, increasing urbanization surrounding these areas has limited the ability for the species to disperse into other breeding areas.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead

This project's Resource Study Area for South-Central California coast steelhead is the El Toro Creek watershed (see Figure 2.3.7.3).

The South-Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment of steelhead trout is listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act and is a State of California Species of Special Concern. Once abundant in Southern and Central California coastal drainages, this population experienced rapid decline in the mid- and late 20th century due to massive post-war urbanization and water development projects that diverted or otherwise altered aquatic habitat. Periods of extended drought have

brought additional challenges. Though habitat restoration and water conservation projects to benefit steelhead continue to be pursued, the South-Central California coast steelhead population is considered to be in a state of poor health.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

This paragraph was added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The southwestern pond turtle shares jurisdictional habitats and seasonal behaviors with other species such as the California red-legged frog for which the project requires consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Therefore, the southwestern pond turtle would have the same Resource Study Area as the California red-legged frog. Potential aquatic habitat for the southwestern pond turtle includes any of the ponds (natural or human-made) near the Biological Study Area such as golf course ponds. Though mostly an aquatic species, pond turtles do use upland habitat for refuge and nesting, which could be in uplands adjacent to ponds, though mostly only in areas that are not heavily used or maintained.

Sensitive Natural Communities and Plant Species

Coast Live Oak Woodland and Coast Live Oak Trees: The Resource Study Area for the Coast Live Oak Woodland natural community and coast live oak trees includes the Canyon del Rey and El Toro Creek watersheds, as well as the Monterey Peninsula portion of the Monterey Bay watershed (see Figure 2.3.7.4).

Coast Live Oak Woodland is common in coastal California and is not considered a sensitive natural community by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. This natural community and species have been adversely impacted as the region has experienced land use changes such as agricultural expansion and urban development, fire suppression practices that have disrupted the natural fire ecology of oak woodlands, and effects from grazing and overgrazing. Sudden Oak Death disease is another concern that has emerged over the past two decades. However, the overall health of Coast Live Oak Woodland and coast live oak trees within the project Resource Study Area is considered good.

Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey Pine Trees: The project Resource Study Area for the Monterey Pine Forest natural community and Monterey pine trees is the Monterey Peninsula portion of this species' native range (see Figure 2.3.7.5).

Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland is a sensitive natural community within its natural range of three discrete locations in California (the Monterey Peninsula, Año Nuevo, and Cambria). The Monterey pine population on the Monterey Peninsula has been fragmented by extensive agricultural conversion and residential, urban, and recreational development since the 19th century, with the result that currently only one-half of the historical extent of Monterey pine forest in the area remains undeveloped. The status of native Monterey pine stands on the Monterey Peninsula is considered stable due to preservation, regulation, and revegetation efforts but threats, including urban development, genetic contamination, pine pitch canker disease, and forest fragmentation, remain.

Yadon's Piperia

The project Resource Study Area for Yadon's piperia is identical to that for Monterey Pine Forest Habitat (see Figure 2.3.7.5).

This species is listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act and is listed by the California Native Plant Society as California Rare Plant Rank 1B.1 (plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; seriously threatened in California). Yadon's piperia is endemic to northern Monterey County and occupies a limited range on the Monterey Peninsula, on the Prunedale Hills, and as a small, isolated population in the Big Sur area. The main cause of decline in this species is habitat loss due to development. Other concerns include herbivory, competition from invasive plant species, and possibly the effects of fire exclusion. The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that this species is in a state of declining health.

Visual/Aesthetic Resources

The project's Resource Study Area for Visual Resources/Aesthetics is the area included within a 500-foot buffer around State Route 68 through the project limits, with the western end of the Resource Study Area at the State Route 1/State Route 68 interchange, and the eastern end at the River Road/Reservation Road/State Route 68 interchange.

The project intersections sit within the Monterey County-designated State Route 68 Scenic Corridor, an attractive rural/semi-rural landscape that has experienced some development over the past century but retains much of its natural beauty, which is prized by residents and visitors alike. The area is bounded by the Salinas Valley to the east and Monterey Bay to the west, while the hilly open space of the former Fort Ord Military Reservation occupies much of the area's northern edge. To the south, steep mountain ridges separate the State Route 68 corridor from Carmel Valley. The project Visual Impact Assessment report notes that the built environment is more noticeable along the western end of the State Route 68 corridor, where the proposed intersection improvements would appear more consistent with existing development.

Paleontological Resources

The project's Resource Study Area for paleontological resources includes all areas within the southern portion of the Coast Ranges Geomorphic Province where geologic units with High Paleontological Potential form outcrops (see Table 2.2.4.1). These areas of outcrop extend approximately from the San Francisco Bay south to the Santa Ynez Valley. In particular, the Monterey Formation, Santa Margarita Formation, unnamed continental deposits, and/or coastal terrace deposits have high potential for construction crews to encounter sensitive paleontological resources.

Environmental Consequences

Biological Resources

Jurisdictional Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Habitat

The project has the potential to impact jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (see Table 2.3.1.5).

The following paragraphs discussing Alternative 1 have been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Alternative 1 could affect:

- An estimated one-half acre of wetlands and other waters of the U.S. (streams) under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (permanent impacts), and about 1 acre of temporary impacts to these jurisdictional waters.
- About two-tenths of an acre of stream habitat and seven-tenths of an acre of riparian and streambank habitat under California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction (permanent impacts), and about 1 acre and a half of these stream habitat types (temporary impacts).
- Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdiction overlaps most of the above and about 0.05 acre of stormwater ditches would be permanently impacted, and 0.032 acre of ditches would be temporarily impacted.

The following paragraphs discussing Alternative 2 have been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Overall, Alternative 2 would have larger amounts of impacts to jurisdictional types of habitats than Alternative 1, including:

- An estimated 0.65 acre of wetlands other waters of the U.S. (streams) under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may be permanently impacted, and about 2.20 acres of these jurisdictional waters would be temporarily impacted.
- About one-half acre of stream habitat and 1.36 acres of riparian and streambank habitat under California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction (permanent impacts), and about 10.45 acres of temporary impacts to these stream habitat types.
- Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdiction overlaps most of the above and about 0.076 acre of stormwater ditches would be permanently impacted, and 0.05 acre of ditches would be temporarily impacted.

Table 2.3.1.5 provides the total habitat acreage for these habitat types in the Biological Study Area of the project.

Temporary impacts would result mostly from clearing and grading for cut or fill slopes and temporary construction access; permanent impacts are where habitat would be displaced from construction for various project features, such as road widening or retaining walls.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis reported on 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, many of which are transportation or other public works projects. The analysis found that 18 of those projects could potentially result in adverse impacts to jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat. As a result, the Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that the proposed project could be expected to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Resource Study Area for this habitat type.

California Red-Legged Frog

The project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent impacts to California red-legged frog aquatic breeding habitat and adjacent upland riparian habitat. Short-term, direct impacts could include injury or mortality to California red-legged frogs during vegetation clearing and grading or during diversion/dewatering activities. Indirect impacts, which could be temporary or long-term, may include stress from capture and relocation (if necessary), erosion and sedimentation affecting water quality, increased habitat fragmentation due to intersection widening, or longer distances that individual frogs would have to travel to seek shelter and new breeding areas. Impacts would be greater under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1, due to the former's larger footprint and greater encroachment into jurisdictional features and suitable habitat for this species.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, 14 could potentially result in adverse impacts to the California red-legged frog. While the potential for considerable impacts to this species from the current project is expected to be low, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the California red-legged frog. The Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that the project could be expected to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to the California red-legged frog when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Resource Study Area for this species.

California Tiger Salamander

The project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent impacts to the California tiger salamander. Short-term, direct impacts could include injury or mortality to this species due to crushing or burrow disturbance during vegetation clearing and grading. Indirect impacts, which could be temporary or long term, may include changes in normal feeding and sheltering behavior patterns due to construction-related noise, vibration, and night lighting; stress from capture and relocation (if necessary); and inability to access suitable upland habitat due to (1) construction in temporary impact areas, prior to habitat restoration or (2) installation of temporary tiger salamander exclusionary fencing around construction areas preventing travel to seek shelter or food resources. Impacts would be greater under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1, due to the former's larger footprint and greater encroachment into suitable habitat for this species.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, 13 could potentially result in adverse impacts to the California tiger salamander. Though the risk of injury or mortality to this species from this project is considered low, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the California tiger salamander. The Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that the project could be expected to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to the California tiger salamander when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Resource Study Area for this species.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead

Alternative 2 of the project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent impacts to South-Central California coast steelhead. Alternative 1 would not result in impacts to this species. Under Alternative 2, widening of the State Route 68 bridge over El Toro Creek would require the installation of four new piers in the creek channel. Because stream diversion and dewatering may be necessary, depending on flow conditions during construction, the potential exists for direct impacts such as individual steelhead becoming stuck in dewatering pumps or being exposed to increased predation from foraging birds and/or mammals while confined to landlocked pools. Indirect impacts would include the potential for adverse effects to water quality downstream of the bridge construction site because of sediment deposition.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, four of these could potentially result in adverse impacts to South-Central California coast steelhead. Though the risk of injury or mortality to this species from this project is considered low for Alternative 2, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination for Alternative 2 was that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, South-Central California coast steelhead. The Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that Alternative 2 of the project could be expected to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to South-Central California coast steelhead when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Resource Study Area for this species. However, the selected preferred alternative, Alternative 1, would have no effect on this species.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The southwestern pond turtle shares jurisdictional habitats and seasonal behaviors with other species such as the California red-legged frog for which the project requires consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Therefore, southwestern pond turtle would have the same Resource Study Area as California red-legged frog. Cumulative impacts of the project to this species are consistent with those of habitats of jurisdictional wetlands and other waters, riparian, oak woodland and coast live oak, as well as those of the California red-legged frog.

Sensitive Natural Communities and Plant Species

Coast Live Oak Woodland and Coast Live Oak Trees: The project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent impacts to coast live oak woodlands and coast live oak trees under both Build Alternatives. Short-term, direct impacts could include clearing and grading for cut/fill slopes, and preparation and use of temporary construction access areas. Permanent, direct impacts would include habitat displacement from the construction of project features, such as retaining walls, and road widening activity. Potential temporary or permanent indirect impacts could include root

compaction, erosion, introduction or spread of pathogens or invasive plant species, and post-construction road maintenance actions.

The potential for disturbance of oaks and oak woodland is higher under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1 because of the former's larger construction footprint. According to the Natural Environment Study, Alternative 1 may result in impacts to approximately 1,100 to 1,200 coast live oaks (900 temporary and 300 permanent impacts), and Alternative 2 could result in impacts to approximately 2,600 to 2,700 coast live oaks (2,200 temporary and 500 permanent impacts).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, 17 could potentially result in adverse impacts to coast live oak woodlands and coast live oak trees. Though the project would entail loss of oak trees in oak woodland habitats, the project is not expected to substantially degrade the quality or quantity of coast live oak woodland habitat in the Resource Study Area from a biological perspective, due to the abundance and overall good health of this species and natural community in the ecoregion. Nevertheless, the Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that the project could potentially contribute to an adverse cumulative impact on coast live oak woodlands and coast live oak trees when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the oak woodland Resource Study Area.

Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey Pine Trees: The project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent impacts to the Monterey Pine Forest natural community and Monterey pine trees under both Build Alternatives. Short-term, direct impacts could include clearing and grading for cut/fill slopes, and preparation and use of temporary construction access areas. Permanent, direct impacts would include habitat displacement from the construction of project features, such as retaining walls, and road widening activity. Potential temporary or permanent indirect impacts could include root compaction, erosion, introduction or spread of pathogens or invasive plant species, and post-construction road maintenance actions.

The potential for disturbance of Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine trees is higher under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1 because of the former's larger construction footprint. According to the Natural Environment Study, Alternative 1 could result in impacts to approximately 300 to 400 Monterey pines (200 temporary and 200 permanent impacts), and Alternative 2 could result in impacts to approximately 800 to 900 Monterey pines (650 temporary and 250 permanent impacts).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, nine of these could potentially result in adverse impacts to the Monterey Pine Forest natural community and Monterey pine trees. Though the anticipated impacts from the project are adjacent to an existing highway corridor in existing, semi-rural developed areas, and therefore have already been impacted by road, commercial, and residential development, the Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that the project could potentially contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine trees

when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine tree Resource Study Area.

Yadon's Piperia

The project has the potential to result in temporary, but not permanent, impacts to Yadon's piperia plants under both Build Alternatives. Both Build Alternatives could cause permanent and temporary impacts to potentially suitable habitat for this species, though no designated critical habitat would be affected because none exists within the Biological Study Area. The potential for adverse impacts to this species and its habitat is higher under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1, due to the former's larger footprint and greater disturbance of potentially suitable habitat. Alternative 1 may result in up to 0.136 acre of temporary impacts and no permanent impacts to suitable Yadon's piperia habitat, while Alternative 2 could result in up to 1.987 acres of temporary impacts and 0.247 acre of permanent impacts to potentially suitable habitat.

Short-term, direct impacts could include clearing and grading for cut/fill slopes, and preparation and use of temporary construction access areas. Permanent, direct impacts would include habitat displacement from the construction of project features, such as retaining walls, and road widening activity. Potential temporary or permanent indirect impacts could include root compaction, erosion, introduction of pathogens or invasive plant species, and post-construction road maintenance actions.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, five of these could potentially result in adverse impacts to this species. Though the risk of injury or mortality to this species from this project is considered low, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, Yadon's piperia. The Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that the project could contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to Yadon's piperia when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Resource Study Area for this species.

Visual/Aesthetic Resources

The project Visual Impact Assessment report states that either of the project alternatives would alter the existing rural character of the project area through roadway expansion, removal of trees and vegetation, and addition of retaining walls, signage, fencing, guardrails, and barriers. Visual impacts would be amplified by the large scale of the project, resulting in the most concentrated assembly of highway structures in the region. The potential for project-related effects to visual and aesthetic resources is higher under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1 due to the former's larger footprint and the greater amount of ground disturbance and vegetation removal that would be required.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Resource Study Area, nine of these could potentially result in adverse impacts to visual/aesthetic resources. The analysis report made the finding that the proposed project is anticipated to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to visual/aesthetic resources in the designated Resource Study Area.

Paleontological Resources

The project has the potential to result in adverse impacts to paleontological resources under both Build Alternatives. Project-related activities including construction of retaining walls, landform grading, trenching, and possibly large-diameter drilling could adversely affect paleontological resources, if present, by disturbing sediments with High Paleontological Potential within the project limits. Also, excavation of fossils during construction could expose these resources to degradation or destruction through natural processes such as erosion and weathering, or through inadvertent human damage or vandalism. The potential impacts are higher under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1, due to the former's larger footprint and greater disturbed soil area.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Resource Study Area, five of these could potentially result in adverse impacts to paleontological resources. The analysis made the finding that the proposed project would be expected to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to paleontological resources in the designated Resource Study Area.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Biological Resources

Jurisdictional Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Habitat

The project will use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat. In addition, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) will be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to jurisdictional features (see Section 2.3.2 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis recommends that agencies with regulatory authority over jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat should support efforts to restore and enhance these resources within the project Resource Study Area for this habitat type.

California Red-Legged Frog

The project will use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to the California red-legged frog. In addition, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) will be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to this species (see Section 2.3.5 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis recommends that agencies with regulatory authority over the California red-legged frog, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, should support efforts to restore and enhance jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat within the Resource Study Area for this habitat type, as these activities would be expected to improve habitat for the California red-legged frog.

California Tiger Salamander

The project will use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to the California tiger salamander. In addition, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) will be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to this species (see Section 2.3.5 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis recommends that agencies with regulatory authority over the California tiger salamander, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, should support efforts to restore and enhance jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat within the Resource Study Area for this habitat type, as these activities would be expected to improve habitat for the California tiger salamander.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Alternative 1 was selected as the preferred alternative and is not expected to have adverse effects on South-central California coast steelhead. If Alternative 2 had been selected as the preferred alternative, however, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation) would have been implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to this species (see Section 2.3.5 for more information and listing of applicable measures).

The National Marine Fisheries Service has regulatory authority over South-Central California coast steelhead. The Cumulative Impact Analysis recommends that this agency pursue development and implementation of more robust recovery plans, fishing regulations, and habitat restoration and enhancement efforts to protect and restore South-Central California coast steelhead. Also, the National Marine Fisheries Service may consider improving education and outreach efforts to promote conservation, as well as improving upon monitoring and research tactics to better inform conservation efforts.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, design elements, and standard measures prescribed for impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and other waters, riparian, oak woodland and coast live oak habitats, as well as measures for the California red-legged frog apply to the southwestern pond turtle.

Sensitive Natural Communities and Plant Species

Coast Live Oak Woodland and Coast Live Oak Trees: The project would use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to Coast Live Oak Woodland and coast live oak trees. Also, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) would be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to these resources (see Section 2.3.1 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis notes that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the County of Monterey, and city planning departments have regulatory authority over coast live oak woodland within the Resource Study Area. The analysis recommends that these agencies work toward mitigating overall cumulative impacts to coast live oak woodland and trees by prioritizing preservation and planting of coast live oaks via building permits, development approvals, and project permitting, as well as by encouraging larger-scale, sustainable ecosystem mitigation efforts.

Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey Pine Trees: The project would use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine trees. Also, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) would be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to these resources (see Section 2.3.1 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis notes that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the County of Monterey, and city planning departments have regulatory authority over Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine trees within the Resource Study Area. Recommendations for agencies to work toward mitigating overall cumulative impacts to these resources include prioritizing preservation and planting of Monterey pines via building permits, development approvals, and project permitting.

Yadon's Piperia

The project would use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to Yadon's piperia. Also, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) would be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to these resources (see Section 2.3.5 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis notes that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has regulatory authority over Yadon's piperia, as the species is a federally designated Endangered species. The analysis recommends that to mitigate overall cumulative impacts on this species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should continue efforts to address habitat restoration and protection, manage invasive species, and encourage responsible urban planning to minimize habitat loss. The agency should also continue to monitor and research the species and collaborate with other agencies and stakeholders to better inform conservation efforts. Finally, continued enforcement of mitigation measures and regular assessments of conservation efforts are crucial for effective protection of Yadon's piperia.

Visual/Aesthetic Resources

While design elements, standard specifications, and avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) in the proposed project would partially alleviate the degradation of scenic views, the overall result of project implementation would be an increase in urban character and reduction of visual quality along the State Route 68 corridor and within the designated Resource Study Area. The Cumulative Impact Analysis report concludes that based on presently

available information, the contribution of the proposed project to the cumulative visual impact may be, and would likely be, considerable.

Numerous measures are proposed to decrease urbanizing aesthetic effects that would result from the project (see Section 2.1.10). These include preserving existing vegetation and revegetating disturbed areas with native tree and plant species, grading to blend cut and fill slopes with the natural topography, darkening or coloring drainage components to reduce their visibility, painting visible electrical and traffic boxes to reduce reflectivity, and more. Overhead utility lines would be placed underground and light fixtures would be shielded to provide safe, but not excessive, illumination.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis report provides recommendations for the relevant regulatory agencies (Monterey County, local city planning departments, and the California Department of Transportation) to mitigate overall cumulative impacts to visual and aesthetic resources in the Resource Study Area. These include prioritizing tree preservation and replacement planting, applying aesthetic treatments to hardscape elements, and enacting policies to protect, preserve, and enhance the character of visual resources.

Paleontological Resources

The proposed project would use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to paleontological resources. In addition, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures would be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to these resources. For instance, qualified paleontological monitors would oversee ground-disturbing activities in high-paleontological-potential areas, and procedures for fossil recovery, preparation, identification, and curation would be specified. See Section 2.2.4 for more information.

Despite the finding in the Cumulative Impact Analysis report that the proposed project would contribute to an existing, adverse cumulative impact, the report's conclusion is that the potential impacts would be cumulatively considerable within the context of other current and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Resource Study Area. This is because, as stated in the project Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report, paleontological resources on the Central Coast are not currently experiencing a cumulative effect in this regard. Exposures of paleontologically sensitive strata in this region include large swaths of rural and mountainous terrain that are unlikely to be disturbed by human activities and would be only minimally affected by natural processes, and the relatively small percentage of paleontologically sensitive strata in the area that may be disturbed by current or future development would be offset by mitigation strategies required for regulatory compliance.

Because the project would not require coordination or permits from resource agencies pertaining to paleontological resources, the Cumulative Impact Analysis report does not contain any recommendations for regulatory authorities.

Chapter 3 California Environmental Quality Act Evaluation

3.1 Determining Significance Under CEQA

The proposed project is a joint project by Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration and is subject to state and federal environmental review requirements. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Federal Highway Administration's responsibility for environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 U.S. Code Section 327 (23 USC 327) and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans. Caltrans is the lead agency under NEPA and CEQA.

One of the main differences between NEPA and CEQA is the way significance is determined. Under NEPA, significance is used to determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or a lower level of documentation, will be required. NEPA requires that an EIS be prepared when the proposed federal action (project) *as a whole* has the potential to "significantly affect the quality of the human environment." The determination of significance is based on context and intensity. Some impacts determined to be significant under CEQA may not be of sufficient magnitude to be determined significant under NEPA. Under NEPA, once a decision is made regarding the need for an EIS, it is the magnitude of the impact that is evaluated and no judgement of its individual significance is deemed important for the text. NEPA does not require that a determination of significant impacts be stated in the environmental documents.

CEQA, on the other hand, does require Caltrans to identify each "significant effect on the environment" resulting from the project and ways to mitigate each significant effect. If the project may have a significant effect on any environmental resource, then an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared. Each and every significant effect on the environment must be disclosed in the EIR and mitigated if feasible. In addition, the CEQA Guidelines list a number of "mandatory findings of significance," which also require the preparation of an EIR. There are no types of actions under NEPA that parallel the findings of mandatory significance of CEQA. This chapter discusses the effects of this project and CEQA significance.

3.2 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. Potential impact determinations include Significant and Unavoidable Impact, Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, and No Impact. In many cases, background studies performed in

connection with a project will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A No Impact answer reflects this determination. The words “significant” and “significance” used throughout the following checklist are related to CEQA, not NEPA, impacts. The questions in this checklist are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project, and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects such as Best Management Practices and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below; see Chapters 1 and 2 for a detailed discussion of these features. The annotations to this checklist are summaries of information contained in Chapter 2 to provide you with the rationale for significance determinations; for a more detailed discussion of the nature and extent of impacts, please see Chapter 2. This checklist incorporates by reference the information contained in Chapters 1 and 2.

3.2.1 Aesthetics

CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

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

Significant and Unavoidable Impact—Scenic vistas in the vicinity of State Route 68 include views of the hills, agriculture and open space, and gentle topography with natural vegetation patterns. The elements in the intersection modifications proposed with both of the project Build Alternatives would cause a moderate reduction in the remaining availability of access to views of the surrounding open spaces and naturally vegetated hillsides. Because the existing visual resources in the project area are of high quality, and the community places a high value on these visual resources, the moderate reduction in views would be a substantial visual impact. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures prescribed in Section 2.1.10. including but not limited to landscape vegetation, and darkening, staining and/or texturing of concrete barriers, guardrail, retaining walls, and other design elements where feasible, would improve visual access to scenic resources. However, the overall visual impact would remain significant and adverse.

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

Significant and Unavoidable Impact—State Route 68 is an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway from post mile L4.3 (which is within one-half mile east of the interchange of State Route 1/State Route 68) to post mile R17.8 (near Reservation Road and the Salinas River). West of the project limits, State Route 68 is designated an Eligible Scenic State Highway from post mile 0.0 (the westerly end of State Route 68 near the Pacific Ocean in the city of Monterey) to L4.26 near State Route 1. Scenic resources associated

with the viewing experience throughout the project area include expansive views, oak dotted hillsides, open space landscapes, and native vegetation patterns.

The project Build Alternatives would both require removal of trees and other vegetation at various locations in and around the project intersections to construct either roundabouts or expanded signalized intersections and affiliated elements such as the pedestrian-bicycle shared pathways, splitter islands, drainage system replacement along the highway, and other features. Alternative 2 Signals and Lane Channelization would require more vegetation removal than Alternative 1 Roundabouts, but both alternatives would result in significant adverse effects to scenic resources as seen from the state scenic highway. No historic buildings would be directly impacted by the Build Alternatives because preliminary designs avoided the property that contains the historic Tarpy's Roadhouse/Ryan House/Rancho Saucito resources.

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

Significant and Unavoidable Impact—The existing visual character of the project area and vicinity is based mostly on its rural and undeveloped landscapes, generally well-vegetated roadsides, and varying topography (gentle rolling hills to flatter). The project would change the visual character through widening of the highway prism, increasing signage and signals or roundabouts, barriers, guardrail, newly disturbed cut slopes and other landform alteration profiles, construction of additional retaining walls, and creation of a more open spatial character. In addition, construction of the Build Alternatives would both require removal of vegetation and trees in the project intersection areas, which would further contribute to the change in visual character.

The project would add new landscaping after construction along with aesthetic treatments on some of the hardscape features, such as retaining walls, concrete barriers, staining or darkening of metallic elements, and other aesthetic applications to be determined in the final design phase, which would reduce the level of adverse impacts to visual character to some extent. However, given the high viewer sensitivity, the inherent visual change associated with an increase in visual scale and additional hardscape elements in the project corridor at multiple intersections would result in a noticeable and substantial degradation of visual character along the State Route 68 corridor.

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

Less Than Significant—Nighttime lighting conditions vary through the project corridor, from somewhat heavily lit areas of commercial development to rural areas with little night lighting. Overall, nighttime lighting and glare levels in the project vicinity are typical for that of rural areas. Most existing light and glare within the project limits from west of Josselyn Canyon Road to just east of San Benancio Road are generated by commercial

developments, such as at State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard)/State Route 68 and around Corral de Tierra Road at State Route 68, and from signalized intersections. Vehicle headlamps, lighting at cross-streets to State Route 68, and building lighting also contribute to the existing nighttime light setting.

Both Build Alternatives would include on average one additional high-efficiency LED (light emitting diode) luminaire at most if not all of the nine project intersections to combine with the existing luminaires (with replacement LEDs as necessary) to provide the required amount of illumination at night. Both Build Alternatives would include cobra-style lighting at the intersections. Alternative 1 would create less light source levels than Alternative 2 since the roundabouts design would remove the existing signal lamps; Alternative 2 with the expanded intersection lanes would increase the signal lamps at the project intersections.

The existing lighting at the project intersections would not be an unexpected visual element even in a rural setting. A measure to minimize potential lighting impacts would be implemented with either Build Alternative, including methods to shield the light angles to reduce effects on nighttime views. The lighting proposed by either Build Alternative would result in additional light and glare, but this visual change would not be substantial.

3.2.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources

CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources

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

Would the project:

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

No Impact—There is no farmland within the project's Area of Potential Impact.

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

No Impact—The project would not affect any land that is agriculturally zoned or covered by a Williamson Act contract.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—There is no land within the project limits that is zoned timberland, or timberland zoned Timber Production, as defined in the referenced government code sections, so there would be no conflict with existing zoning or rezoning related to those land uses.

The project limits contain land that could be considered "forest land" under Public Resources Code Section 12220(g), where "forest land" is defined as "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."

The forest land within the project's Area of Potential Impact consists of small and/or narrow treed areas in various locations adjacent to State Route 68, a busy highway. These treed areas experience high levels of traffic-generated noise and air pollution daily and are therefore unlikely to provide high-quality forest resources "under natural conditions" as listed under Public Resources Code Section 12220(g), particularly in the context of the more extensive forest and woodland areas that occur away from the highway throughout the greater State Route 68 corridor area. Therefore, the project would not be expected to conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land that exists "under natural conditions" in the Area of Potential Impact.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated—As discussed in Section 2.3.1, within the project limits, up to 4,000 trees may be impacted (removed or otherwise adversely affected) under Alternative 1, and up to 5,500 trees may be impacted under Alternative 2. These totals would include approximately 1,100 to 1,200 coast live oaks and 300 to 400 Monterey pines under Alternative 1, and approximately 2,600 to 2,700 coast live oaks and 800 to 900 Monterey pines under Alternative 2. The balance would consist of other tree species.

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. In total, the project could result in up to 24.2 acres of temporary impacts and up to 5.75 acres of permanent impacts to forest land (coast live oak woodland/forest, Monterey pine forest/woodland, and willow riparian forest habitats) under Alternative 2 (see Table 2.3.1.5). Impact acreages would be less under Alternative 1, with approximately 9.09 acres of temporary impacts and 1.82 acres of permanent impacts to forest land. Seventy to 80 percent of these impacts are considered temporary (where replanting/habitat restoration would be implemented), and the remainder will permanent (for example, areas of new impervious surface).

Depending on final project design, the temporary impact areas may require less tree removal than stated above.

The avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures listed in Section 2.3.1 would reduce project-related impacts to forest land. The project would be designed and constructed to avoid as many coast live oaks and Monterey pines as possible. Wherever feasible, trees would be trimmed or pruned instead of removed. Post-construction, temporary impact areas would be restored with an assemblage of locally appropriate native plant species. This would include the replanting of coast live oaks and Monterey pines at a 1-to-1 ratio (acreage) for temporary impacts and a 3-to-1 ratio (acreage) for permanent impacts. This mitigation would be implemented onsite if possible; otherwise, Caltrans would coordinate with a local land conservancy or restoration group to conduct the plantings offsite.

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

No Impact—The project limits do not contain any farmland. No other project-related changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of forest land to different uses are anticipated.

3.2.3 Air Quality

CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality

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

Would the project:

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

Less Than Significant Impact—The project sits in the North Central Coast Air Basin and is within the jurisdiction of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District and the California Air Resources Board. The project is not a capacity-increasing transportation project. It would have no impact on traffic volumes and would generate a less than significant amount of air pollutants during construction. Therefore, the project would not conflict with the Monterey Bay Air Resources District's state air quality attainment goals as stated in the State Implementation Plan (the 2012-2015 Air Quality Management Plan). See Section 2.2.6 of this document for more information.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact—The North Central Coast Air Basin is in attainment for all criteria pollutants under National Ambient Air Quality Standards but is in non-attainment status for suspended particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM10) under California Ambient Air Quality Standards. However, the project would not increase operational emissions of PM10 or any other air pollutant and is expected to produce less than significant amounts of all air pollutants during the construction phase. Caltrans Standard Specifications would be implemented to avoid or minimize all air pollutant emissions to the extent feasible.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less Than Significant Impact—Under either Build Alternative, the project would consist of improvements to traffic flow at congested intersections and would not increase traffic volume on State Route 68. As a result, the project would not cause any long-term increase in sensitive receptor exposure to traffic-generated air pollutants. While project construction would result in a temporary increase in air pollutant emissions, as noted above Caltrans Standard Specifications would be used to avoid or minimize these emissions.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—As noted above, the project would not lead to any long-term increase in traffic-generated air pollutants, and construction-related emissions would be avoided and/or minimized to the extent feasible through the implementation of Caltrans Standard Specifications. Also, several (if not most) of the project intersections are in areas that do not contain substantial numbers of people in the immediate vicinity, further reducing the chances of project-related emissions adversely affecting residents, commuters, or visitors.

3.2.4 Biological Resources

CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources

Would the project:

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated—Sections 2.3.3, 2.3.4, and 2.3.5 of this document discuss potential project impacts to the following special-status or threatened/endangered plant and animal species. This discussion in the second and third bullet points below has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment:

- Section 2.3.3, special-status plant species (non-listed): Special-status manzanita species, Congdon’s tarplant, Lewis’ clarkia, Monterey pine.

- Section 2.3.4, special-status animal species (non-listed): Special-status and other nesting birds, roosting bats, Monterey dusky-footed woodrat and American badger, Northern California legless lizard, and two-striped garter snake.
- Section 2.3.5, State- and/or federally listed threatened or endangered species: Yadon's piperia, Monarch butterfly, California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, South-Central California coast steelhead (steelhead would potentially be affected only by Alternative 2; Alternative 1 was selected as the preferred alternative), southwestern pond turtle, Crotch bumble bee, and tricolored blackbird.

Design features, best management practices, standard measures, and avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures will be implemented to reduce project-related impacts to these species to the extent feasible. Examples of these actions and measures include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition of all required permits and agreements from regulatory agencies prior to initiation of construction
- Avoidance of construction in sensitive areas and/or during sensitive times of the year (e.g., nesting season)
- Trimming/pruning vegetation instead of removal, where feasible
- Preconstruction surveys for special-status species
- Worker awareness training
- Establishment and fencing-off of Environmentally Sensitive Areas to avoid equipment-related or foot traffic-related damage
- Post-construction replanting/habitat restoration using locally appropriate/locally sourced native plant species, including replacement of removed coast live oak and Monterey pine trees (compensatory mitigation under CEQA) at a 1-to-1 (acreage) ratio for temporary impacts and a 3-to-1 (acreage) ratio for permanent impacts
- Translocation of Yadon's piperia seeds/bulbs from temporary construction impact areas into nearby, suitable non-affected areas using topsoil and duff collected from the impacted areas
- Oversight of construction activities by a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved and National Marine Fisheries Service-approved biologist(s); only this biologist(s) would be authorized to capture, handle, and relocate threatened/endangered species, if needed, prior to or during construction
- Removal of invasive plant and animal species, as feasible, from project work areas by the approved biologist(s)
- Installation of temporary exclusionary measures to keep special-status/threatened or endangered animal species out of construction areas

This is only a partial list of actions and measures that would be applied to protect special-status/threatened or endangered plant and animal species during

implementation of the project. See Sections 2.3.3, 2.3.4, and 2.3.5 for more discussion regarding this topic, and see Table 1-5 in Section 1.4.1 for a listing of standard measures and best management practices intended to reduce project-related impacts.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated—Sections 2.3.1, Natural Communities, and 2.3.2, Wetlands and Other Waters discuss potential project impacts to riparian habitat and other sensitive natural communities in the project vicinity.

Design features, best management practices, standard measures, and avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures will be implemented to reduce project-related impacts to these natural communities/habitats to the extent feasible. Examples of these actions and measures include, but are not limited to:

- Avoidance of construction in sensitive areas and/or during sensitive times of the year (e.g., nesting season)
- Trimming/pruning vegetation instead of removal, where feasible
- Limiting clearing and grubbing in temporary impact areas to the smallest footprint possible, to allow for the best chances of native vegetation root preservation and resprouting post-construction
- Establishment and fencing-off of Environmentally Sensitive Areas to avoid equipment-related or foot traffic-related damage
- Preparation of a Mitigation and Monitoring Plan to offset impacts to natural vegetation and protected habitats, including aquatic resources
- Post-construction replanting/habitat restoration using locally appropriate/locally sourced native plant species, including replacement of removed coast live oak and Monterey pine trees (compensatory mitigation under CEQA) at a 1-to-1 (acreage) ratio for temporary impacts and a 3-to-1 (acreage) ratio for permanent impacts.

This is only a partial list of actions and measures that would be applied for natural communities and habitats during implementation of the project. See Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 for more discussion regarding this topic and see Table 1-5 in Section 1.4.1 for a listing of standard measures and best management practices intended to reduce project-related impacts.

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?

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated—Section 2.3.2 Wetlands and Other Waters discusses potential project impacts to state and federally protected wetlands and other waters in the project vicinity.

Under either Build Alternative, the project would have the potential to adversely affect jurisdictional features in the watersheds of Del Monte Lake, Canyon Del Rey Creek, and El Toro Creek, including in-stream and adjacent wetlands, ephemeral and intermittent streams, streambanks and riparian zones, and other features. Both Alternatives 1 and 2 would impact riparian and other jurisdictional habitats in the project Biological Study Areas as discussed in Section 2.3.2. Alternative 2 would have a larger footprint at the project intersection locations overall. For the proposed work at the San Benancio Road/State Route 68 intersection, Alternative 2 would have permanent impacts in the streambed of El Toro Creek as well as riparian habitat, but Alternative 1 would not impact the streambed.

Temporary impacts would be associated mostly with clearing and grading for cut or fill slopes and temporary construction access; permanent impacts would occur in locations where habitat would be displaced for project features, such as roadway or retaining walls. Estimated acreages of permanent and temporary impacts to jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat are provided in Table 2.3.1.5 (see Section 2.3.1).

As stated in Section 2.3.2, during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project, Caltrans would submit permit applications to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (see Section 4.2) to address required protections for wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the U.S., listed species and their habitats, and water quality. Project construction will not be allowed to proceed until all required permits are obtained.

The Build Alternatives have been designed to reduce potential impacts to wetlands and other waters to the extent feasible through the use of standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects (see Table 1-5 in Section 1.4.1). In addition, the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures listed in Section 2.3.2 would also be implemented to reduce wetland-related project impacts to the extent feasible. This includes compensatory mitigation (under CEQA) at a 1-to-1 ratio (acreage) for temporary impacts and a 3-to-1 ratio (acreage) for permanent impacts to wetland, stream, streambank, and riparian aquatic resources. Compensatory mitigation would be completed onsite as feasible; offsite mitigation through an existing mitigation bank or in coordination with a local land conservancy or restoration group may also be required.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—Section 2.3.1 discusses potential project-related impacts to wildlife movement and wildlife corridors (habitat connectivity). The project Natural Environment Study did not identify any impacts relating to native wildlife nursery sites.

The project has been designed in part to improve public safety and protect wildlife by reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions on State Route 68. The Highway 68 Scenic Plan Study Area, which includes the project area, has been identified as a critical wildlife

linkage connecting the coast of Monterey to the Sierra de Salinas Range. However, the highway acts as a significant barrier to wildlife travel and sees ongoing, high rates of wildlife-vehicle collisions as wild animals attempt to cross the highway from south to north or vice versa. Aside from killing wildlife, these collisions jeopardize public safety and result in high costs to the involved drivers and responding public agencies.

A Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)-sponsored Wildlife Connectivity Analysis study (Transportation Agency for Monterey County 2017) attempted to quantify roadkill events (see Table 2.3.1.3) and identified specific locations along State Route 68 as “roadkill hotspots” (areas with particularly high rates of wildlife-vehicle collisions). Based on recommendations made in the Wildlife Connectivity Analysis study, the project incorporates wildlife crossing improvements that include the enlargement of five existing culverts that pass under State Route 68 as well as installation of fencing to guide animals away from the roadway and into the enlarged culverts.

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Wildlife Connectivity Analysis study did not evaluate movement of aquatic or semi-aquatic species, but the proposed culvert improvements may facilitate passage for amphibian and reptile species. Fish passage is not considered applicable to the streams draining directly to Monterey Bay due to low flow and substantial barriers lower in the system. Potential temporary (construction-phase) impacts to South-Central California coast steelhead and its habitat in El Toro Creek from Alternative 2 were identified that would be reduced by measures to maintain creek flow during construction (see Section 2.3.5, Threatened and Endangered Species). However, Alternative 1 was selected as the preferred alternative, which would not impact South Central California coast steelhead.

While it is possible that the project could result in temporary impacts to wildlife movement, wildlife corridors, or fish passage, it is expected that design features, standard measures, and avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures would reduce these effects to a less than significant level. No permanent significant impacts to wildlife movement, wildlife corridors, or fish passage are anticipated to result from project implementation. Long-term positive effects are expected for terrestrial wildlife transiting the area.

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

No Impact—The project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. Caltrans would cooperate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and local jurisdictions to minimize effects on oak woodlands that are protected under the California Oak Woodlands Protection Act (Senate Concurrent Resolution No 17), as well as by the County and City of Monterey (e.g., Monterey County Zoning Ordinance 21.64.260 for the protection of oak and madrone trees). Temporary and permanent impacts to coast live oak and Monterey pine woodland and forest areas within the project limits would be addressed through compensatory mitigation under CEQA (replanting) both onsite and offsite (see Section

2.3.1). Caltrans would not be required to obtain any permits for oak tree removal on this project but would endeavor to be consistent with local laws and ordinances regarding oak protection and preservation to the extent possible.

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

No Impact—Various state, regional, and local conservation planning areas, as well as the Conservation Elements of the County of Monterey and City of Monterey General Plans, cover the project's Biological Study Area (see Section 2.3.1). The project is consistent with most of the policies in these plans. Caltrans would be required to obtain an access permit from the Bureau of Land Management for work planned on a small portion of property in Fort Ord National Monument, but the project is consistent with the applicable Bureau of Land Management Resource Management Plan (2007) and does not conflict with the Fort Ord Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (2020).

3.2.5 Cultural Resources

CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources

Would the project:

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

Less Than Significant Impact—Alternative 2 was redesigned to avoid a known historical resource property that is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Neither Build Alternative would adversely affect the one historic-era property within the architectural study area eligible for the National Register.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated—Prehistoric sites exist within the project Area of Potential Effects, and the eastern portion of the project limits has moderate to high potential for buried sites. Archaeological site testing was conducted but could not be completed due to sensitive biological resources in the area. Two sites were previously determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as part of studies for other projects along State Route 68. Untested portions could potentially be impacted by either of the two Build Alternatives. Caltrans prepared a Finding of Effect document and a Cultural Resources Management Plan which present a minor phased approach for testing to determine the project's effects on the potentially sensitive archaeological sites. Adverse effects if determined would be mitigated by implementation of the procedures and treatment plan contained in the Cultural Resources Management Plan so as not to change the significance, once determined after testing is completed, of archaeological resources that may be impacted by the project. See Mitigation Measures Cultural Resources 1 and Cultural Resources 2 in

Section 2.1.11. On March 17, 2025 the State Historic Preservation Officer did not object to Caltrans' proposed findings that the project will likely result in a Finding of No Adverse Effect, and use of minor phasing to complete Section 106 studies. After the testing in the restricted areas is completed, the finding of effect will be determined. District 5 shall continue consultation with the Cultural Studies Office and State Historic Preservation Officer in accordance with Stipulation X.B.2 of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated—Human remains and related items of Native American origin if discovered during implementation of the terms of the Programmatic Agreement referenced above in question (b) will be treated in accordance with State Health and Safety Codes and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98(a) through (d). Refer to Section 2.1.11 and Measure Cultural Resources 2.

3.2.6 Energy

CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy

Would the project:

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

No Impact—This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Both Build Alternatives would improve the flow of traffic through the corridor, allowing travelers to maintain optimal speeds for fuel efficiency resulting in some level of reduced consumption. As discussed in Section 2.2.8, the Build Alternatives do not add roadway capacity, and both would improve the flow of traffic through the State Route 68 corridor through operational improvements to existing signalized intersections. Therefore, the project is unlikely to increase direct energy consumption though increased fuel use. In addition, energy conservation features incorporated into the project such as energy-efficient lighting, would reduce indirect energy use and are consistent with state and local policies to reduce energy use. Reduction of fuel consumption is anticipated to be greater in Alternative 1, due to the continuous traffic flow allowed by roundabouts and lack of signal lighting as well as improvements for pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. During the project construction phase, Caltrans Standard Specifications would be implemented to reduce unnecessary energy use and maximize efficiency to the extent feasible. See Section 2.2.8 for more information.

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

No Impact—The project is one of many projects planned and included in the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments' 2018 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy and in Monterey County's 2018 Regional Transportation Plan with the aim of reducing congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. The project would not conflict with these or any other applicable plans regarding renewable energy or energy efficiency.

3.2.7 Geology and Soils and Paleontological Resources

CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils

Would the project:

a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42?

Less Than Significant Impact—The project limits do not contain any fault identified on the most recent State of California Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map. In addition, Monterey County's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping and Data website does not show any known historical earthquakes in, or within 4 miles of, the project area between 1931 and 2001 (County of Monterey, 2021). Nevertheless, the U.S. Geological Survey believes that the Chupines Fault, which crosses the project corridor in three separate traces, has been active at some point during the past 15,000 years. Surface fault rupture is considered possible in the project area.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less Than Significant Impact—A preliminary assessment of earthquake ground shaking was present for the each of the nine project intersections in the Caltrans Revised District Preliminary Geotechnical Report for Highway 68 Corridor Improvement, dated August 8, 2021. The assessment estimated that maximum ground shaking magnitudes of 6.7 to 6.8 on the Moment magnitude scale could occur in the project area. The shaking generated by this amount of energy could be perceived as Very Strong (VII) to Destructive (VIII) on the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less Than Significant Impact—Monterey County's Geographic Information Systems website shows that much of the State Route 68 corridor within the project area has high susceptibility to liquefaction (County of Monterey, 2021). As of this writing, additional information is needed to better assess liquefaction potential. A future investigation

would include the collection and analysis of soil samples for liquefaction potential at each project intersection, with the results presented in the Preliminary Geotechnical Design Report.

iv) Landslides?

Less Than Significant Impact—Landslides can be induced by seismic activity. During an earthquake, strong ground surface shaking and vibration caused by seismic wave transmission can cause loss of soil strength and ground failure, leading to landslides on sloping land. Landslides can also be induced by heavy precipitation (especially over long periods), stream erosion, changes in groundwater, disturbance by human activities, or any combination of these factors.

Representative slope angles in the project area range from 1 to 53 percent. Landslide potential throughout the project area is low to moderate, except for a 1.6-mile stretch of State Route 68 from York Road to 0.12 mile west of Pasadera Drive, which is adjacent to steep hill slopes along the south side of the roadway.

The final design of the project will be based on the results of geotechnical studies conducted throughout the project area and would follow current State of California seismic engineering standards to ensure maximum strength and safety of all constructed features under both static and dynamic (earthquake-caused ground shaking) conditions, as well as associated hazards such as seismic-related ground failure (e.g., rupture, landslide, liquefaction). The use of Caltrans Standard Specifications and Best Management Practices would also help ensure that the project would not cause, or suffer from, adverse effects relating to geology and soils. See Section 2.2.3 for more information on this topic.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—Soil data was collected and reviewed from the U.S. Department of Agriculture web soil survey portal (2021). Approximately 76 percent of soils in the assessed area are described as moderately susceptible to detachment and produce moderate runoff.

Standard Specifications and Best Management Practices would be implemented during construction at project work locations for control of erosion and sedimentation from the construction work areas, including through the requirement for a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. Though some soil erosion is anticipated during construction, the effects are expected to be less than significant. See Section 2.2.2 for more information on avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures pertaining to soil erosion control.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact—This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. A preliminary

evaluation of subsurface conditions, based on examination of geologic mapping for the project area, was provided in the Caltrans Revised District Preliminary Geotechnical Report for Highway 68 Corridor Improvement, dated August 8, 2021. Detailed geotechnical investigations of the subsurface materials, based on one to two dozen borings of up to 75 feet deep (depending on the Build Alternative), will be conducted during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (final design) phase of the project.

Slope compaction specifications would be applied to project designs for slopes and embankment areas in liquefaction- and landslide-prone areas of the project limits so as not to cause potential instability of the soils onsite or offsite. In addition, the project would not increase groundwater levels in the work areas and would therefore not increase the liquefaction potential of soils in project construction areas.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact—This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Soils found within the project limits, as mapped by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, are non-expansive. Less than 1 percent of the soils within the project limits are mapped as peat, which have a potential to expand with changes in moisture. However, peat more commonly becomes marshy with increases in moisture. Detailed geotechnical investigations, including evaluation of soil physical characteristics like shrink-swell capacity, will be conducted during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (final design) phase of the project.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

No Impact—The project is a traffic improvement project and does not involve the installation, maintenance, or use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated—Within the project area, there is a mix of high and low sensitivity geologic units. In some areas, ground-disturbing activities for construction of retaining walls, culvert replacement, drainage swale installation, and utility undergrounding may encounter deposits of high sensitivity for paleontological resources. In areas with low sensitivity deposits at the surface, it is possible that those deposits could thinly overlay high sensitivity deposits that could be damaged by ground-disturbing activities. A Paleontological Monitoring Plan will be prepared, and paleontological monitors will be present during applicable construction activities to mitigate potential impacts. See Section 2.2.4 for specific details about preparation and implementation of a Paleontological Mitigation Plan as specified in Mitigation Measures PALEO-1 and PALEO-2.

3.2.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Would the project:

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

Less Than Significant Impact—Because the project would not increase operational roadway capacity, it would not be expected to result in any new or additional greenhouse gas emissions upon completion of construction. Activities during the project construction phase would result in a temporary increase in greenhouse gas emissions in the area, but Caltrans Standard Specifications would be implemented to reduce emissions to the extent feasible. See Section 3.3 of this document for more detail.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—Applicable local and regional plans, policies, and/or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases are summarized in Table 3.3.2.1 (Section 3.3.2) of this document. The project would not conflict with any of these.

3.2.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Would the project:

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

Less Than Significant Impact—The project would involve the transport, use, and probable disposal of hazardous materials. Some hazardous materials may be used during project construction, and there is a potential for the project to disturb existing hazardous materials, including hydrocarbon-contaminated soils from leaking underground storage tanks, aerially deposited lead-contaminated soils, lead-containing paint and asbestos-containing materials, yellow thermoplastic traffic striping paint, and treated wood waste.

Prior to the beginning of construction, site investigations would be conducted to determine the exact nature of potential hazardous materials at the project intersections. Based on the results, Caltrans Standard and (if needed) Non-Standard Specifications would be implemented to reduce the possibility of public, worker, or environmental exposure from the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. For instance, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be prepared including Best Management Practices for the safe management of hazardous materials. See Table 1-5 in Section 1.4.1 for a listing of Standard Measures and Best Management Practices that

will be implemented to reduce project-related environmental impacts, including those related to hazards and hazardous materials.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—As stated above in a), additional site investigations would be conducted at the project intersections prior to the onset of construction to determine the exact nature of any potential hazardous materials present. All construction activities will be subject to Caltrans Standard and (if needed) Non-Standard Specifications to minimize the risk of public, worker, or environmental exposure to hazardous materials.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—Construction would occur within one-quarter mile of the San Benancio Middle School and York School. Due to the age of the highway, it is possible that concentrations of aerially deposited lead would be found in the soil in these areas. It is also possible that work on the El Toro Creek Bridge on State Route 68 would expose asbestos-containing materials. The soil and bridges will be tested prior to construction for these materials. If found in excess of regulatory limits, the materials would be handled according to all applicable regulations to ensure they are not released into the environment and are properly disposed of. Caltrans Standard Specifications include measures for handling these substances on all projects.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact—According to the project's Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment report, dated September 26, 2023, two former leaking underground storage tank locations (GeoTracker ID numbers T10000002861 and T10000003114) exist within 1,000 feet of the project site at the intersection of State Route 68 and Corral de Tierra Road. The Initial Site Assessment found that though these sites have been remediated and the cases are closed, because the fuel dispensers were also leaking, these sites may have the potential to impact the project due to the residual presence of petroleum hydrocarbon plumes in shallow soils (5 feet or less).

The project has been designed to avoid disturbance of the residual contaminant plumes underlying these properties, and the Initial Site Assessment concluded that the project can proceed with very little risk of impacts due to unanticipated hazardous waste or other contamination-related issues. The Initial Site Assessment recommends that a Non-Standard Special Provision (NSSP) be included in the Standard Special Provisions to cover handling, testing, and disposal of petroleum hydrocarbon-impacted soil and

groundwater in the event unanticipated petroleum hydrocarbon impacts are encountered during construction.

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

No Impact—This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project proposes to modify existing intersections along State Route 68. The project would not alter the existing conditions in such a way that would result in new or increased safety hazard or excessive noise. The project would not impact airport operations at the Monterey Peninsula Airport nor increase residents or businesses along the project corridor that would be exposed to airport operations.

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

No Impact— This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Once completed, the project would improve traffic flow within the project limits and accommodate emergency access and evacuation operations. During construction, travel lanes could be restricted temporarily, but emergency access would be accommodated at all times.

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

No Impact—The project will not alter existing conditions in such a way that would increase exposure of people or structures to wildfire.

3.2.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality

Would the project:

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

Less Than Significant Impact—The project would not result in substantial degradation of water quality under either Build Alternative in either the short term or the long term. Best Management Practices, including implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, will be incorporated into the project to reduce discharge of pollutants both during construction and permanently, as required under Caltrans' National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit with the State Water Resources Control Board. See Section 2.2.2 for details on measures to protect water quality.

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

No Impact—As noted in the project Water Quality Technical Memo dated July 27, 2023, the project area includes areas defined by a high groundwater elevation. Multiple earthwork and excavation operations would potentially encounter groundwater during construction activities. If dewatering is deemed necessary during the construction phase, any such activities would comply with the applicable Caltrans Standard Specifications and Best Management Practices.

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

i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;

Less Than Significant Impact—This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the area. Project construction would result in an estimated 24.33 acres of Disturbed Soil Area (DSA) under Alternative 1 and 59.54 acres under Alternative 2. As described in Section 2.2.2, the project will incorporate Best Management Practices, including temporary soil stabilization and sediment control measures to limit erosion and siltation.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project would add 2.12 acres of new impervious surface under Alternative 1 and 11.95 acres under Alternative 2, but these are not expected to substantially increase surface runoff leading to flooding because of the implementation of the Best Management Practices described in Section 2.2.2. Alternative 1 was selected as the preferred alternative for the project to move forward to the final plans, specifications, and estimates phase of the project.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—With project implementation, runoff is not expected to be substantially greater in amount, or more polluted, than runoff from the nine project intersections in their current condition. During the construction phase, Treatment Best Management Practices will be installed with the requirement to treat 100 percent of the water quality volume (WQV) generated by the project’s new and replaced impervious surfaces. If the selected alternative cannot treat 100 percent of the required water quality volume, Alternative Compliance would be required.

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation—This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Location Hydraulic Study for the project dated December 21, 2020, the Location Hydraulic Study Addendum dated September 28, 2023, and the Location Hydraulic Study Addendum Number 2 dated March 26, 2025 determined that for both Build Alternatives there would be no significant impacts to natural and beneficial floodplain values and no support of probable incompatible floodplain development such as commercial development or urban growth.

Some of the proposed project locations are within the 100-year flood zone, including locations at Canyon del Rey Boulevard/State Route 218, Ragsdale Drive, and the State Route 68 bridge over El Toro Creek. Other project locations are near the 100-year flood zone.

Under Alternative 1, the preliminary design for the roundabouts would avoid encroachment into Regulatory Floodways, and the 1 percent annual chance flood discharge would be conveyed without increasing base flood elevations. Also, Alternative 1 would not cause longitudinal encroachment of floodplains and would result in no significant risks to floodplains associated with the project.

Under Alternative 2, four new bridge piers would be added to the two existing piers in the Regulatory Floodway at the State Route 68 El Toro Creek Bridge to support the planned widening of the bridge, which would be necessary to accommodate two lanes of travel in each direction on State Route 68 and a tapered striped median. This design would also potentially result in longitudinal encroachment into the adjacent floodplain. El Toro Creek at the location of the State Route 68 bridge crossing is identified as a Regulatory Floodway Zone AE, with floodplain areas adjacent to the floodway. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have a potential adverse impact on the Regulatory Floodway of El Toro Creek from the additional bridge columns.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. If Alternative 2 had been chosen as the preferred alternative, the design of the State Route 68 El Toro Creek Bridge improvements would be revised and refined after confirmation from the Federal Emergency Management Agency of the existing State Route 68 El Toro Creek Bridge base flood elevation and hydraulic model. The existing bridge hydraulic design components and flood capacity would be analyzed for potential accommodation of the additional bridge columns. Alternative 2 would be designed to maintain the base flood elevation within the Regulated Floodway in accordance with federal regulations and associated Caltrans design criteria, to the extent feasible. If the findings of final design review and investigations determine that the Alternative 2 bridge design would raise or otherwise change the base flood elevation and there are no feasible avoidance alternatives to achieve the project improvements, Caltrans would file a Conditional Letter of Map Revision with the federal government, the process for which would add

substantial time and costs to the project. Alternative 1, Roundabouts, was selected as the preferred alternative, as discussed in Section 1.6.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Mitigation Measure HYD-1 (see Section 2.2.1) specifies the design revisions and coordination process as described above if Alternative 2 were to have been selected as the preferred alternative. Applicable Standard Specifications, design features, and practices will be incorporated into the preferred alternative (Alternative 1) to address potential impacts related to Regulated Floodways and natural and beneficial floodplain values.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—Most of the project's Area of Potential Impact is within Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Zone X, outside the 500-year floodplain, and is not considered a flood hazard area, though small portions are within or near the base floodplain (the 100-year flood zone; see Section 2.2.1). Regardless, the project is not expected to cause the involved intersections to be at greater risk of inundation than under current conditions and is not anticipated to introduce new sources of floodwater-transported pollutants.

The project limits do not include any tsunami or seiche zones.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—The project will incorporate numerous design features, specifications, and practices to protect surface water and groundwater resources in the project area. Project activities are not expected to disrupt or redirect groundwater flow or introduce any elements that would cause impairment of water quality and related beneficial uses. Nor would the proposed activities use any groundwater for water supply during construction or for mitigation landscape maintenance; the project is therefore not expected to affect recharge of local groundwater units. No project-related conflict with or obstruction of any water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan is anticipated.

3.2.11 Land Use and Planning

CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact—The project makes modifications to existing intersections along an existing highway and would not encroach upon or divide any residences or businesses.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact—The project would not conflict with the majority of land use plans, policies, or regulations that apply to the project area as discussed in Section 2.1.2. However, the project would not be consistent with policies and plans intended to preserve vegetation and other scenic elements of the highway corridor. Though Caltrans is not subject to adherence to local plans, policies, and ordinances, design of the project would endeavor to be as consistent as possible with applicable plans and policies. Regardless, avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are required and will be implemented for visual resources (see Section 2.1.10) to comply with project study area impacts that call for the retention of vegetative character and scenic vistas. The project will also incorporate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures, including compensatory mitigation under CEQA, for impacts to trees and other vegetation (see Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.3) and wetlands (see Section 2.3.2).

3.2.12 Mineral Resources

CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources

Would the project:

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

No Impact—The project area is not a source of any known mineral resource.

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

No Impact—There is no mineral resource recovery site near the project limits.

3.2.13 Noise

CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise

Would the project result in:

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

Less Than Significant Impact—The project Noise Study Report prepared by Caltrans, dated June 2023, found that no significant noise impacts to any of the 19 identified sensitive receptors would result from implementation of Alternative 1.

For Alternative 2, the Noise Study Report found that the project could result in exceedance of noise thresholds (noise increases of 12 or more decibels [dBA], or

increases exceeding the Noise Abatement Criteria threshold of 67 decibels) at one of the 19 sensitive receptors: the Living Hope Church of the Nazarene (Receptor R-1) at 1375 Josselyn Canyon Road, Monterey. This finding was based on the fact that, with implementation of Alternative 2, traffic would be shifted closer to the recreational/parking area than under current conditions.

Specifically, the Noise Study Report found that implementation of Alternative 2 could increase noise levels at the church's outdoor recreational area (basketball court)/parking area by up to 1 decibel (1 dBA). That is, the existing 67-decibel noise level at that location could potentially increase to 68 decibels. A noise level increase of less than 3 decibels (3 dBA) is considered to be imperceptible.

Construction of an 8- to 12-foot sound barrier would reduce Alternative 2-associated traffic noise to acceptable levels at the basketball court/parking area, but the Caltrans Noise Abatement Decision Report (July 2023) prepared in response to this situation found that such a barrier would not be feasible because it would exceed the cost allowance for this type of structure. In addition, the planned future widening of eastbound State Route 68 at that location for the addition of an auxiliary through lane, as well as planned realignment of a roadside drainage ditch in the immediate area, would potentially require removal of the basketball court/parking area regardless.

Given the imperceptible nature of the project-related noise increase at the church recreational area/parking area, the infeasible cost of barrier installation, and planned future improvements at that location, this impact is characterized as less than significant.

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less Than Significant Impact—Project construction under both Build Alternatives could result in groundborne vibration or noise from the use of heavy equipment such as bulldozers, rollers, and heavy trucks. However, the construction activities are not expected to generate these effects in amounts or durations substantial enough to significantly affect any nearby residents or other sensitive receptors.

The only historic-era resource that could potentially be jeopardized by project-related groundborne vibration is Tarpy's Roadhouse, near the State Route 68/State Route 218 intersection at 2999 Monterey-Salinas Highway. However, a groundborne vibration assessment conducted by Caltrans determined that no project construction equipment would be working close enough to the building for the ground to exceed a vibration level of 0.25-inch per second, the threshold at which historic buildings may experience damage from this type of vibration.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact—Five of the project intersections (State Route 68/Josselyn Canyon Road, State Route 68/Olmsted Road, State Route 68/State Route

218, State Route 68/Ragsdale Drive, and State Route 68/York Road) are within 2 miles of the Monterey Peninsula Airport. However, the construction activities at these locations are not expected to generate excessive noise levels that would affect residents or employees in the area.

3.2.14 Population and Housing

CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing

Would the project:

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

No Impact—The project would reduce intersection delays resulting from anticipated future population growth in the region, but there are no project components that would induce growth.

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

No Impact—The project would not impact existing housing or displace any people.

3.2.15 Public Services

CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services

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

Fire protection?

No Impact—The project would not induce the need for any new or altered fire protection services.

Police protection?

No Impact—The project would not induce the need for any new or altered police protection services.

Schools?

No Impact—The project would not induce the need for any new or altered school services.

Parks?

No Impact—The project would not induce the need for any new or altered park services.

Other public facilities?

No Impact—The project would not induce the need for any new or altered other public services.

3.2.16 Recreation

CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation

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

Less Than Significant Impact—As a highway transportation operations improvement project that would not increase the highway capacity, it would not cause growth or generate additional population in the area that would otherwise increase uses in local and regional parks and other recreational properties.

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

No Impact—The project does not include recreational facilities or require new or expanded recreational facilities.

3.2.17 Transportation

CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation

Would the project:

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

No Impact—The project would reduce intersection delays, which will improve circulation and include improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities at the project intersections. It is consistent with applicable regional and local plans and programs.

b) Conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

No Impact—The project began the draft environmental document preparation phase prior to the Caltrans deadline for the requirement to analyze traffic impacts using the vehicle miles traveled metric in place of level of service method. The original traffic

analysis used the level of service metric, and subsequently an addendum to the Traffic Operations Analysis Report was prepared that uses modeling to assess delay metrics.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Though the project would not increase capacity of the corridor overall, an analysis was conducted to assess travel inducement of the project, as discussed in Sections 2.1.9 and 3.2.22 (Volume 2 of the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment includes the report State Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project – Estimation of Induced Traffic Demand, September 2020). The induced travel assessment concluded that Alternative 1 would not add lane miles within the project limits and therefore would not induce travel demand or increased vehicle miles traveled. Updated Alternative 1 with hybrid roundabout design at the three eastern intersections is estimated to add less than one-half mile of a lane mile within the project limits (see Section 2.2.6). Alternative 2 would generate additional vehicle miles traveled because of the additional short segments of lanes at the nine intersections within the project limits. However, the vehicle miles traveled estimates for Alternative 2 would be below the threshold used in the analysis for increased daily vehicle miles traveled within the region. Therefore, the project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 (b).

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

No Impact—The project is designed to include required standards for highway safety. The roundabouts alternative (Alternative 1) has design features inherent to roundabouts that present fewer potential vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-pedestrian conflict points, compared to signalized intersections. Alternative 2, the expanded signalized intersections, would have more potential conflict points than the No-Build Alternative (existing condition) and Alternative 1 roundabouts. In addition, the roundabout designs would have geometry that facilitates slowed speed prior to entry to the intersections. Alternative 2 would have additional exclusive turn lanes, auxiliary lanes approaching and departing the intersections, crosswalks, sidewalks and bicycle areas compared to the existing intersections.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less Than Significant Impact—Once completed, the project would improve highway operations within the project limits and thereby improve emergency access. Intersection modifications in both alternatives would be designed to accommodate emergency and other large vehicles. As discussed in Section 2.1.8, emergency access would be accommodated at all times during construction. Access for fire/paramedic and other emergency service vehicles through the project limits would be enabled through controlled work zones by the project's construction contractor.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. As a result of reductions to current intersection delays and improved travel time reliability through the corridor after project

improvements are constructed and in operation, improved access for emergency services is anticipated to occur under both Build Alternatives. Alternative 1 would include a roundabout design that provides sufficient lane width to allow for other vehicles to move aside for emergency vehicles passing through the intersection. In addition, four of the roundabouts would have multiple lanes, providing additional space. In addition, since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, the designs of the roundabouts at the three easternmost intersections have been updated to hybrid roundabouts as discussed in Section 1.4.1, which would provide some additional lane space in the roundabout. Curbs in the roundabouts would be designed to be traversable by emergency vehicles. Roundabouts are designed to slow traffic down to 25 to 30 miles per hour to navigate through them as discussed in Section 2.1.9. Therefore, with reduced vehicle speeds through multiple roundabouts on the project corridor, there would potentially be some delay for emergency vehicles compared to traveling through multiple signalized intersections in the green phase, depending on the time of day, traffic flow, weather conditions, and other factors. However, because of the reduced speeds and other design elements, studies of roundabouts have shown that they result in fewer and less severe traffic collisions overall compared to signalized intersections, as discussed in Section 2.1.9.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Alternative 2 would include signal prioritization features, which would alter the signal to provide priority access for emergency vehicles through signalized intersections. Since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, Caltrans selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for final design.

During the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final design) phase of the project, design of the intersections would be further refined to best accommodate emergency vehicles. The Build Alternatives would not permanently alter planned routes for emergency responses or evacuations. Therefore, no long-term impacts to emergency services are expected from the project.

3.2.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources

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) 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

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated—For either Build Alternative, if any unanticipated prehistoric cultural resources are discovered during project construction, all earth-moving activity around the immediate discovery area would be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find. If human remains are discovered, the County coroner should be contacted. If the coroner thinks that the remains are Native American, the procedures prescribed in Measure Cultural-4 shall be followed; refer to Section 2.1.11.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. As discussed in Section 3.2.5 (b), there are known prehistoric sites in the project Area of Potential Effects, and the eastern portion of the project limits has moderate to high sensitivity. Archaeological site testing was conducted but could not be completed due to sensitive biological resources in the area. Two sites were previously determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as part of studies for other projects along State Route 68. Untested portions could potentially be impacted by either of the two Build Alternatives; therefore, the Finding of Effect document and Cultural Resources Management Plan present a minor phased approach for testing to determine the project's effects on the potentially sensitive archaeological sites. Adverse effects if determined would be mitigated by implementation of the procedures and treatment plan contained in the Cultural Resources Management Plan so as not to change the significance, once determined after testing is completed, of archaeological resources that may be impacted by the project. Refer to Mitigation Measures Cultural Resources 1 and Cultural Resources 2 in Section 2.1.11.

b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated—Refer to response to question 3.2.18 (a).

3.2.19 Utilities and Service Systems

CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems

Would the project:

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?

Less Than Significant Impact—No new or expanded wastewater treatment, storm drains or other utility lines would be required because the project would redesign the

project intersections for improved operations and traffic flow. The project would not cause population growth that would increase demand for utilities and services in the project area. As discussed in Section 2.1.8, existing utility lines, storm drains and other utility service equipment that would be in conflict with either of the Build Alternative features would be relocated accordingly. Existing overhead utilities will be undergrounded as part of the project and as required by California Public Utilities Commission regulation. Caltrans will coordinate with utility operators to ensure that all utilities within the roadway right-of-way would be relocated before and during construction as standard procedures.

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

Less Than Significant Impact—Any water required for construction work will be brought to the project site as needed by the project's construction contractor. Installation of landscaping would require watering until it is fully established. This will be done either through water trucks or a utility agreement with the local water provider. As a transportation facility improvement project, the project will not require long-term water demand after the landscape plantings are established.

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

No Impact—The project will not affect demand on wastewater treatment facilities. Construction of the project will generate a minimal amount of wastewater. The main source of wastewater would be associated with sanitary waste generated by construction workers. Portable waste facilities will be provided for use by all workers, and sanitary waste generated from the use of these facilities would be disposed of by an approved contractor at an approved disposal site. No long-term generation of wastewater will occur since the proposed improvements are for roadway infrastructure.

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

No Impact—The project is a transportation facility improvement and will not generate population growth or other increases in use of the highway that would generate solid waste in excess of applicable standards. Construction activities will generate solid waste, but the amount would not be in excess of local landfill capacity or be inconsistent with solid waste reduction goals of local agencies.

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

No Impact—Solid waste generated by construction activities will be in compliance with all statutes and regulations related to solid waste as required in the construction contract.

3.2.20 Wildfire

CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire

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

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

Less Than Significant Impact—Once completed, the project will improve highway operations within the project limits and thereby improve emergency access and evacuation. During construction, travel lanes could be restricted, but emergency access will be accommodated at all times.

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?

No Impact—This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The project will not generate population growth and, therefore, will not add occupants or exacerbate wildfire risks.

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

No Impact—No additional infrastructure is being installed that would increase fire risk. Undergrounding of electrical utilities may reduce wildfire risk.

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

No Impact—As described in Section 3.3.5, the project site along the State Route 68 corridor crosses a mix of High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones within both Local Responsibility Area and State Responsibility Area locations. Wildfire can contribute to flooding and landslide hazards by burning off the protective land cover (vegetation) and reducing the ability of soil to absorb rainfall, resulting in runoff of soils and debris that clog roadway culverts and bridges during rains.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. However, neither Build Alternative is expected to increase people or structures to a heightened risk of flooding or landslides due to post-fire slope instability or runoff/drainage changes. The final design of the preferred alternative, Alternative 1,will ensure that changes to regulatory floodways will be avoided and any changes to floodplains will be minimal (see Section 2.2.1). Caltrans will continue to perform regular culvert maintenance to allow for safe passage of stormwater runoff. In addition, slopes in the project are mostly gentle and landslide

potential is primarily low to moderate (see Section 2.2.3). For these reasons, no impact is anticipated.

3.2.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance

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

Significant and Unavoidable Impact—Aesthetics/Visual Resources

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, or No Impact—All other resource areas analyzed in this environmental document.

Substantially degrade the quality of the environment?

The project has the potential to result in a Significant and Unavoidable impact to one resource area, Aesthetics/Visual Resources. The project Visual Impact Assessment found that, under either Build Alternative, the removal of existing trees/vegetation and the addition of new road surfaces, high retaining walls, and other associated transportation infrastructure to the Scenic State Route 68 corridor in the project area would result in a Significant and Unavoidable impact to Aesthetics/Visual Resources.

The project does not have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment in any other resource area discussed in this Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. For all other resource areas that would experience potentially significant environmental impacts related to the project, these impacts would be reduced to a level of Less than Significant with the implementation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.

Substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species?

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Wildlife Habitat: Preliminary estimates are that construction activities for this project could result in up to 24.33 acres of Disturbed Soil Area (temporary disturbance) and 2.12 acres of net new impervious surface area (permanent disturbance) under Alternative 1, and up to 59.54 acres of Disturbed Soil Area (temporary disturbance) and 11.95 acres of net new impervious surface area (permanent disturbance) under Alternative 2 (see Section 2.2.2). As a result, the project has the potential to reduce wildlife habitat.

However, it is unlikely that project activities would substantially reduce wildlife habitat because the project Area of Potential Impact/Biological Study Area sits alongside and

near the shoulders of a busy, noisy highway. According to the Natural Environment Study for the project, these areas are considered to consist mainly of degraded, low-quality wildlife habitat, while higher-quality habitat is widely available outside of the project limits.

In addition, as discussed throughout Chapters 2 and 3 of this document, the implementation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures during construction would reduce any potential project-related impacts to wildlife habitat to a Less than Significant level.

Furthermore, the project includes the planned installation of five enlarged culverts specifically designed to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions on State Route 68, which it is hoped will facilitate wildlife dispersal to new habitat while alleviating the current high rates of roadkill in the area.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Fish Habitat: Build Alternative 2 would have had the potential to temporarily (during construction) impact habitat for South-Central California coast steelhead, if present, in the intermittently flowing El Toro Creek at and downstream from the eastern end of the project area. Under this project alternative, four new bridge piers (support columns) would be added to the two existing piers at the State Route 68 El Toro Creek Bridge to support the planned widening of the bridge (see Section 2.2.1). If Alternative 2 were to have been chosen as the preferred alternative, the design of the State Route 68 El Toro Creek Bridge improvements would be revised and refined after confirmation from the Federal Emergency Management Agency of the existing State Route 68 El Toro Creek Bridge base flood elevation and hydraulic model. The existing bridge hydraulic design components and flood capacity would be analyzed for potential accommodation of the additional bridge columns. Alternative 2 would be designed to maintain the base flood elevation within the Regulated Floodway in accordance with federal regulations and associated Caltrans design criteria, to the extent feasible. Alternative 1, Roundabouts, was selected as the preferred alternative as discussed in Section 1.6.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Any potential temporary (construction-phase) impacts to South-Central California coast steelhead and its habitat in El Toro Creek would be reduced by project design features, standard measures, and avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, including measures to maintain creek flow during construction. Permanent project-related impacts to South-Central California coast steelhead and its habitat in El Toro Creek are not anticipated for Alternative 1, Roundabouts, the selected preferred alternative. See Section 2.3.5, Threatened and Endangered Species, for more information.

Cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels?

The project does not have the potential to cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels. All of the species discussed in Sections 2.3.3, 2.3.4, and 2.3.5, as

well as species not discussed, that could potentially be affected by project activities would be protected from significant project-related impacts by design features, standard measures, Best Management Practices, and avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, including habitat restoration and monitoring. Also, the project is expected to increase overall wildlife survival in the area through the installation of five undercrossings intended to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions (and therefore wildlife deaths) along State Route 68 by providing safe means for animals to cross the highway corridor.

Threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community?

The project does not have the potential to threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community. As identified in the Natural Environment Study, natural communities of concern in the project area include Coast Live Oak Woodland, Monterey Pine Forest, and several other communities that contain special-status plants, such as White-Root Beds, Red Willow Riparian Forest and Woodland, and Purple Needlegrass Grassland (see Section 2.3.1). While these communities would experience temporary and permanent project-related impacts, the impacts will be addressed through the implementation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. Impacts to Coast Live Oak Woodland and Monterey Pine Forest will require compensatory mitigation under CEQA at a 1-to-1 ratio (acreage) for temporary impacts, and a 3-to-1 ratio (acreage) for permanent impacts. Mitigation is expected to be completed onsite in the Caltrans right-of-way within the project area but, if sufficient area is not available onsite, offsite mitigation would be conducted in coordination with a local land conservancy or restoration group.

Temporary impacts to White-Root Beds and Purple Needlegrass Grassland communities would be addressed through restoration using locally appropriate, native plant species. Impacts to Red Willow Riparian Forest and Woodland would be offset through compensatory mitigation under CEQA for riparian impacts, as described in Section 2.3.2.

Substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal?

The project's Area of Potential Impact/Biological Study Area does not contain any species that is so limited in distribution or number that project implementation would substantially reduce its numbers or restrict its range. As an example, though Yadon's piperia is found only in northern Monterey County, it occurs in three separate populations within that area: the general vicinity of the proposed project (including designated critical habitat at Jacks Peak), the Prunedale Hills, and an isolated population in Big Sur.

All of the sensitive species discussed in Sections 2.3.3, 2.3.4, and 2.3.5 that could potentially be affected by project activities would be protected by design features, standard measures, Best Management Practices, and avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, including habitat restoration and monitoring. Also, the project is expected to increase overall wildlife survival in the area through the installation of five undercrossings

intended to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions (and therefore wildlife deaths) along State Route 68 by providing safe means for animals to cross the highway corridor.

Eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Several technical studies pertaining to cultural resources in the project area were consulted in the preparation of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact (see Section 2.1.11). The project does not have the potential to eliminate important Californian historic or prehistoric resources, nor would the project cause any significant impacts to these resources after mitigation.

Historic Resources: Twenty historic-era properties within the project Architectural Study Area were evaluated or reevaluated for cultural significance. The only significant historic resource identified from this process was Tarpy's Roadhouse at 2999 Monterey Salinas Highway (State Route 68) in Monterey. The project has been designed to avoid any temporary or permanent impacts to this property.

Archaeological Resources: A one-half-mile radius records search for archaeological resources in the vicinity of the project turned up 36 resources, including seven prehistoric or multi-component (both prehistoric and historic resources) sites that are in or bisect the project study area. Querying the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service's Soil Survey Geographic Database further revealed that the eastern portion of the project area is considered to have a moderate to high potential for buried archaeological sites. Therefore, because both Build Alternatives have the potential for deep ground disturbance (over 3 feet of depth) during construction, buried archaeological remains could be encountered by earth disturbance activities.

As discussed in Section 2.1.11, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures would reduce the chance of significant project-related impacts to archaeological resources. These include adhering to the requirements of the Programmatic Agreement and Cultural Resources Management Plan, and following all regulations pertaining to the discovery and treatment of human remains and to the discovery of unanticipated cultural effects.

Paleontological Resources: The project's Paleontological Identification Report/ Paleontological Evaluation Report (PIP/PER) states that several fossil-bearing rock formations occur in the project area, so the potential exists for construction earthworks such as grading and excavating to expose or damage paleontological resources (see Section 2.2.4). Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures will be implemented that include preparation and implementation of a Paleontological Mitigation Plan.

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.)

Significant and Unavoidable Impact—Aesthetics/Visual Resources.

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, or No Impact—All other resource areas analyzed in this environmental document.

This section has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The cumulative impact analysis of the project is addressed in full in Section 3.4 in this final environmental document. A summary of the analysis is provided below.

The project Cumulative Impact Analysis found that the project would contribute to an existing adverse cumulative impact in nine resource areas:

- Jurisdictional Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Habitat
- California Red-Legged Frog
- California Tiger Salamander
- South-Central California Coast Steelhead DPS
- Southwestern Pond Turtle
- Coast Live Oak Woodland and Coast Live Oak Trees
- Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey Pine Trees
- Yadon's Piperia
- Paleontological Resources
- Visual/Aesthetic Resources

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Cumulative Impact Analysis concluded that impacts to the first nine of these resources would not be cumulatively considerable. Project design features, standard measures, Best Management Practices, and avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures would reduce significant project-related impacts for these eight resource areas to a level of Less Than Significant.

However, the Cumulative Impact Analysis found that the project would make a considerable contribution to cumulative impacts to Aesthetics/Visual Resources. Both Build Alternatives would result in a significant visual alteration of the project area. The project intersections are within a Monterey County-designated Scenic Highway Corridor, mainly in an attractive rural/semi-rural landscape that has experienced some degree of development, drainage modifications, and loss of native vegetation over the past century and longer. If implemented, the project would involve the addition of project elements including roadway expansion, extensive retaining walls, removal of trees and vegetation, heightened signage, fencing, and increased roadside fixtures such as guardrails and barriers. The project would contribute to an overall increase of the built character within this corridor and a resulting diminishment of the natural beauty along State Route 68 that is highly valued by residents and visitors alike. While design elements proposed for the project would partially alleviate these effects, they would not reduce this impact to a Less than Significant level under CEQA. As a result, the

Cumulative Impact Analysis concluded that "*Although the outlined mitigation measures would alleviate some visual impacts, the contribution of the proposed project to the cumulative visual impact may be, and will likely be, considerable.*"

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

Significant and Unavoidable Impact—Aesthetics/Visual Resources.

Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, or No Impact—All other resource areas analyzed in this environmental document.

The project does not have environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings aside from the predicted Significant and Unavoidable impact to Aesthetics/Visual Resources discussed above.

3.2.22 Senate Bill 743/Induced Demand Analysis

Affected Environment

This section is based on the analysis of induced traffic demand included in the technical memorandum prepared by Caltrans: State Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project – Estimation of Induced Traffic Demand (September 25, 2020). The memorandum addresses the potential for induced traffic demand and/or increases in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) that could be associated with the proposed project improvements at the nine intersections within the project limits. The affected environment for both Build Alternatives—Alternative 1, Roundabouts, and Alternative 2, Signalized Intersections with Expanded Lane Channelization—is described in Chapter 1, Section 1.4, and in Section 2.1.9, Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities.

Environmental Consequences

The State of California's Office of Planning and Research released the Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA (Office of Planning and Research Advisory) in December 2018. The advisory states that many transportation projects can change travel patterns, and those that would cause additional vehicle travel must quantify the amount of additional vehicle travel, also referred to as "induced vehicle travel," to assess specific impacts that would result. Induced vehicle travel is measured in vehicle miles traveled, the amount of travel for all vehicles in a geographic region over a given period, either daily or a one-year period.

Transportation improvement projects that create additional lane miles and expand roadway capacity must analyze induced vehicle travel measured in vehicle miles traveled, according to the Office of Planning and Research Advisory. The advisory also lists types of projects not considered to be capacity-increasing, and which are therefore exempt from vehicle miles traveled analysis requirements. Both Build Alternatives of the current project (roundabouts and reconfiguration of existing traffic control devices) are included in the types of improvements exempt from vehicle miles traveled analysis, in

that those improvements are not likely to lead to a substantial or measurable increase in vehicle travel.

While the project is not a capacity-increasing project, Alternative 2 does add short lane segments at each of the nine intersections as part of the proposed signalized intersection lane channelization modifications. The proposed additional turning lanes, and elongation of turning and/or auxiliary lanes under Alternative 2 would add an estimated combined total of 2.2 miles of additional lane miles through the 9-mile project limits. Under Alternative 2, an additional through lane would be built between some of the more closely spaced intersections. Though the two Build Alternatives are exempt by their project types, an analysis of potential for induced travel demand and additional vehicle miles traveled was conducted for the additional combined lane miles under Alternative 2; Alternative 1 was analyzed as well for comparative consistency, though no through lanes are proposed between intersections with the roundabout designs.

This paragraph was added after the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, the roundabout designs at the three easternmost intersection locations were updated by Caltrans to hybrid (a combination of two by one (dual- and single-) lane) designs from single-lane roundabouts, as discussed in Section 1.6. The additional travel lane at two of the four sides of the roundabout circles at these three locations would add a combined total of 0.40 lane mile, less than one-half-mile within the project corridor. This relatively small amount of additional lane mile would not increase highway capacity overall as these small segments of second lanes are at spot locations; they would, however, serve to further improve traffic flow through the roundabouts measured in delay reduction as discussed in the Traffic and Transportation section of this document. Therefore, the minor amount of additional lane mile due to the three updated roundabout designs at the eastern end of the project do not alter the conclusions of the Induced Traffic Demand analysis discussed below as presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

The estimation of induced vehicle miles traveled followed the Office of Planning and Research Advisory's four-step analysis process summarized as follows. Further specifics in the analysis calculations can be referenced in the Induced Demand memorandum:

1) Determine the total lane miles over an area that fully captures travel behavior changes resulting from the project.

2) Determine the percent change in total lane miles that will result from the project.

3) Determine the total existing vehicle miles traveled over that same area.

4) Multiply the percent increase in lane miles by the existing vehicle miles traveled, and then multiply that by the elasticity factor from the induced travel literature.

The elasticity factor indicates the percentage of increase in vehicle miles traveled based on the percentage of change in lane miles resulting from a project. An elasticity factor of 0.75 was used for the analysis of the two Build Alternatives, based on a University of

California, Davis Induced Travel Calculator that uses that factor for Class 2 (expressways) and Class 3 (principal arterials) roadway facilities, which are the types of facilities in Monterey County.

The analysis concluded the following for each of the Build Alternatives, based on the method in the Office of Planning and Research Advisory, approximate lane miles of the regional transportation network in the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments Region of 1,240 miles, the demand elasticity factor of 0.75, and existing vehicle miles traveled in the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments region of 14,451,056 total daily vehicle miles traveled. The analysis provided the following induced demand estimates for the Build Alternatives:

- Alternative 1 - Roundabouts: no additional daily vehicle miles traveled resulting from the project (no increase in lane miles).
- Alternative 2 - Expanded Signalized Intersections: 19,337 additional daily vehicle miles traveled resulting from the project (increase in 2.2 total lane miles).

The vehicle miles traveled analysis then estimated a project-level threshold of significance for vehicle miles traveled increases that would achieve legally mandated greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for the region. The total daily increase in vehicle miles traveled in the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments region permissible from the base year 2015 and 2040 that would meet the California Air Resources Board 2017 Scoping Plan target was 2,080,015 daily vehicle miles traveled. To determine project-specific vehicle miles traveled significance thresholds, based on the percentage of the project area lane miles to regional lane miles and allocation of allowable daily vehicle miles traveled for the project was calculated to be 29,664, factoring in the total regional lane miles (1,240), the project area lane miles (17.8) (lane lines within the project limits), and the percentage of the regional lane miles within the project limits (1.44 percent).

The vehicle miles traveled allocation for the proposed project following the Office of Planning and Research Advisory methodology resulted in allowable additional daily vehicle miles traveled for the project of 29,664 vehicle miles traveled (percentage of regional lane miles from Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments Traffic Model multiplied by allowable regional daily vehicle miles traveled of 2,080,015). The additional combined 2.2 lane miles under Alternative 2 (a 0.134 percent increase in daily vehicle miles traveled in the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments region) would potentially result in about additional 19,337 vehicle miles traveled per day. This amount is within the threshold of 29,664 vehicle miles traveled allowable per the analysis as noted above.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. As noted above, updated Alternative 1 with modification of the three easternmost project intersections to hybrid design would add a combined total of 0.40 lane mile, less than one-half-mile within the project corridor. This relatively small amount of additional lane mile would not increase highway capacity overall as these small segments of second lanes are at spot locations. Alternative 1

would not, therefore, induce travel demand or increased vehicle miles traveled. Alternative 2 would potentially generate additional vehicle miles traveled because of the additional short segments of lanes within the project limits at the nine intersections. However, the estimates would be below a project threshold of significance for increased daily vehicle miles traveled within the region. In addition, Caltrans Transportation Analysis under CEQA Guidance states that a small increase in vehicle miles traveled associated with the types of transportation improvements on the list of exempt types of projects in the Office of Planning and Research Advisory would likely not be determined significant. While Alternative 2 would add short lengths of lane segments and turn lanes that, when considered in total, would have the potential to result in some additional vehicle miles traveled, the potential increase is a 0.134 percent increase within the regional total. This supports a determination that Alternative 2 is consistent with the Caltrans Transportation Analysis under CEQA screened list of non-capacity increasing projects that would not result in a substantial increase in vehicle travel, and the Office of Planning and Research's list of exempt project types and is therefore not considered to result in a significant increase in vehicle miles traveled.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

3.2.23 Wildfire

Regulatory Setting

Senate Bill 1241 required the Office of Planning and Research, the Natural Resources Agency, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) to develop amendments to the "CEQA Checklist" for the inclusion of questions related to fire hazard impacts for projects located on lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones. The 2018 updates to the CEQA Guidelines expanded this to include projects "near" these very high fire hazard severity zones.

Affected Environment

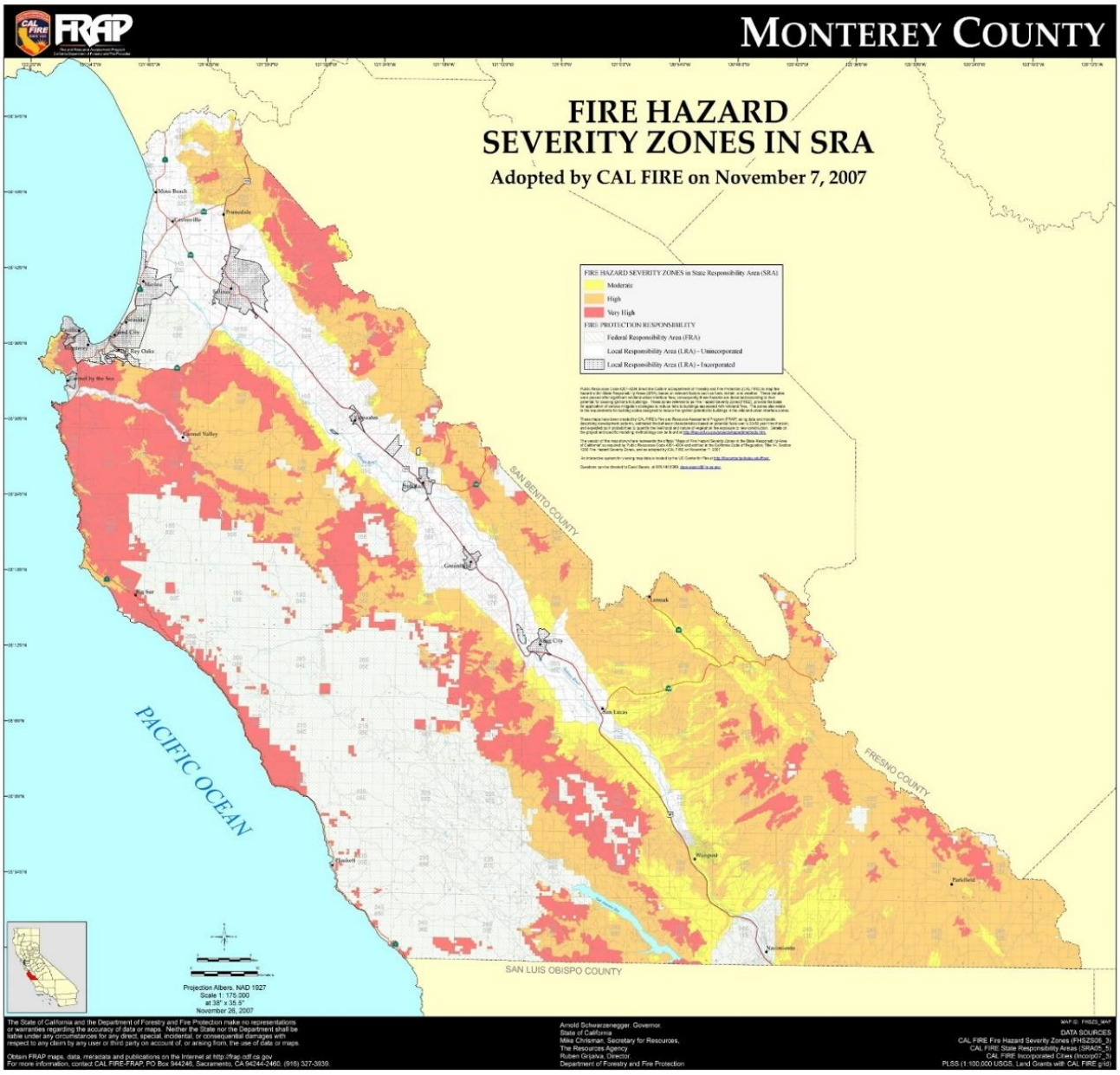
While all of California is prone to some degree of wildfire hazard, some areas have increased fire hazard because of local topography, vegetation, and potential weather conditions. CalFire is required by law to map areas of significant fire hazards, which are delineated in fire hazard severity zones (Public Resources Code 4201-4204 and Government Code 51175-89). The fire hazard severity zones are designated for both areas of local and state responsibility and identify areas with moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity.

The State Route 68 project area consists of a range of ecosystems, including annual (non-native) grassland, oak woodland, riparian corridors, and Monterey pine forest, which are at risk from wildfire. Existing development varies across the corridor with suburban neighborhoods tucked into the Monterey pine forest at the western end of the project, shifting to low-density rural residential along the corridor east of State Route 218. CalFire's Fire Hazards Severity Zone maps for Monterey County show that the fire hazard severity along most of the State Route 68 corridor is classified as high or very

high fire hazard both in in the local responsibility areas and the state responsibility areas. Refer to Figure 3.2.23.1.

In addition, future climate forecasts suggest that California wildfires will worsen. In Caltrans District 5, and across the state, higher temperatures and changing precipitation are expected to affect both the intensity and scale of wildfires (see Section 3.3.5). Wildfires can also contribute to flooding and landslide hazards because they burn off the protective land cover and reduce the ability of soil to absorb rainfall. This loss of cover can result in runoff of soils and debris that clog roadway culverts and bridges during rains. The Caltrans District 5 Vulnerability Assessment (2019) states that as early as 2025 most of the State Highway System will lie in areas of medium to very high wildfire concern and by 2055 most of the State Highway System will lie in areas of very high wildfire concern. In Monterey County, the miles of state highways in medium to high wildfire concern areas will increase from 154 miles in 2025 to 178 miles in 2055.

Figure 3.2.23.1 Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Areas for Monterey County



Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1

Research data on roundabout performance during emergency evacuations is limited. However, limited research data and assessments of evacuations indicate that roundabouts do not impede emergency evacuation and may facilitate safer evacuation. There is no research supporting the various published opinion statements that roundabouts impede emergency evacuations.

Taking into consideration the available research data, the roundabouts would not impede emergency evacuation efforts over signalized intersections. The operation of roundabouts is considered more reliable because roundabouts do not require functioning signal lights, sensors, or electronic timing to function and will continue to operate as designed during a power outage.

Studies have shown that modern roundabout design allows for fire engines and other large equipment to travel (at slower speeds) unimpeded through properly sized and engineered roundabouts. Some “training” of the public on how to properly move through a roundabout to make way for emergency vehicles may be necessary. The hybrid design and multi-lane design at State Route 218/State Route 68 will provide additional lane spaces for vehicles in a roundabout circle to pull over for emergency vehicles, and at single-lane roundabouts non-emergency vehicles may pull over onto the highway shoulder before and after the roundabout. Final design for the roundabouts in the next phase of the project will further refine emergency vehicle access elements.

Alternative 2

In Alternative 2, intersections will continue to operate as they currently do for emergency response and evacuations.

No-Build Alternative

In the No-Build Alternative, no modifications will be made to the intersections, and they will continue to operate as they currently do for emergency response and evacuations.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Alternative 1

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. As part of project outreach, coordination has been conducted and will continue with local fire agencies to provide information on educational resources that can be shared with the public . Such information can be made available at emergency response fairs held locally. Design considerations were made to ensure accommodation of large vehicles through the roundabouts, including mountable aprons and curbs in the central island intended for use by large vehicles and wider entry and exit lanes for efficient movement into and out of the roundabout.

Alternative 2

No anticipated consequences are identified for Alternative 2, so no avoidance or minimization measures are proposed.

3.3 Climate Change

Climate change refers to long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other elements of the Earth’s climate system. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, established by the United Nations and World Meteorological Organization in 1988, is devoted to greenhouse gas emissions reduction and climate

change research and policy. Climate change in the past has generally occurred gradually over millennia or more suddenly in response to cataclysmic natural disruptions. The research of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other scientists over recent decades, however, has unequivocally attributed an accelerated rate of climatological changes over the past 150 years to greenhouse gas emissions generated from the production and use of fossil fuels.

Human activities generate greenhouse gases consisting mostly of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, tetrafluoromethane, hexafluoroethane, sulfur hexafluoride, and various hydrofluorocarbons. Carbon dioxide is the most abundant greenhouse gas; while it is a naturally occurring and necessary component of Earth's atmosphere, fossil-fuel combustion is the main source of additional, human-generated carbon dioxide that is the main driver of climate change. In the U.S. and in California, transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, mostly carbon dioxide.

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

3.3.1 Regulatory Setting

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

Federal

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Please Note: the NEPA Phase II regulation that required climate change to be analyzed will be rescinded pursuant to the Removal of NEPA Implementing Regulations CEQ Interim Rule (effective April 11, 2025). However, inclusion of federal regulatory language was included in this section prior to requirement to consider climate change under NEPA and prior to the recission of the NEPA Phase II regulations, on which that requirement was based. Therefore, the language below pertaining to federal policy and/or requirements is no longer applicable to the project and is retained for informational purposes only.

To date, no national standards have been established for nationwide mobile-source greenhouse gas reduction targets, nor have any regulations or legislation been enacted

specifically to address climate change and greenhouse gas emissions reduction at the project level.

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

The Federal Highway Administration recognizes the threats that extreme weather, sea-level change, and other changes in environmental conditions pose to valuable transportation infrastructure and those who depend on it. The Federal Highway Administration, therefore, supports a sustainability approach that assesses vulnerability to climate risks and incorporates resilience into planning, asset management, project development and design, and operations and maintenance practices (Federal Highway Administration, 2022). This approach encourages planning for sustainable highways by addressing climate risks while balancing environmental, economic, and social values—"the triple bottom line of sustainability" (Federal Highway Administration, no date.). Program and project elements that foster sustainability and resilience also support economic vitality and global efficiency, increase safety and mobility, enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve the quality of life.

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

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

State

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

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

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

Executive Order S-01-07 (January 18, 2007): This order sets forth the low carbon fuel standard for California. Under this order, the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuels is to be reduced by at least 10 percent by the year 2020. The California Air Resources Board readopted the low carbon fuel standard regulation in September 2015, and the changes went into effect on January 1, 2016. The program establishes a strong framework to promote the low-carbon fuel adoption necessary to achieve the governor's 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas reduction goals.

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

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

Executive Order B-16-12 (March 2012): This order requires State entities under the direction of the Governor, including the California Air Resources Board, the California Energy Commission, and the Public Utilities Commission, to support the rapid commercialization of zero-emission vehicles. It directs these entities to achieve various benchmarks related to zero-emission vehicles.

Executive Order B-30-15 (April 2015): This order establishes an interim statewide greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 to

ensure California meets its target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. It further orders all state agencies with jurisdiction over sources of greenhouse gas emissions to implement measures, pursuant to statutory authority, to achieve reductions of greenhouse gas emissions to meet the 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets. It also directs the California Air Resources Board to update the Climate Change Scoping Plan to express the 2030 target in terms of million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. Greenhouse gases differ in how much heat each trap in the atmosphere, called global warming potential. Carbon dioxide is the most important greenhouse gas, so amounts of other gases are expressed relative to carbon dioxide, using a metric called "carbon dioxide equivalent." The global warming potential of carbon dioxide is assigned a value of 1, and the global warming potential of other gases is assessed as multiples of carbon dioxide. Finally, it requires the Natural Resources Agency to update the state's climate adaptation strategy, *Safeguarding California*, every three years and to ensure that its provisions are fully implemented.

Senate Bill 32, Chapter 249, 2016: This bill codifies the greenhouse gas reduction targets established in Executive Order B-30-15 to achieve a mid-range goal of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

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

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

Senate Bill 150**,** Chapter 150, 2017, Regional Transportation Plans: This bill requires the California Air Resources Board to prepare a report that assesses progress made by each metropolitan planning organization in meeting its established regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

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

Assembly Bill 1279, Chapter 337, 2022, The California Climate Crisis Act: This bill mandates carbon neutrality by 2045 and establishes an emissions reduction target of 85 percent below 1990 levels as part of that goal. This bill solidifies a goal included in Executive Order B-55-18. It requires the California Air Resources Board to work with

relevant state agencies to ensure that updates to the scoping plan identify and recommend measures to achieve these policy goals and to identify and implement a variety of policies and strategies that enable carbon dioxide removal solutions and carbon capture, utilization, and storage technologies in California, as specified.

3.3.2 Environmental Setting

The project sits along 8.9 miles of the scenic State Route 68 corridor in Monterey County, between the cities of Monterey and Salinas. The western end of the project area is in the City of Monterey, about 1.5 miles southeast of Monterey Bay; the eastern end is in unincorporated Monterey County, just west of the Toro Park community. The project is outside of the state-designated Coastal Zone.

Land uses in the project area include residential, commercial, industrial, airport, conservation open space, and public lands. The State Route 68 corridor carries 25,000 to 30,000 vehicles per day and is of regional importance due to its facilitation of travel for commuters, freight and agricultural goods, and visitors (tourism) (Transportation Agency for Monterey County 2017). The corridor is also prized for its scenic beauty, and the surrounding, largely natural landscapes—notably, Fort Ord National Monument—support significant wildlife habitat.

As part of the Monterey Bay region, the project corridor is characterized by dry summers, rainy winters, prevailing northwesterly winds, and mild year-round temperatures. During summer, a high-pressure cell centered over the northeastern Pacific Ocean results in stable meteorological conditions in the region, while during winter the Pacific high-pressure cell weakens, resulting in increased precipitation and storm activity. Average annual precipitation in the area is approximately 19 inches (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, no date).

The project area is within the North Central Coast Air Basin. Air quality is generally good in the basin, which is in attainment for all federal ambient air quality standards but is currently in nonattainment for airborne particulates less than 10 microns in diameter (PM10) under state standards.

A variety of native plant communities is present in the area, with coast live oak woodland/forest, arroyo willow thickets, and Monterey pine forest/woodland being the most common. The landscape also includes developed, landscaped, and ruderal/disturbed areas. Potential natural hazards in the area include wildfire, flooding, and geologic hazards including both seismic hazards and non-seismically induced earth movement.

In most of the project area, the State Route 68 corridor stays in the drainages of Canyon del Rey Creek, which flows west to the Pacific Ocean, and east-flowing El Toro Creek, which is a tributary to the Salinas River. The highway corridor also intersects and/or parallels several other tributary drainages. The highway corridor is nestled between higher land to both the north and south. On the north, the terrain consists of eroded ridges that rise to about 950 feet above mean sea level near Fort Ord National Monument. To the south, a west-east ridge between State Route 68 and the parallel

Carmel River Valley ascends first gradually, and then sharply, as the road heads east toward Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road.

The State Route 68 corridor is vulnerable to natural hazards, including wildfire, flooding, and landslides. The project site includes High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones within both Local Responsibility Area and State Responsibility Area locations (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 2007). The California State Geoportal database identifies two historic wildfires in the immediate vicinity of the project site: the 90-acre Laureles Fire (2015), started by a vehicle, and the 632-acre Los Laureles Fire (1970), cause unknown (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 2019).

The project area is also crossed by three mapped segments of the Chupines earthquake fault, none of which are currently known to be active. The nearest known active fault is the San Andreas, about 30 miles east of the project site.

In the project area, State Route 68 is a two-lane conventional highway with 12-foot lanes, 8-foot outside shoulders, and a speed limit of 55 miles per hour. The route is heavily used during morning and evening peak hours and currently experiences heavy congestion leading to travel delays, mainly at signalized intersections. Target Level of Service for all nine project intersections is Level of Service C during weekday peak hour (morning and evening) operations; however, eight of the intersections have at least one leg below Level of Service C, and three intersections have an average Level of Service below C.

The nearest feasible alternative driving route between Monterey and Salinas involves taking State Route 1 and several other roads (Del Monte Boulevard, Reservation Road, Blanco Road, West Alisal Street), making this a less efficient option compared to State Route 68 in an uncongested condition.

As of July 2023, scheduled public transit service along the State Route 68 corridor exists only along approximately the westernmost 3 miles of the project area (going no farther east than York Road), due to delays at intersections that negatively affect reliable travel time along the corridor. Though the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan found that bicycle and pedestrian activity is present at many of the project intersections, a lack of sufficient bike and pedestrian facilities—along with a high number of conflict points at intersections—lead to increased delay for both bicyclists and vehicles at intersections (Transportation Agency for Monterey County 2017).

Greenhouse gas emissions analysis conducted for the *Final State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan* found that under existing conditions the State Route 68 corridor (including stretches outside the project limits) generates 30 tons of greenhouse gas emissions daily during morning/evening peak periods. Greenhouse gas reduction policies and strategies in the project area are addressed in various regional and local planning documents, including the Monterey County General Plan *Conservation and Open Space Element* (amended December 2020), the City of Monterey *Climate Action Plan* (2016), the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's 2022 *Regional Transportation*

Plan, and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments' (AMBAG) *2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy* (MTP/SCS), which contains the Regional Transportation Plan.

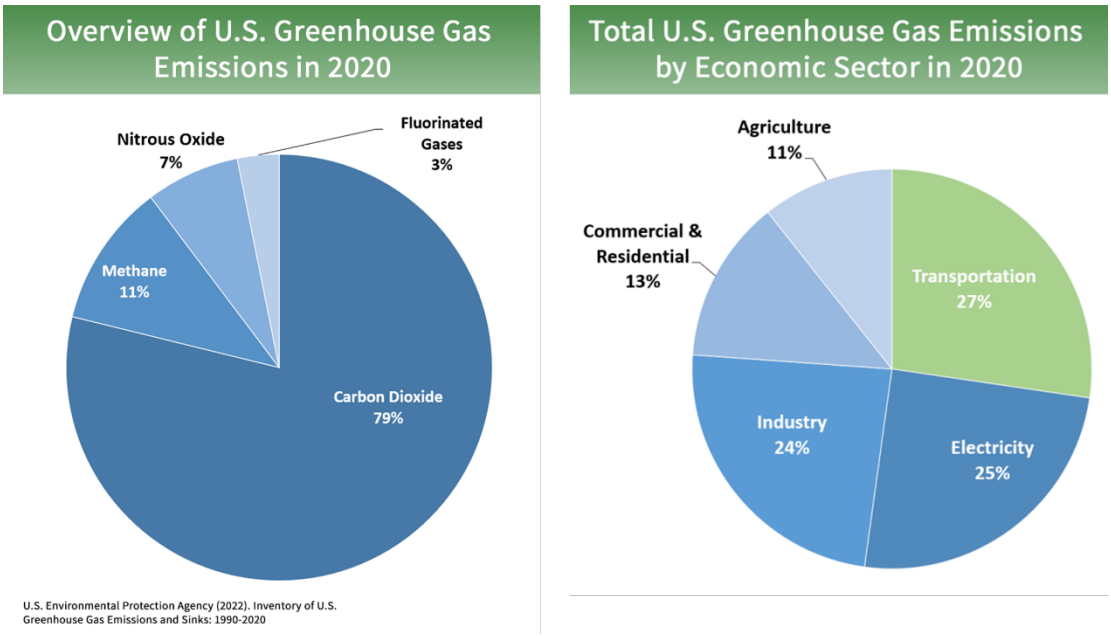
Greenhouse Gas Inventories

A greenhouse gas emissions inventory estimates the amount of greenhouse gases discharged into the atmosphere by specific sources over a period of time, such as a calendar year. Tracking annual greenhouse gas emissions allows countries, states, and smaller jurisdictions to understand how emissions are changing and what actions may be needed to attain emission reduction goals. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for documenting greenhouse gas emissions nationwide, and the California Air Resources Board does so for the state, as required by Health and Safety Code Section 39607.4. Cities and other local jurisdictions may also conduct local greenhouse gas inventories to inform their greenhouse gas reduction or climate action plans.

National Greenhouse Gas Inventory

The annual greenhouse gas inventory submitted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to the United Nations provides a comprehensive accounting of all human-produced sources of greenhouse gases in the U.S. Total greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors in 2020 were 5,222 million metric tons, factoring in deductions for carbon sequestration in the land sector. Of these, 79 percent were carbon dioxide, 11 percent were methane, and 7 percent were nitrous oxide; the balance consisted of fluorinated gases. Total greenhouse gases in 2020 decreased by 21 percent from 2005 levels and 11 percent from 2019. The change from 2019 resulted primarily from less demand in the transportation sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. The transportation sector was responsible for 27 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2020, more than any other sector (see Figure 3.3.2.1), and for 36 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion. Transportation carbon dioxide emissions for 2020 decreased by 13 percent from 2019 to 2020 but were 7 percent higher than transportation carbon dioxide emissions in 1990 (see Figure 3.3.2.1) (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2022b).

Figure 3.3.2.1 U.S. 2022 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2022b)



State Greenhouse Gas Inventory

The California Air Resources Board collects greenhouse gas emissions data for transportation, electricity, commercial/residential, industrial, agricultural, and waste management sectors each year. It then summarizes and highlights major annual changes and trends to demonstrate the state's progress in meeting its greenhouse gas reduction goals. The 2022 edition of the greenhouse gas emissions inventory reported emissions trends from 2000 to 2020. Total California greenhouse gas emissions in 2020 were 369.2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, a reduction of 35.3 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent from 2019 and 61.8 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent below the 2020 statewide limit of 431 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. Much of the decrease from 2019 to 2020, however, is likely due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the transportation sector, during which vehicle miles traveled declined under stay-at-home orders and reductions in goods movement. Nevertheless, transportation remained the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 37 percent of statewide emissions (see Figure 3.3.2.2). (Including upstream emissions from oil extraction, petroleum refining, and oil pipelines in California, transportation was responsible for about 47 percent of statewide emissions in 2020; however, those emissions are accounted for in the industrial sector.) California's gross domestic product and greenhouse gas intensity (greenhouse gas emissions per unit of gross domestic product) both declined from 2019 to 2020 (see Figure 3.3.2.3). It is expected that total greenhouse gas emissions will increase as the economy recovers over the next few years (California Air Resources Board 2022a).

Figure 3.3.2.2 California 2022 Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Scoping Plan Category (Source: California Air Resources Board 2022a)

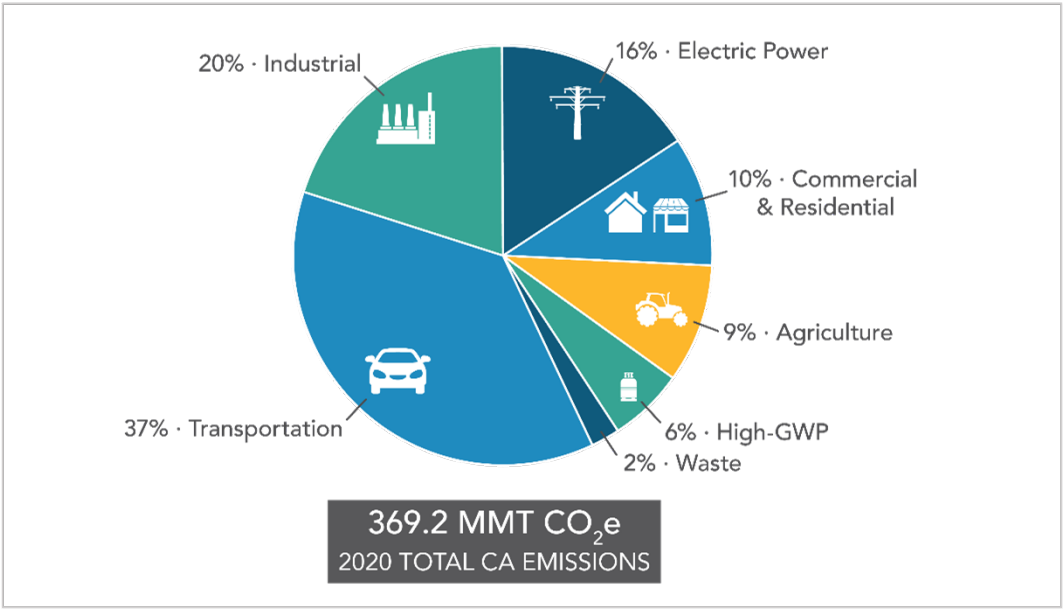
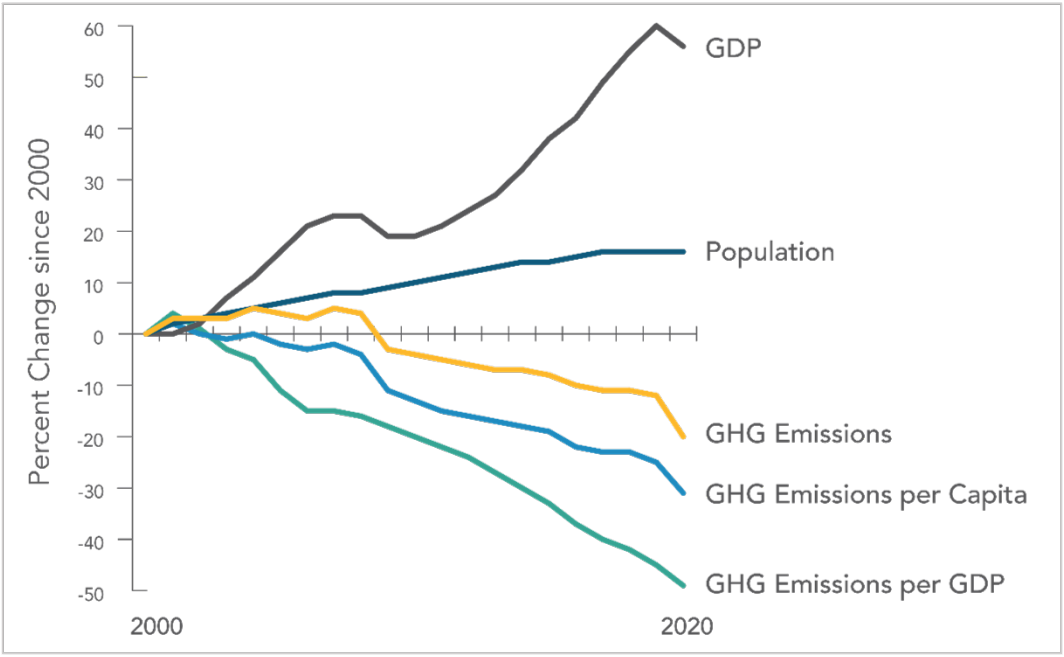


Figure 3.3.2.3 Change in California Gross Domestic Product, Population, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Since 2000 (Source: California Air Resources Board 2022a)



Assembly Bill 32 required the California Air Resources Board to develop a Scoping Plan that describes the approach California will take to achieve the goal of reducing

greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and to update it every five years. The California Air Resources Board adopted the first scoping plan in 2008. The second updated plan, *California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan*, adopted on December 14, 2017, reflects the 2030 target established in Executive Order B-30-15 and Senate Bill 32. The draft 2022 Scoping Plan Update additionally lays out a path to achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 (California Air Resources Board 2022b).

Regional Plans

The California Air Resources Board sets regional greenhouse gas reduction targets for California's 18 Metropolitan Planning Organizations to achieve through planning future projects that will cumulatively achieve those goals and reporting how they will be met in the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. Targets are set at a percent reduction of passenger vehicle greenhouse gas emissions per person from 2005 levels.

The project is in the jurisdiction of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, which is designated by the State of California as the Regional Transportation Agency for the county. The project is consistent with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's mission to develop and maintain a multimodal transportation system that enhances mobility, safety, access, environmental quality, and economic activities in Monterey County.

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County's 2022 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) supports this mission by incorporating State of California sustainability and climate action planning goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The plan identifies State Route 68 as one of two major regional commute routes between Salinas and Monterey that are conventional two-lane roadways heavily congested during peak travel times (Transportation Agency for Monterey County, 2022 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan).

The State Route 68 corridor is also included in the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (MTP/SCS). The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments is the joint power, multi-planning agency for the counties of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz, and is the federal Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region (Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, June 2022).

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County and the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments work together to update the Regional Transportation Plan every four years, and have also coordinated to develop a Policy Element, a Finance Element, and a list of regional transportation investments that achieve greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and support the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (Transportation Agency for Monterey County, 2022 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan). The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments' greenhouse gas reduction target for the region is 6 percent by 2035 (California Air Resources Board, 2022c).

Monterey County does not currently have a standalone climate action plan, but the Monterey County General Plan's Conservation and Open Space Element calls for a variety of greenhouse gas emissions reduction actions. See Table 3.3.2.1, which lists greenhouse gas reduction plans in the local and regional vicinity of the proposed project, for further information.

Table 3.3.2.1. Regional and Local Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plans

Plan Title	Greenhouse Gas Reduction Policies or Strategies
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG). *Moving Forward Monterey Bay 2045: Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy* (adopted June 2022)	This plan seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by: • Developing an integrated, multimodal, equitable transportation system • Expanding the public transit network • Adding strategic capacity and technology enhancements to existing highways • Identifying a list of projects that will add and enhance walking and biking facilities • Adding improved Transportation Systems Management measures • Improving Transportation Demand Management
City of Monterey. *Climate Action Plan* (March 2016)	The City of Monterey's *Climate Action Plan* lists 18 programs, campaigns, and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in six areas: residential, commercial, transportation, solid waste, city government, and water and wastewater. Recommendations include promoting energy conservation and efficiency; continuing with the green business program; promoting electric vehicle charging, recycling, and composting; and adding hybrid vehicles to the City fleet, among others.
County of Monterey. *General Plan – Conservation and Open Space Element* (amended as of December 15, 2020)	The County's *Conservation and Open Space Element*, Policy OS-10.11, calls for the creation of a County climate action plan that would include the following activities: • Establish a current inventory of GHG emissions in the County of Monterey including but not limited to residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural emissions; • Review progress made between 2010 and 2020 to reduce GHG emissions; • Forecast GHG emissions for 2030 for County operations; • Forecast GHG emissions for areas within the jurisdictional control of the County for "business as usual" conditions; • Identify strategies to reduce and sequester GHG emissions and set performance indicators for each strategy; • Quantify the reductions in GHG emissions from the identified strategies and evaluate the social and health impacts that may result from their implementation; • Quantify carbon sequestration in agricultural soils and crops; • Establish requirements for monitoring and reporting of indicators; • Establish a schedule of actions for implementation; • Identify funding sources for implementation; and • Identify a reduction goal for 2045

Plan Title	Greenhouse Gas Reduction Policies or Strategies
Transportation Agency for Monterey County. *2022 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan* (adopted June 2022)	The Regional Transportation Plan includes Policy Objective 3.1, Reduce greenhouse gas emissions consistent with regional targets.
Transportation Agency for Monterey County. *Active Transportation Plan for Monterey County* (adopted June 2018)	The primary goal of this plan is to increase the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking throughout Monterey County. Other goals include improving safety, connectivity, and equity; increasing public outreach; and improving bike/ pedestrian facilities. The plan contains numerous objectives and programs (strategies or actions) to achieve these goals.

3.3.3 Project Analysis

Greenhouse gas emissions from transportation projects can be divided into those produced during operation of the State Highway System (operational emissions) and those produced during construction. The main greenhouse gases produced by the transportation sector are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and hydrofluorocarbons. Carbon dioxide emissions are a product of burning gasoline or diesel fuel in internal combustion engines, along with relatively small amounts of methane and nitrous oxide. A small amount of hydrofluorocarbon emissions related to refrigeration is also included in the transportation sector.

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

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

Operational Emissions

The purpose of the project is to improve traffic flow, reduce collisions between vehicles, reduce collisions between vehicles and wildlife, and improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians at nine congested intersections along State Route 68 in Monterey County.

The heavy congestion currently experienced at these intersections during peak travel hours likely results in elevated greenhouse gas emissions, as the speeding and rapid acceleration/braking that typically characterizes stop-and-go traffic can decrease fuel economy by anywhere from 10 percent to 40 percent (U.S. Department of Energy (U.S.

DOE), Energy Saver: Fuel Economy (source: U.S. Department of Energy, no date). The optimum speed for fuel efficiency is 50 to 55 miles per hour.

The project would not increase the number of travel lanes on State Route 68, and therefore would not increase roadway capacity or amount of vehicle miles traveled. This type of project generally causes minimal or no increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, by restoring traffic speeds to a level closer to the posted 55 mile per hour speed limit in the highway corridor, the project improvements would likely improve overall fuel economy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The project would also help support greenhouse gas reduction goals through the installation of two publicly available Zero Emissions Vehicle (ZEV) charging station systems as a design feature. These Level 2, solar-powered charging systems would be installed in the existing Monterey County Park and Ride lot at the State Route 68/Laureles Grade intersection and would provide charging capability for two electric vehicles at the same time. In summary, no increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions is expected from implementation of the project.

Construction Emissions

Construction greenhouse gas emissions would result from material processing and transportation, onsite construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions would be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases. The use of long-life pavement, improved traffic management plans, and changes in materials can also help offset emissions produced during construction by allowing longer intervals between maintenance and rehabilitation activities.

An Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Memo, dated July 28, 2023, was prepared for the project. Memo preparation was informed by the Caltrans document “Interim Guidance: Determining CEQA significance for GHG Emissions,” dated May 31, 2018.

The Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool (CAL-CET) was used to calculate construction-related greenhouse gas emissions for the project, using the model’s default settings for a Mainline Improvement project. The CAL-CET estimates for carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), and hydrofluorocarbons (HFC) for each alternative are shown in Tables 3.3.3.1 and 3.3.3.2, using an estimated duration of project construction activities of 2,180 working days for Alternative 1 and 2,695 working days for Alternative 2. The emissions estimates are based on assumptions made during the environmental planning phase of the project and are considered “ballpark” energy use projections.

Table 3.3.3.1 Construction Phase Greenhouse Gas Emission Estimates, Alternative 1

Metric	Carbon Dioxide CO2	Methane CH4	Nitrous Oxide N2O	Hydrofluoro-carbons HFC
Daily Average (pounds per day)	4,713	0.108	0.217	0.149
Maximum Daily Average (pounds per day)	9,137	0.247	0.382	0.320
Annual Average (tons per year)	514	0.012	0.024	0.016

Source: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Memo (California Department of Transportation, July 28, 2023)

Table 3.3.3.2 Construction Phase Greenhouse Gas Emission Estimates, Alternative 2

Metric	Carbon Dioxide CO2	Methane CH4	Nitrous Oxide N2O	Hydrofluoro-carbons HFC
Daily Average (pounds per day)	4,172	0.096	0.190	0.119
Maximum Daily Average (pounds per day)	8,111	0.220	0.327	0.229
Annual Average (tons per year)	468	0.011	0.021	0.013

Source: Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Memo (California Department of Transportation, July 28, 2023)

As shown in Table 3.3.3.1, Alternative 1 was projected to produce 514 tons per year of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions during the construction phase. In combination with other project-generated greenhouse gases, this results in an estimated total release of 4,862 tons of CO2 equivalent emissions over the 2,180-day duration of project construction.

Alternative 2 was projected to result in 468 tons per year of CO2 emitted during construction (Table 3.3.3.2). In combination with other project-generated greenhouse gases, this would result in an estimated project total of 5,430 tons of CO2 equivalent emissions over the 2,695-day duration of project construction.

All construction contracts include Caltrans Standard Specifications related to air quality. Section 7-1.02A and 7-1.02C, Emissions Reduction, requires contractors to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and will comply with all California Air Resources Board emission reduction regulations. Section 14-9.02, Air Pollution Control, requires contractors to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. Certain common regulations, such as equipment

idling restrictions, that reduce construction vehicle emissions also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Fuel Consumption

The CAL-CET model also calculates construction-phase fuel consumption. The results of these calculations may be reported in a project's climate change environmental documentation (for example, an environmental impact report), because the amounts and types of fuel consumed directly influence the amount of exhaust released and types of pollutants produced.

Fuel consumption for the construction phase of this project was calculated using CAL-CET and reported in the Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Noise Updated Technical Memo (July 28, 2023). For Alternative 1, maximum daily average fuel consumption for diesel fuel and gasoline was calculated as being 337 gallons and 103 gallons, respectively. Using the estimated Alternative 1 project duration of 2,180 working days, these figures equate to total estimated fuel consumption of up to 734,660 gallons of diesel and 66,400 gallons of gasoline for this project alternative.

For Alternative 2 (2,695 estimated working days), maximum daily average fuel consumption was calculated as being 300 gallons and 88 gallons for diesel and gasoline, respectively. These figures lead to estimates of total project fuel consumption of up to 808,500 gallons of diesel and 237,160 gallons of gasoline under this alternative. See Section 2.2.8 for CAL-CET fuel consumption tables for each Build Alternative.

CEQA Conclusion

The project is intended to reduce travel delays, vehicle collisions, and collisions between wildlife and vehicles, as well as improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians, by improving traffic operations at nine intersections within the State Route 68 corridor. While the project would result in a temporary, unavoidable increase in greenhouse gas emissions during construction, these would be limited by implementation of the measures listed below under "Project-Level Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies." These measures would reduce emissions of airborne pollutants, including greenhouse gases, to the maximum extent feasible.

The project is unlikely to result in any increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions because neither of the Build Alternatives would increase the number of travel lanes on State Route 68 or otherwise increase the highway's vehicle capacity. Therefore, no project-related increase in vehicle miles traveled (and thus vehicle-generated greenhouse gas emissions) is expected to occur as a result of the project.

The project does not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, including those addressing multimodal transportation (transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities). The project would support various emissions reduction policies and strategies in the applicable county, regional, and state plans (see Table 3.3.2.1) through the use of the Project-Level Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies listed below. Because the project would not result in a net increase of greenhouse gas emissions that would conflict with

the goals of Assembly Bill 32 or result in a detrimental impact on the environment, the impact would be less than significant.

In summary, Caltrans is firmly committed to implementing measures to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These measures are outlined in the following section.

3.3.4 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies

Statewide Efforts

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

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

The transportation sector is integral to the people and economy of California. To achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, it is vital that the state build on past successes in reducing criteria and toxic air pollutants from transportation and goods movement.

Greenhouse gas emission reductions will come from cleaner vehicle technologies, lower-carbon fuels, and reduction of vehicle miles traveled. Reducing today's petroleum use in cars and trucks by 50 percent is a key state goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (California Environmental Protection Agency 2015).

In addition, Senate Bill 1386 (Wolk 2016) established as state policy the protection and management of natural and working lands and requires state agencies to consider that policy in their own decision making. Trees and vegetation on forests, rangelands, farms, and wetlands remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through biological processes and sequester the carbon in above-ground and below-ground matter.

Subsequently, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-82-20 to combat the crises in climate change and biodiversity. It instructs state agencies to use existing

authorities and resources to identify and implement near- and long-term actions to accelerate the natural removal of carbon and build climate resilience in our forests, wetlands, urban greenspaces, agricultural soils, and land conservation activities in ways that serve all communities and in particular low-income, disadvantaged, and vulnerable communities. To support this order, the California Natural Resources Agency (2022a) released *Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy,* with a focus on nature-based solutions.

Caltrans Activities

Caltrans continues to be involved on the Governor's Climate Action Team as the California Air Resources Board works to implement Executive Orders S-3-05 and S-01-07 and help achieve the targets set forth in Assembly Bill 32. Executive Order B-30-15, issued in April 2015, and Senate Bill 32 (2016), set an interim target to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The following major initiatives are underway at Caltrans to help meet these targets.

Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure

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

California Transportation Plan

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

Caltrans Strategic Plan

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

Caltrans Policy Directives and Other Initiatives

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

Project-Level Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies

The following measures would be implemented during the construction phase of the project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project.

GHG-1: Reduce construction waste and maximize the use of recycled materials, including but not limited to stockpiling pavement grindings for future use, salvaging rebar from demolished concrete, replaced drainage pipes, and processing waste to create usable fill material.

GHG-2: Operate construction equipment with improved fuel efficiency by:

- Properly tuning and maintaining equipment
- Limiting idling to five minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment
- Using the right-sized equipment for the job
- Use of alternative fuels such as renewable diesel as feasible
- Produce hot mix asphalt with warm mix technology

GHG-3: Implement construction planning to reduce the number of equipment mobilizations needed.

GHG-4: Reduce duration and length of lane closures to minimize traffic disturbances.

GHG-5: Reduce water consumption during construction and prioritize the use of recycled water for construction needs.

GHG-6: Conduct construction environmental training to provide construction personnel with information regarding methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to construction.

GHG-7: Select pavement materials that lower the rolling resistance of highway surfaces as much as possible while still maintaining design and safety standards.

GHG-8: Maintain bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access throughout construction.

3.3.5 Adaptation

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

Federal Efforts

Under NEPA assignment, Caltrans is obligated to comply with all applicable federal environmental laws and Federal Highway Administration NEPA regulations, policies, and guidance.

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

The U.S. Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Climate Adaptation in June 2011 committed the federal Department of Transportation to "integrate consideration of climate change impacts and adaptation into the planning, operations, policies, and programs of the U.S. Department of Transportation in order to ensure that taxpayer resources are invested wisely and that transportation infrastructure, services, and operations remain effective in current and future climate conditions" (U.S. DOT 2011). The U.S. Department of Transportation Climate Action Plan of August 2021 followed up with a statement of policy to "accelerate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector and make our transportation infrastructure more climate change resilient now and in the future," following this set of guiding principles (U.S. DOT 2021):

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

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. This paragraph in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment mentioned federal Executive Order 14008 which ordered federal government agencies to prioritize actions on climate adaptation and resilience in their programs and investments. Pursuant to federal Executive Order 14148 (2025), Executive Order 14008 has been rescinded.

Federal Highway Administration Order 5520 (*Transportation System Preparedness and Resilience to Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events,* December 15, 2014) established Federal Highway Administration policy to strive to identify the risks of climate change and extreme weather events to current and planned transportation systems. The Federal Highway Administration has developed guidance and tools for transportation planning that foster resilience to climate effects and sustainability at the federal, state, and local levels (FHWA 2022).

State Efforts

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

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

Sea level rise is a particular concern for transportation infrastructure in the coastal zone. Major urban airports will be at risk of flooding from sea level rise combined with storm surge as early as 2040; San Francisco International Airport is already at risk. Miles of coastal highways vulnerable to flooding in a 100-year storm event will triple to 370 by 2100, and 3,750 miles will be exposed to temporary flooding. The Fourth Assessment's findings highlight the need for proactive action to address these current and future impacts of climate change.

In 2008, then-governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recognized the need when he issued Executive Order S-13-08, which focused on sea level rise. Technical reports on the latest sea level rise science were first published in 2010 and updated in 2013 and 2017.

The 2017 projections of sea level rise and a new understanding of processes and potential impacts in California were incorporated into the *State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance Update* in 2018. This executive order also gave rise to the *California Climate Adaptation Strategy* (2009), updated in 2014 as *Safeguarding California: Reducing Climate Risk* (Safeguarding California Plan), which addressed the full range of climate change impacts and recommended adaptation strategies. The Safeguarding California Plan was updated in 2018 and again in 2021 as the *California Climate Adaptation Strategy*, incorporating key elements of the latest sector-specific plans such as the *Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy*, *Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan*, *Water Resilience Portfolio,* and the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (described above). Priorities in the 2021 California Climate Adaptation Strategy include acting in partnership with California Native American Tribes, strengthening protections for climate-vulnerable communities that lack capacity and resources, nature-based climate solutions, use of best available climate science, and partnering and collaboration to best leverage resources (California Natural Resources Agency 2022b).

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

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

Caltrans Adaptation Efforts

Caltrans Vulnerability Assessments

Caltrans completed climate change vulnerability assessments to identify segments of the State Highway System vulnerable to climate change effects of precipitation, temperature, wildfire, storm surge, and sea level rise. The climate change data in the assessments were developed in coordination with climate change scientists and experts at federal, state, and regional organizations at the forefront of climate science. The findings of the vulnerability assessments guide analysis of at-risk assets and the development of Adaptation Priority Reports as a method to make capital programming decisions to address identified risks.

Project Adaptation Analysis

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research prepared *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California* (OPR 2017), a guidebook for state agencies performing climate risk analyses to determine how to integrate climate considerations into planning or investment decisions. Assessing the scale, scope, and context of climate disruption for the project means considering the timeframe/lifetime, adaptive capacity, and risk tolerance of the project areas. Ensuring that the climate change analysis adequately addresses a project's impacts and vulnerability reduces the risk of project delays.

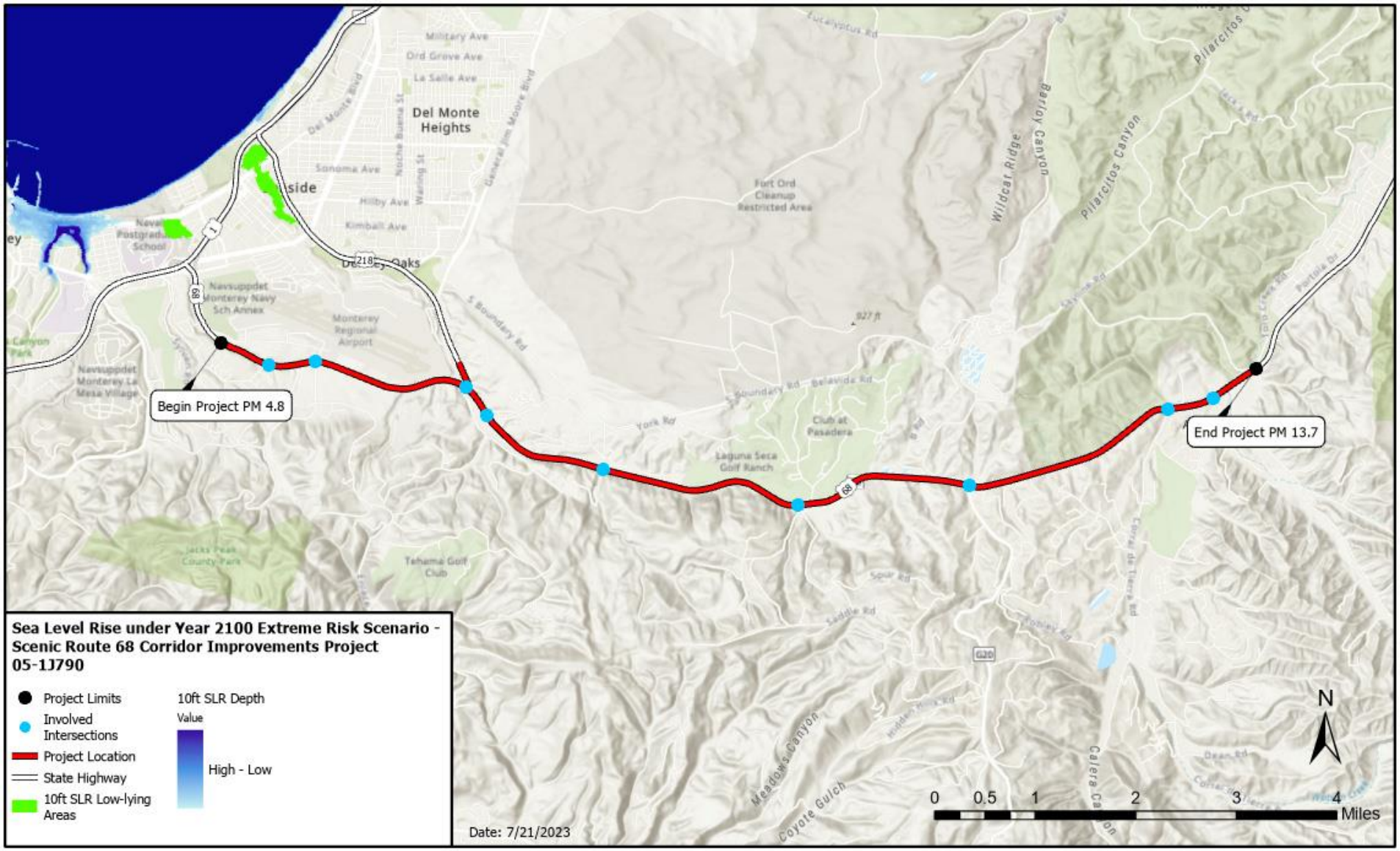
The first step in the process is to identify how climate change could affect a project or plan by identifying impacts of concern and assessing the scale, scope, and context of climate disruption. Next, a climate risk analysis can be conducted by selecting climate change scenarios for analysis and selecting an analytical approach. Following that, a climate-informed decision can be made by evaluating the alternatives and design and applying resilient decision principles. Finally, the agency can track and monitor progress by evaluating determined metrics, adjusting as needed. The adaptation analysis evaluates the first two steps to inform a decision for the project.

In the following sections, the extreme impacts of climate change-based sea level rise, flooding, wildfire, and temperature on the proposed State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project are addressed. Though climate-change risk analysis inherently involves uncertainties as to the timing and intensity of potential risks, the present analysis uses the best available science. The improvements in proposed project are expected to last for decades, so the impacts of extreme events are considered to ensure that planning and investment decisions reflect the current and future climate conditions.

Sea Level Rise

The proposed project is outside the Coastal Zone and not in an area subject to sea level rise (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 2022; Figure 3.3.5.1). Accordingly, direct impacts to transportation facilities within the project area due to projected sea level rise are not expected.

Figure 3.3.5.1 Predicted Coastal Inundation with 10 Feet of Sea Level Rise, Year 2100



Precipitation and Flooding

Climate change modeling shows that the southwestern United States is likely to experience less total precipitation in the coming decades, but that the potential for heavier individual rainstorms may increase. Heavy rains can affect highways by causing flooding, landslides, washouts, or structural damage. These effects can be exacerbated in the aftermath of wildfire on hillslopes such as those above many portions of the State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project site.

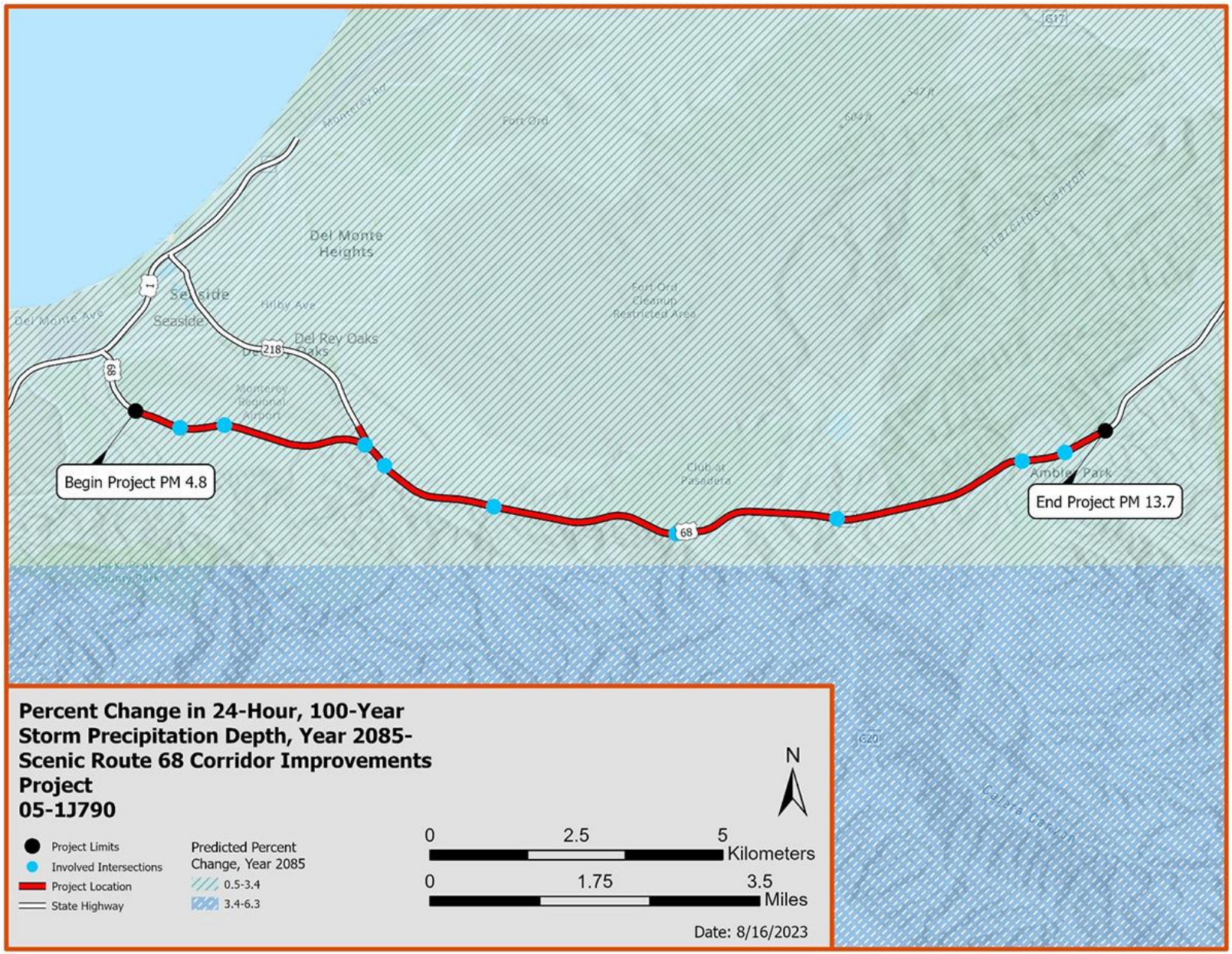
A review of State of California natural resources Geographic Information Systems (GIS) databases and the Caltrans Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment - District 5 Technical Report (Caltrans 2019) indicates that in the immediate project area, the 24-hour precipitation depth for a 100-year storm event is anticipated to increase by 0.5 to 3.4 percent (approximately 0.1 to 0.65 inch) over historical conditions by 2085, if high greenhouse gas emissions continue to the end of the century (the “RCP 8.5” scenario) (Figure 3.3.5.2). Further, the estimated precipitation depth increase is up to 6.3 percent (approximately 1.2 inches) on the high ground to the south of the State Route 68 corridor, which drains north toward the highway. This increased precipitation would result in greater seasonal stream flow, and possibly increased potential for flooding, in project area drainages such as Canyon del Rey Creek and El Toro Creek.

However, construction of the project is not expected to increase the vulnerability of any roadway or other infrastructure along State Route 68 to undesirable effects from increased precipitation or flooding because the project would maintain existing grade/existing elevation in all nearby floodplain areas, would not make any changes to regulatory floodways, and would not significantly alter the El Toro Creek channel at the site of the State Route 68 El Toro Creek Bridge widening. Widening of the State Route 68 El Toro Creek Bridge is proposed under Build Alternative 2 only.

In addition, the project would not support probable incompatible floodplain development such as commercial development or urban growth and would not significantly increase impervious surface in the affected watersheds.

For these reasons, climate change-related increases in precipitation and flooding are not expected to be a concern with the project.

Figure 3.3.5.2 Predicted Percent Change in 24-Hour, 100-Year Storm Precipitation Depth, Year 2085



Wildfire

The project area is susceptible to wildfire due to areas of thick native vegetation, including oak woodlands, pine forest, and chaparral. Fire hazard in this type of setting is increased during hot and dry weather. Wildfire can directly damage asphalt roads by causing damage such as cracking and melting.

Fire can also accelerate erosion by removing the landscape's vegetation cover, burning roots that hold soil in place, and in some cases, causing native plants to release hydrophobic (water-repelling) chemicals into the soil. These conditions greatly increase the potential for destructive flooding, rockfall, and earth movement on steep slopes during periods of heavy precipitation that occur months to years after fire.

The hotter, drier weather conditions and increase in periodic heavy storms that are predicted by climate change models to occur more frequently in California in coming decades are expected to continue exacerbating both wildfire and post-fire flooding/landslide hazards.

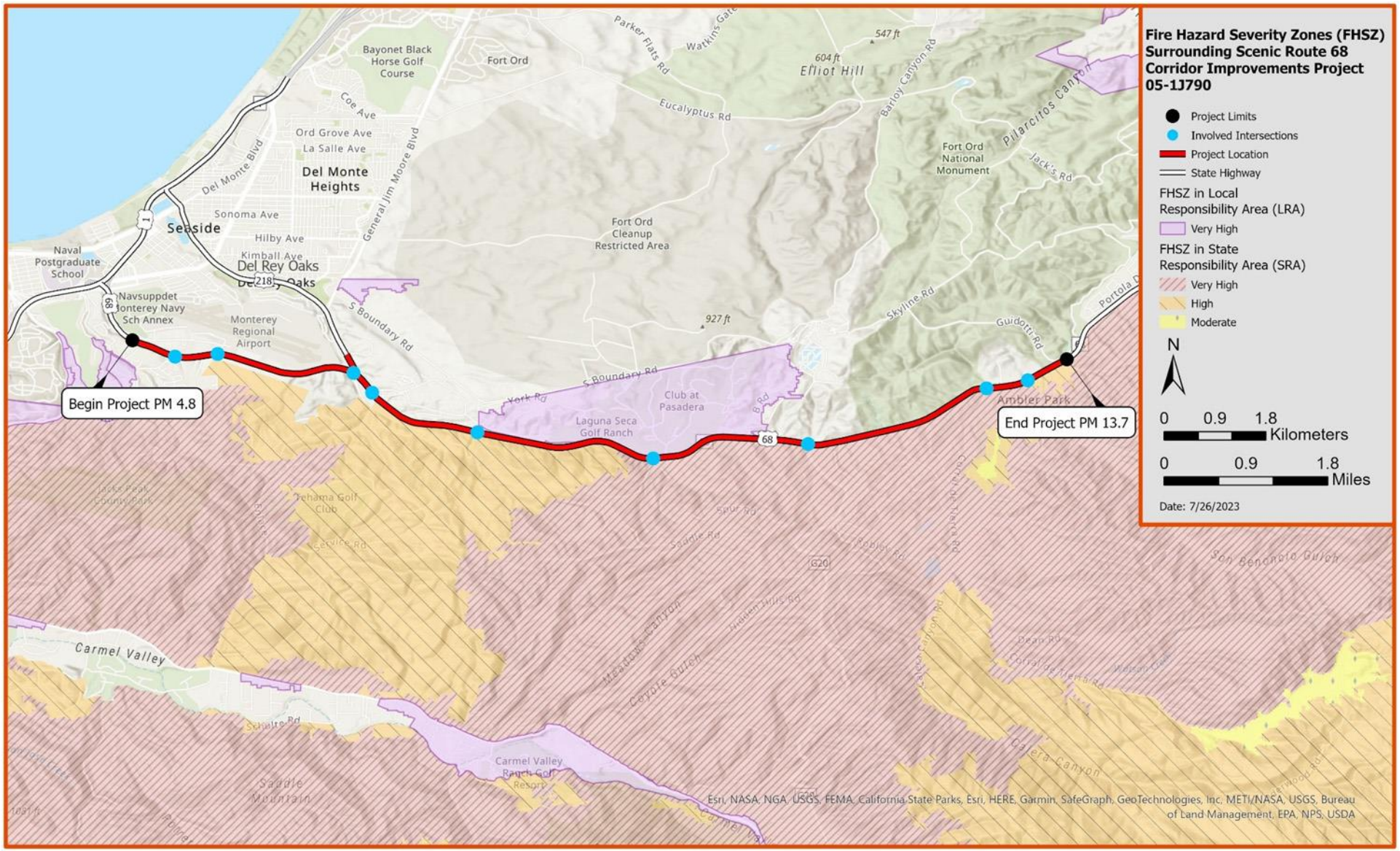
According to the CalFire Fire Hazard Severity Zone online mapping website (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 2007), the project site along the State Route 68 corridor crosses a mix of High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones within both Local Responsibility Area and State Responsibility Area locations (see Figure 3.3.5.3). Other areas along State Route 68 within the project area are unclassified by CalFire for Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

In addition, the Caltrans District 5 climate change vulnerability online mapping tool identifies State Route 68 as a roadway that has High to Very High exposure to wildfire under the year 2085 RCP 8.5 emissions scenario. The Very High category is found from the project's western end to a point about one-quarter mile west of York Road. The remainder of the corridor within the project area falls under the High fire hazard classification.

During the project's construction phase, contractors would be required to comply with Caltrans' Standard Specification 7-1.02M(2), which mandates fire prevention procedures, including a fire prevention plan, to avoid accidental fire starts. The project would feature steel and concrete culverts to reduce the risk of infrastructure damage from wildfire. The box culverts installed for wildlife crossings would be made of reinforced concrete. In addition, the posts for the roadside guardrail assemblies would be steel, and the blocks connecting the rail to the posts would be made of a fire-resistant, recycled plastic material that is not consumed during a wildfire, allowing for the guardrail assembly to remain standing and providing traffic safety until it can be replaced if necessary post-fire.

See Sections 3.2.20 and 3.2.23 of this document for more information regarding wildfire.

Figure 3.3.5.3 CalFire - Fire Hazard Severity Zones 2023



Temperature

Changes in daily temperature can affect pavement quality and durability. The two temperature inputs to consider when selecting a pavement design are the average maximum temperature over seven consecutive days, and the absolute minimum air temperature. Per the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, the pavement design for new construction and reconstruction shall be no less than 40 years, or to about 2065 for this proposed project.

The District 5 climate vulnerability online mapping tool indicates that in the project area, average 7-day maximum temperature is predicted to increase by 8.3 to 8.5 degrees Fahrenheit by 2085 under the RCP 8.5 emissions scenario, while absolute minimum air temperature is expected to increase by 6.4 to 6.6 degrees Fahrenheit (Caltrans 2019). These increases are anticipated to fall within the acceptable temperature ranges for the "Central Coast" pavement type used in Monterey County. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to be affected by temperature changes that would require adaptive changes in pavement design or maintenance practices during the project's design life.

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3.4 Cumulative Impacts

This section on cumulative impacts has been copied from the main body of the document (Chapter 2, Section 2.3.7) because the Council on Environmental Quality regulations that were contained in 40 Code of Federal Regulations, which included cumulative impacts, have been removed.

3.4.1 Regulatory Setting

Cumulative impacts are those that result from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, combined with the potential impacts of the proposed project. A cumulative effect assessment looks at the collective impacts posed by individual land use plans and projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively substantial impacts taking place over a period of time.

Cumulative impacts to resources in the project area may result from residential, commercial, industrial, and highway development, as well as from agricultural development and the conversion to more intensive agricultural

cultivation. These land use activities can degrade habitat and species diversity through consequences such as displacement and fragmentation of habitats and populations, altering of hydrology, contamination, erosion, sedimentation, disruption of migration corridors, changes in water quality, and introduction or promotion of predators. They can also contribute to potential community impacts identified for the project, such as change in community character, traffic patterns, housing availability, and employment.

California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15130 describes when a cumulative impact analysis is necessary and what elements are necessary for an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts.

3.4.2 Affected Environment

This section addresses the potential for the proposed project to contribute to regional cumulative impacts to the resources listed below. Information in this section comes from the project Cumulative Impact Analysis Technical Report dated October 2023. The cumulative impact analysis was conducted in accordance with the eight-step cumulative impact analysis methodology developed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Based on reporting in the technical studies conducted for the project, the Cumulative Impact Analysis report identified the following resources as potentially being at risk of adverse cumulative environmental effects when considered in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the region (the South-Central California coast steelhead and southwestern pond turtle discussions have been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment):

- Biological Resources
    - Jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat
    - California red-legged frog
    - California tiger salamander
    - South-Central California coast steelhead (Alternative 2 only)
    - Southwestern pond turtle
    - Sensitive Natural Communities and Plant Species
        - Coast Live Oak Woodland and coast live oak trees
        - Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine trees

  - Yadon's piperia

- Visual/Aesthetic Resources
- Paleontological Resources

Biological Resources

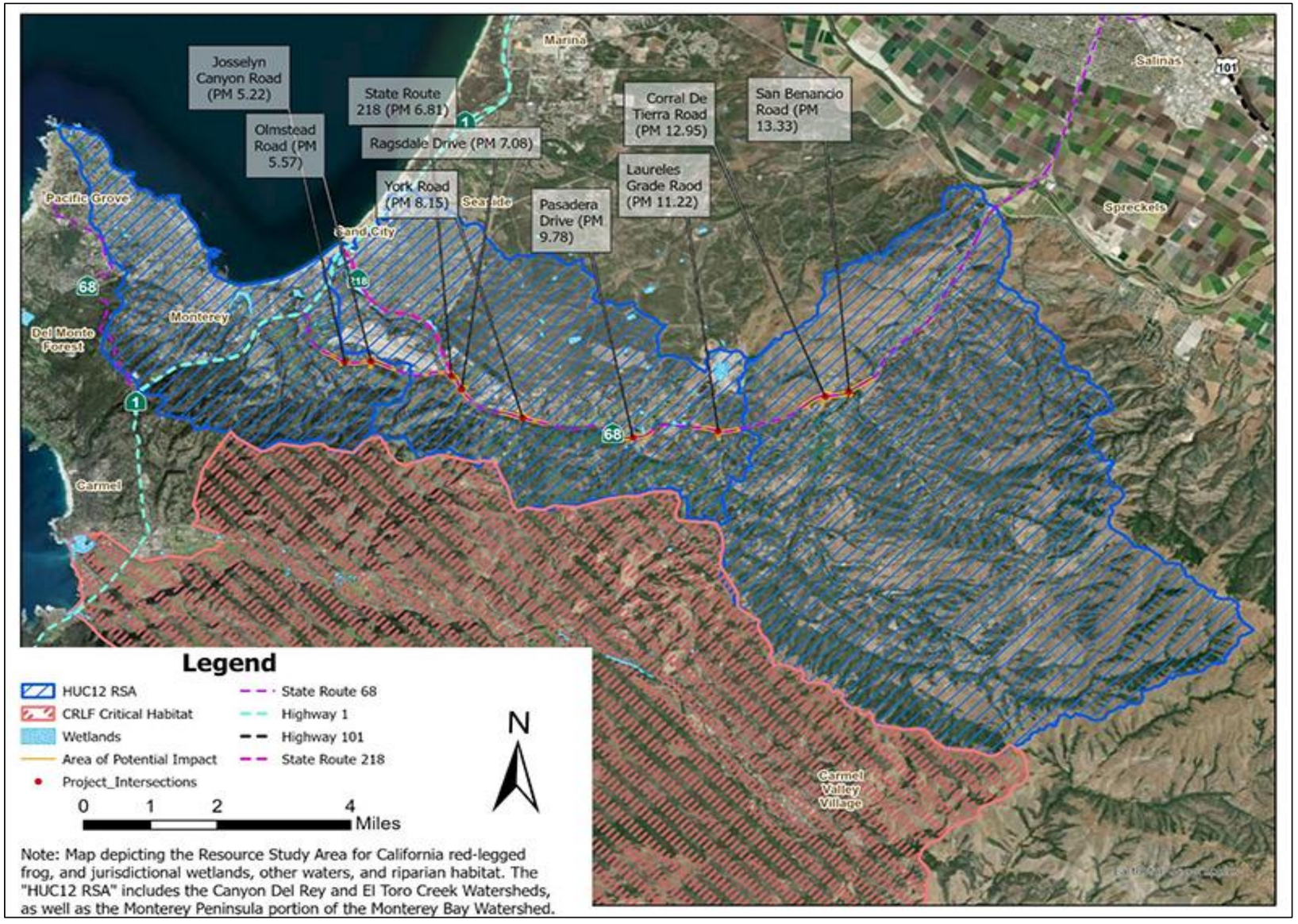
Because a cumulative impact analysis must take into account other projects within the region, the Resource Study Area (RSA) discussed for each of the biological resources listed above is much larger than the project Biological Study Area. (For this project, the Biological Study Area is identical to the project's Area of Potential Impacts, i.e., it is limited to the immediate areas of proposed construction). The Resource Study Areas for the resources listed above are shown in Figures 3.4.2.1 through 3.4.2.5.

Jurisdictional Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Habitat

The Resource Study Area for jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat for this project includes the Canyon del Rey and El Toro Creek watersheds, as well as the Monterey Peninsula portion of the Monterey Bay watershed (see Figure 3.4.2.1).

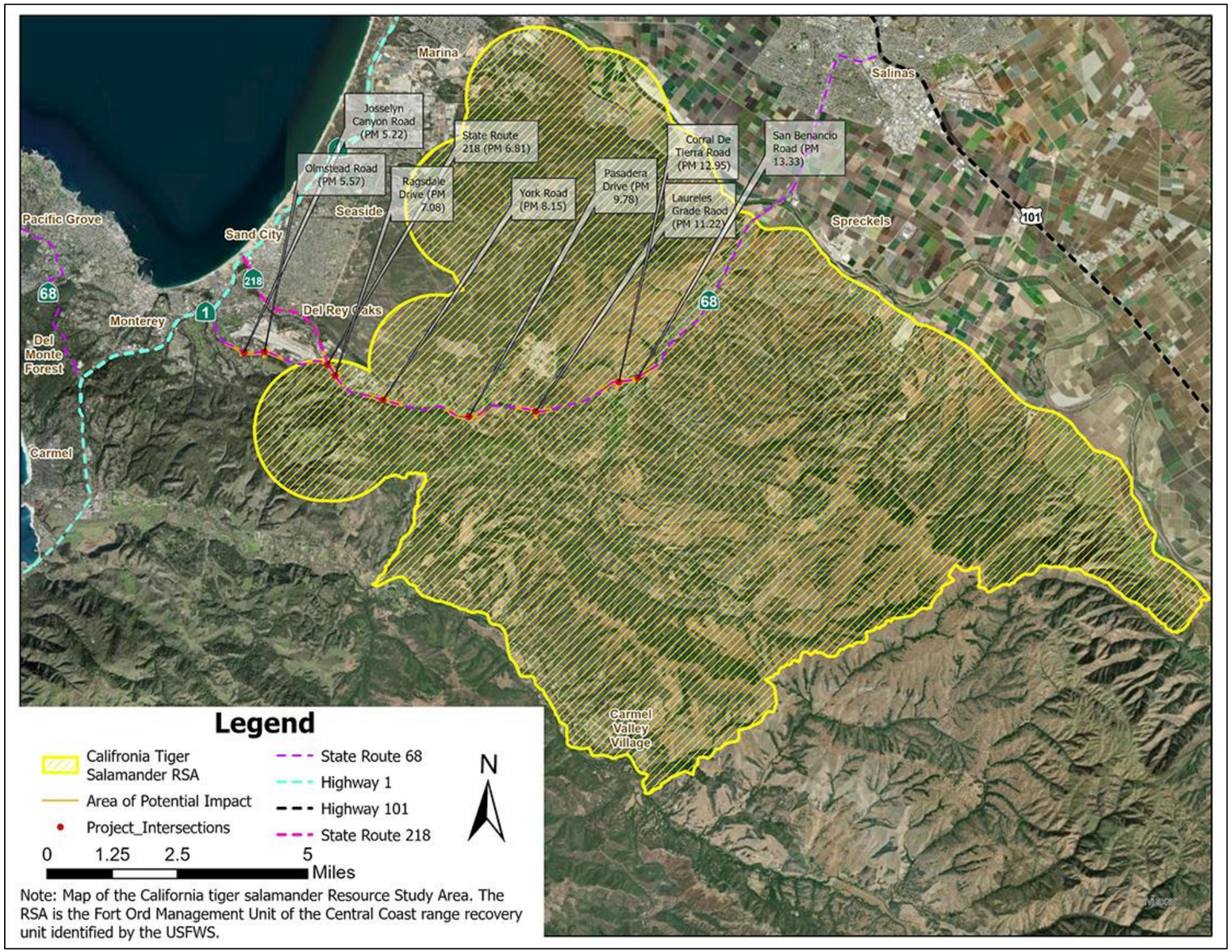
The Cumulative Impact Analysis noted that over the past few decades, the watersheds composing the wetlands/other waters/riparian habitat Resource Study Area for this project have undergone substantial changes due to land conversion for agricultural uses, residential development, and other facets of urbanization. As a result, there has been large-scale loss or degradation of wetlands and the ecological functions they support in the region, and many of the remaining wetlands in the area are in poor health. This situation has led to natural resources regulatory agencies requiring restoration and revegetation measures to offset any further depletion of wetlands and riparian habitats in projects within their respective jurisdictions.

Figure 3.4.2.1 California Red-Legged Frog and Jurisdictional Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Habitat Resource Study Area



Note: Map depicting the Resource Study Area for California red-legged frog, and jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat. The "HUC12 RSA" includes the Canyon Del Rey and El Toro Creek Watersheds, as well as the Monterey Peninsula portion of the Monterey Bay Watershed.

Figure 3.4.2.2 California Tiger Salamander Resource Study Area



Note: Map of the California tiger salamander Resource Study Area. The RSA is the Fort Ord Management Unit of the Central Coast range recovery unit identified by the USFWS.

Figure 3.4.2.3 South-Central California Coast Steelhead Resource Study Area

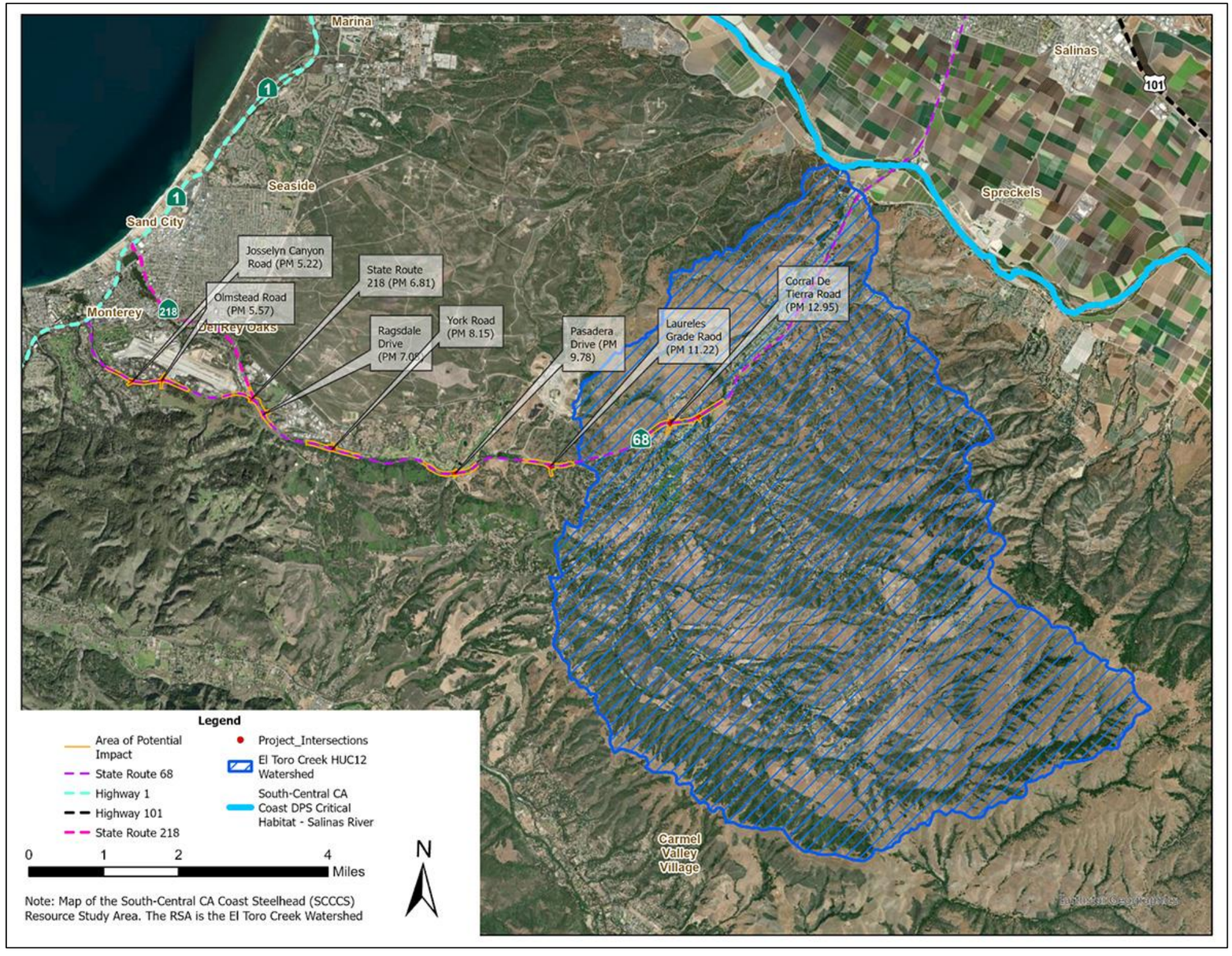


Figure 3.4.2.4 Coast Live Oak Woodland Habitat Resource Study Area

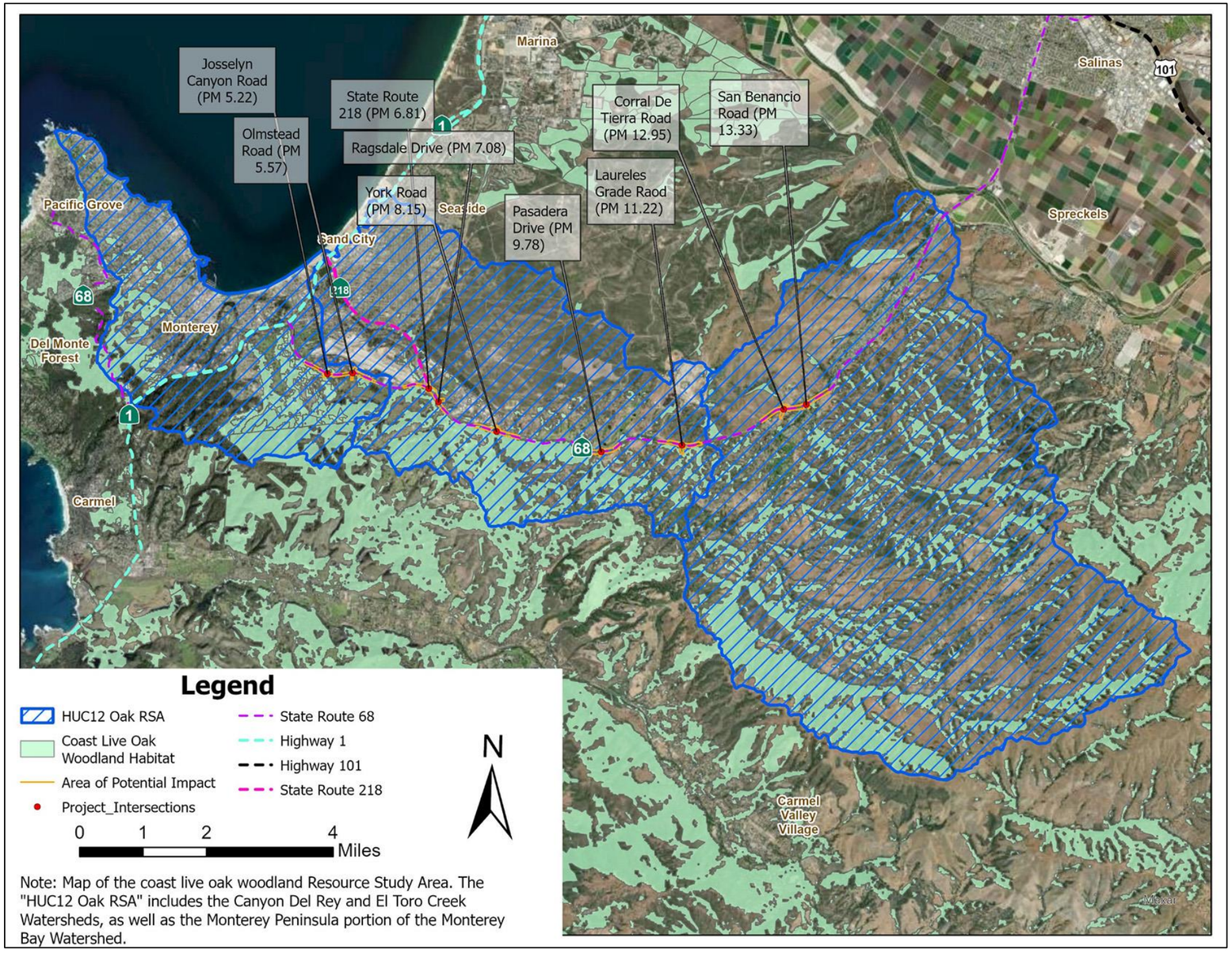
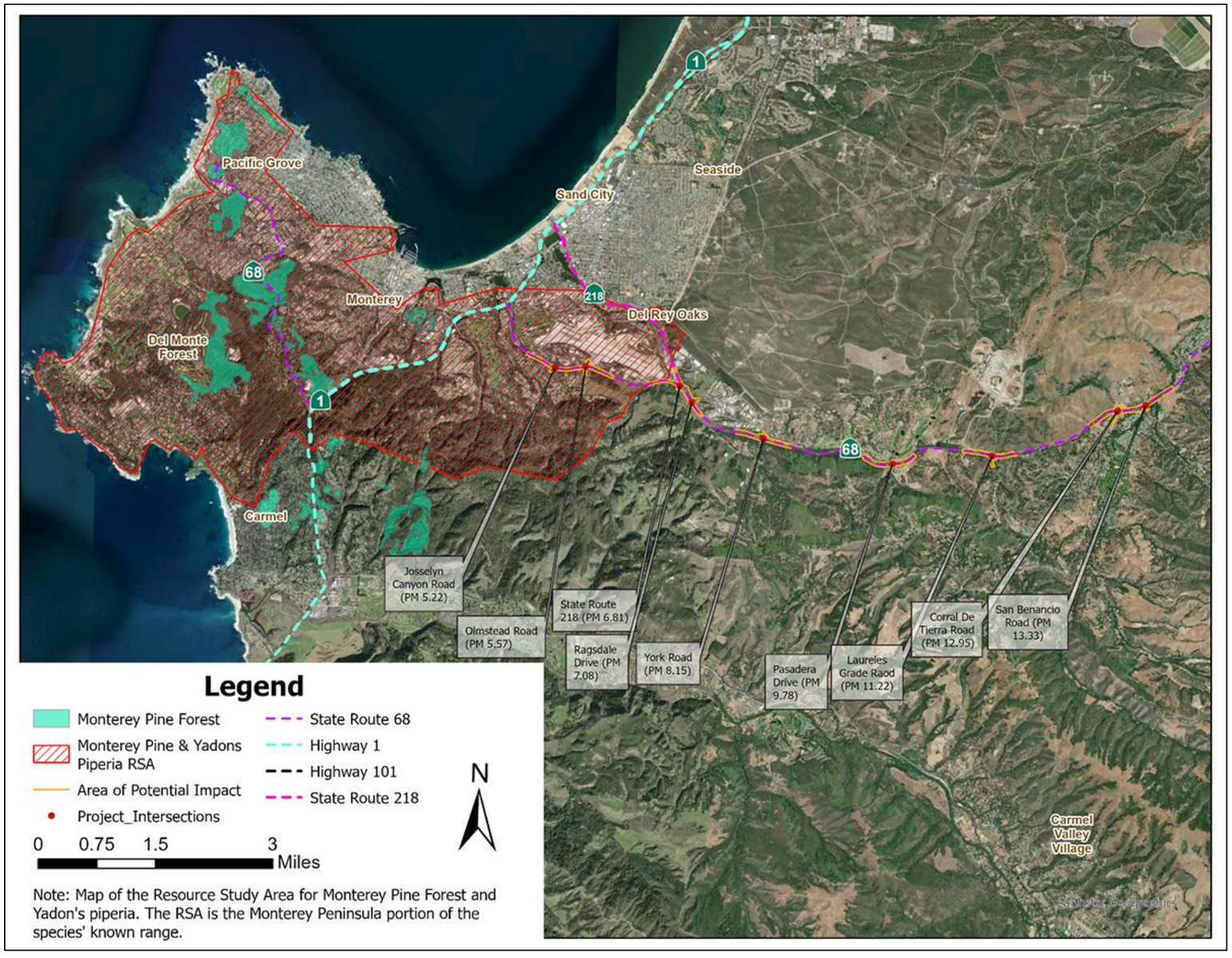


Figure 3.4.2.5 Monterey Pine Forest Habitat and Yadon's Piperia Resource Study Area



Note: Map of the Resource Study Area for Monterey Pine Forest and Yadon's piperia. The RSA is the Monterey Peninsula portion of the species' known range.

California Red-Legged Frog

The project's Resource Study Area for the California red-legged frog is identical to that for jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat (see Figure 3.4.2.1).

The California red-legged frog is listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act and is a State of California Species of Special Concern. This species inhabits coastal drainages and was once found from Marin County southward to northern Baja California but has been extirpated from 70 percent of its historic range. Main causes of this decline include overharvesting in the 19th century, habitat loss, and predation and competition from introduced species such as the American bullfrog. Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties support the largest remaining populations within California. The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that, overall, the California red-legged frog population is considered to be in a state of poor and declining health.

California Tiger Salamander

The project Resource Study Area for the California tiger salamander is the Fort Ord Management Unit of the Central Coast Range recovery unit identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (see Figure 3.4.2.2).

The Central California Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of this species was listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 2004, and the entire species was State listed as Threatened throughout its range by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in 2010. The Central California Distinct Population Segment was once widely found in the valleys and foothills around the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers, and along the Central California coast. Though still somewhat widely distributed, the Central California Distinct Population Segment is currently known only from scattered and limited pockets within its overall distribution range. The main causes of decline include habitat loss and fragmentation, and encroachment of non-native predators.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that in the California tiger salamander Resource Study Area for this project, habitat fragmentation—including in and near the Biological Study Area—is widespread, resulting in ongoing species decline. Though the Fort Ord Management Unit contains breeding ponds and suitable upland habitat, increasing urbanization surrounding these areas has limited the ability for the species to disperse into other breeding areas.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead

This project's Resource Study Area for South-Central California coast steelhead is the El Toro Creek watershed (see Figure 3.4.2.3).

The South-Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment of steelhead trout is listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act and is a State of California Species of Special Concern. Once abundant in Southern and Central California coastal drainages, this population experienced rapid decline in the mid- and late 20th century due to massive post-war urbanization and water development projects that diverted or otherwise altered aquatic habitat. Periods of extended drought have brought additional challenges. Though habitat restoration and water conservation projects to benefit steelhead continue to be pursued, the South-Central California coast steelhead population is considered to be in a state of poor health.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

This paragraph was added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The southwestern pond turtle shares jurisdictional habitats and seasonal behaviors with other species such as the California red-legged frog for which the project requires consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Therefore, the southwestern pond turtle would have the same Resource Study Area as the California red-legged frog. Potential aquatic habitat for the southwestern pond turtle includes any of the ponds (natural or human-made) near the Biological Study Area such as golf course ponds. Though mostly an aquatic species, pond turtles do use upland habitat for refuge and nesting, which could be in uplands adjacent to ponds, though mostly only in areas that are not heavily used or maintained.

Sensitive Natural Communities and Plant Species

Coast Live Oak Woodland and Coast Live Oak Trees: The Resource Study Area for the Coast Live Oak Woodland natural community and coast live oak trees includes the Canyon del Rey and El Toro Creek watersheds, as well as the Monterey Peninsula portion of the Monterey Bay watershed (see Figure 3.4.2.4).

Coast Live Oak Woodland is common in coastal California and is not considered a sensitive natural community by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. This natural community and species have been adversely impacted as the region has experienced land use changes such as agricultural expansion and urban development, fire suppression practices that have disrupted the natural fire ecology of oak woodlands, effects from grazing and overgrazing, and climate change. Sudden Oak Death disease is another concern that has emerged over the past two decades. However, the overall health of Coast Live Oak Woodland and coast live oak trees within the project Resource Study Area is considered good.

Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey Pine Trees: The project Resource Study Area for the Monterey Pine Forest natural community and Monterey pine trees is the Monterey Peninsula portion of this species' native range (see Figure 3.4.2.5).

Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland is a sensitive natural community within its natural range of three discrete locations in California (the Monterey Peninsula, Año Nuevo, and Cambria). The Monterey pine population on the Monterey Peninsula has been fragmented by extensive agricultural conversion and residential, urban, and recreational development since the 19th century, with the result that currently only one-half of the historical extent of Monterey pine forest in the area remains undeveloped. The status of native Monterey pine stands on the Monterey Peninsula is considered stable due to preservation, regulation, and revegetation efforts but threats, including urban development, genetic contamination, pine pitch canker disease, and forest fragmentation, remain.

Yadon's Piperia

The project Resource Study Area for Yadon's piperia is identical to that for Monterey Pine Forest Habitat (see Figure 3.4.2.5).

This species is listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act and is listed by the California Native Plant Society as California Rare Plant Rank 1B.1 (plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; seriously threatened in California). Yadon's piperia is endemic to northern Monterey County and occupies a limited range on the Monterey Peninsula, on the Prunedale Hills, and as a small, isolated population in the Big Sur area. The main cause of decline in this species is habitat loss due to development. Other concerns include herbivory, competition from invasive plant species, and possibly the effects of fire exclusion. The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that this species is in a state of declining health.

Visual/Aesthetic Resources

The project's Resource Study Area for Visual Resources/Aesthetics is the area included within a 500-foot buffer around State Route 68 through the project limits, with the western end of the Resource Study Area at the State Route 1/State Route 68 interchange, and the eastern end at the River Road/ Reservation Road/State Route 68 interchange.

The project intersections sit within the Monterey County-designated State Route 68 Scenic Corridor, an attractive rural/semi-rural landscape that has experienced some development over the past century but retains much of its natural beauty, which is prized by residents and visitors alike. The area is bounded by the Salinas Valley to the east and Monterey Bay to the west, while the hilly open space of the former Fort Ord Military Reservation occupies much of the area's northern edge. To the south, steep mountain ridges separate the State Route 68 corridor from Carmel Valley. The project Visual Impact Assessment report notes that the built environment is more noticeable along the western end of the State Route 68 corridor, where the proposed intersection improvements would appear more consistent with existing development.

Paleontological Resources

The project's Resource Study Area for paleontological resources includes all areas within the southern portion of the Coast Ranges Geomorphic Province where geologic units with High Paleontological Potential form outcrops (see Table 2.2.4.1). These areas of outcrop extend approximately from the San Francisco Bay south to the Santa Ynez Valley. In particular, the Monterey Formation, Santa Margarita Formation, unnamed continental deposits, and/or coastal terrace deposits have high potential for construction crews to encounter sensitive paleontological resources.

3.4.3 Environmental Consequences

Biological Resources

Jurisdictional Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Habitat

The project has the potential to impact jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat that are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (see Table 2.3.1.5).

The following paragraphs discussing Alternative 1 have been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Alternative 1 could affect:

- An estimated one-half acre of wetlands and other waters of the U.S. (streams) under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (permanent impacts), and about 1 acre of temporary impacts to these jurisdictional waters.
- About two-tenths of an acre of stream habitat and seven-tenths of an acre of riparian and streambank habitat under California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction (permanent impacts), and about 1 acre and a half of these stream habitat types (temporary impacts).
- Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdiction overlaps most of the above and about 0.05 acre of stormwater ditches would be permanently impacted, and 0.032 acre of ditches would be temporarily impacted.

The following paragraphs discussing Alternative 2 have been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Overall, Alternative 2 would have larger amounts of impacts to jurisdictional types of habitats than Alternative 1, including:

- An estimated 0.65 acre of wetlands other waters of the U.S. (streams) under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may be permanently impacted, and about 2.20 acres of these jurisdictional waters would be temporarily impacted.

- About one-half acre of stream habitat and 1.36 acres of riparian and streambank habitat under California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction (permanent impacts), and about 10.45 acres of temporary impacts to these stream habitat types.

- Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdiction overlaps most of the above and about 0.076 acre of stormwater ditches would be permanently impacted, and 0.05 acre of ditches would be temporarily impacted.

Table 2.3.1.5 provides the total habitat acreage for these habitat types in the Biological Study Area of the project.

Temporary impacts would be associated mostly with clearing and grading for cut or fill slopes and temporary construction access; permanent impacts are where habitat would be displaced from construction for various project features, such as road widening or retaining walls.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis reported on 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, many of which are transportation or other public works projects. The analysis found that 18 of those projects could potentially result in adverse impacts to jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat. As a result, the Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that the proposed project could be expected to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Resource Study Area for this habitat type.

California Red-Legged Frog

The project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent impacts to California red-legged frog aquatic breeding habitat and adjacent upland riparian habitat. Short-term, direct impacts could include injury or mortality to California red-legged frogs during vegetation clearing and grading or during diversion/dewatering activities. Indirect impacts, which could be temporary or long-term, may include stress from capture and relocation (if necessary), erosion and sedimentation affecting water quality, increased habitat fragmentation due to intersection widening, or longer distances that individual frogs would have to travel to seek shelter and new breeding areas. Impacts would be greater under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1, due to the former's larger footprint and greater encroachment into jurisdictional features and suitable habitat for this species.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, 14 could potentially result in adverse impacts to the California red-legged frog. While the potential for considerable impacts to this species from the current project is expected to be low, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the California red-legged frog. The Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that the project could be expected to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to the California red-legged frog when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Resource Study Area for this species.

California Tiger Salamander

The project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent impacts to the California tiger salamander. Short-term, direct impacts could include injury or mortality to this species due to crushing or burrow disturbance during vegetation clearing and grading. Indirect impacts, which could be temporary or long term, may include changes in normal feeding and sheltering behavior patterns due to construction-related noise, vibration, and night lighting; stress from capture and relocation (if necessary); and inability to access suitable upland habitat due to (1) construction in temporary impact areas, prior to habitat restoration or (2) installation of temporary tiger salamander exclusionary fencing around construction areas preventing travel to seek shelter or food resources. Impacts would be greater under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1, due to the former's larger footprint and greater encroachment into suitable habitat for this species.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, 13 could potentially result in adverse impacts to the California tiger salamander. Though the risk of injury or mortality to this species from this project is considered low, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the California tiger salamander. The Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that the project could be expected to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to the California tiger salamander when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Resource Study Area for this species.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead

Alternative 2 of the project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent impacts to South-Central California coast steelhead. Alternative 1 would not result in impacts to this species. Under Alternative 2, widening of the State Route 68 bridge over El Toro Creek would require the installation of four new piers in the creek channel. Because stream diversion and dewatering may be necessary, depending on flow conditions during

construction, the potential exists for direct impacts such as individual steelhead becoming stuck in dewatering pumps or being exposed to increased predation from foraging birds and/or mammals while confined to landlocked pools. Indirect impacts would include the potential for adverse effects to water quality downstream of the bridge construction site because of sediment deposition.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, four of these could potentially result in adverse impacts to South-Central California coast steelhead. Though the risk of injury or mortality to this species from this project is considered low for Alternative 2, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination for Alternative 2 was that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, South-Central California coast steelhead. The Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that Alternative 2 of the project could be expected to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to South-Central California coast steelhead when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Resource Study Area for this species. However, the selected preferred alternative, Alternative 1, would have no effect on this species.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The southwestern pond turtle shares jurisdictional habitats and seasonal behaviors with other species such as the California red-legged frog for which the project requires consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Therefore, southwestern pond turtle would have the same Resource Study Area as California red-legged frog. Cumulative impacts of the project to this species are consistent with those of habitats of jurisdictional wetlands and other waters, riparian, oak woodland and coast live oak, as well as those of the California red-legged frog.

Sensitive Natural Communities and Plant Species

Coast Live Oak Woodland and Coast Live Oak Trees: The project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent impacts to coast live oak woodlands and coast live oak trees under both Build Alternatives. Short-term, direct impacts could include clearing and grading for cut/fill slopes, and preparation and use of temporary construction access areas. Permanent, direct impacts would include habitat displacement from the construction of project features, such as retaining walls, and road widening activity. Potential temporary or permanent indirect impacts could include root compaction, erosion, introduction or spread of pathogens or invasive plant species, and post-construction road maintenance actions.

The potential for disturbance of oaks and oak woodland is higher under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1 because of the former's larger construction footprint. According to the Natural Environment Study, Alternative 1 may result in impacts to approximately 1,100 to 1,200 coast live oaks (900 temporary and 300 permanent impacts), and Alternative 2 could result in impacts to approximately 2,600 to 2,700 coast live oaks (2,200 temporary and 500 permanent impacts).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, 17 could potentially result in adverse impacts to coast live oak woodlands and coast live oak trees. Though the project would entail loss of oak trees in oak woodland habitats, the project is not expected to substantially degrade the quality or quantity of coast live oak woodland habitat in the Resource Study Area from a biological perspective, due to the abundance and overall good health of this species and natural community in the ecoregion. Nevertheless, the Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that the project could potentially contribute to an adverse cumulative impact on coast live oak woodlands and coast live oak trees when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the oak woodland Resource Study Area.

Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey Pine Trees: The project has the potential to result in temporary and permanent impacts to the Monterey Pine Forest natural community and Monterey pine trees under both Build Alternatives. Short-term, direct impacts could include clearing and grading for cut/fill slopes, and preparation and use of temporary construction access areas. Permanent, direct impacts would include habitat displacement from the construction of project features, such as retaining walls, and road widening activity. Potential temporary or permanent indirect impacts could include root compaction, erosion, introduction or spread of pathogens or invasive plant species, and post-construction road maintenance actions.

The potential for disturbance of Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine trees is higher under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1 because of the former's larger construction footprint. According to the Natural Environment Study, Alternative 1 could result in impacts to approximately 300 to 400 Monterey pines (200 temporary and 200 permanent impacts), and Alternative 2 could result in impacts to approximately 800 to 900 Monterey pines (650 temporary and 250 permanent impacts).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, nine of these could potentially result in adverse impacts to the Monterey Pine Forest natural community and Monterey pine trees. Though the anticipated impacts from the project are adjacent to an existing highway corridor in existing, semi-rural developed areas, and therefore have already been impacted by road, commercial, and residential development, the Cumulative Impact Analysis

made the finding that the project could potentially contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine trees when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine tree Resource Study Area.

Yadon's Piperia

The project has the potential to result in temporary, but not permanent, impacts to Yadon's piperia plants under both Build Alternatives. Both Build Alternatives could cause permanent and temporary impacts to potentially suitable habitat for this species, though no designated critical habitat would be affected because none exists within the Biological Study Area.

The potential for adverse impacts to this species and its habitat is higher under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1, due to the former's larger footprint and greater disturbance of potentially suitable habitat. Alternative 1 may result in up to 0.136 acre of temporary impacts and no permanent impacts to suitable Yadon's piperia habitat, while Alternative 2 could result in up to 1.987 acres of temporary impacts and 0.247 acre of permanent impacts to potentially suitable habitat.

Short-term, direct impacts could include clearing and grading for cut/fill slopes, and preparation and use of temporary construction access areas. Permanent, direct impacts would include habitat displacement from the construction of project features, such as retaining walls, and road widening activity. Potential temporary or permanent indirect impacts could include root compaction, erosion, introduction of pathogens or invasive plant species, and post-construction road maintenance actions.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Monterey region, five of these could potentially result in adverse impacts to this species. Though the risk of injury or mortality to this species from this project is considered low, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 preliminary effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, Yadon's piperia. The Cumulative Impact Analysis made the finding that the project could contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to Yadon's piperia when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Resource Study Area for this species.

Visual/Aesthetic Resources

The project Visual Impact Assessment report states that either of the project alternatives would alter the existing rural character of the project area through roadway expansion, removal of trees and vegetation, and addition of retaining walls, signage, fencing, guardrails, and barriers. Visual impacts would be amplified by the large scale of the project, resulting in the most concentrated assembly of highway structures in the region. The potential for project-related effects to visual and aesthetic resources is higher under Alternative 2 than

under Alternative 1 due to the former's larger footprint and the greater amount of ground disturbance and vegetation removal that would be required.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Resource Study Area, nine of these could potentially result in adverse impacts to visual/aesthetic resources. The analysis report made the finding that the proposed project is anticipated to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to visual/aesthetic resources in the designated Resource Study Area.

Paleontological Resources

The project has the potential to result in adverse impacts to paleontological resources under both Build Alternatives. Project-related activities including construction of retaining walls, landform grading, trenching, and possibly large-diameter drilling could adversely affect paleontological resources, if present, by disturbing sediments with High Paleontological Potential within the project limits. Also, excavation of fossils during construction could expose these resources to degradation or destruction through natural processes such as erosion and weathering, or through inadvertent human damage or vandalism. The potential impacts are higher under Alternative 2 than under Alternative 1, due to the former's larger footprint and greater disturbed soil area.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis found that of the 22 other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Resource Study Area, five of these could potentially result in adverse impacts to paleontological resources. The analysis made the finding that the proposed project would be expected to contribute to an adverse cumulative impact to paleontological resources in the designated Resource Study Area.

3.4.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Biological Resources

Jurisdictional Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Habitat

The project will use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat. In addition, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) will be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to jurisdictional features (see Section 2.3.2 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis recommends that agencies with regulatory authority over jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat should support efforts to restore and enhance these resources within the project Resource Study Area for this habitat type.

California Red-Legged Frog

The project will use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to the California red-legged frog. In addition, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) will be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to this species (see Section 2.3.5 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis recommends that agencies with regulatory authority over the California red-legged frog, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, should support efforts to restore and enhance jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat within the Resource Study Area for this habitat type, as these activities would be expected to improve habitat for the California red-legged frog.

California Tiger Salamander

The project will use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to the California tiger salamander. In addition, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) will be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to this species (see Section 2.3.5 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis recommends that agencies with regulatory authority over the California tiger salamander, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, should support efforts to restore and enhance jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat within the Resource Study Area for this habitat type, as these activities would be expected to improve habitat for the California tiger salamander.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Alternative 1 was selected as the preferred alternative and is not expected to have adverse effects on South-central California coast steelhead. If Alternative 2 had been selected as the preferred alternative, however, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation) would have been implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to this species (see Section 2.3.5 for more information and listing of applicable measures).

The National Marine Fisheries Service has regulatory authority over South-Central California coast steelhead. The Cumulative Impact Analysis recommends that this agency pursue development and implementation of more robust recovery plans, fishing regulations, and habitat restoration and

enhancement efforts to protect and restore South-Central California coast steelhead. Also, the National Marine Fisheries Service may consider improving education and outreach efforts to promote conservation, as well as improving upon monitoring and research tactics to better inform conservation efforts.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, design elements, and standard measures prescribed for impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and other waters, riparian, oak woodland and coast live oak habitats, as well as measures for the California red-legged frog apply to the southwestern pond turtle.

Sensitive Natural Communities and Plant Species

Coast Live Oak Woodland and Coast Live Oak Trees: The project would use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to Coast Live Oak Woodland and coast live oak trees. Also, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) would be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to these resources (see Section 2.3.1 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis notes that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the County of Monterey, and city planning departments have regulatory authority over coast live oak woodland within the Resource Study Area. The analysis recommends that these agencies work toward mitigating overall cumulative impacts to coast live oak woodland and trees by prioritizing preservation and planting of coast live oaks via building permits, development approvals, and project permitting, as well as by encouraging larger-scale, sustainable ecosystem mitigation efforts.

Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey Pine Trees: The project would use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine trees. Also, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) would be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to these resources (see Section 2.3.1 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis notes that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the County of Monterey, and city planning departments have regulatory authority over Monterey Pine Forest and Monterey pine trees within the Resource Study Area. Recommendations for agencies to work toward mitigating overall cumulative impacts to these resources include prioritizing preservation and planting of Monterey pines via building permits, development approvals, and project permitting.

Yadon's Piperia

The project would use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to Yadon's piperia. Also, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) would be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to these resources (see Section 2.3.5 for more information and listing of proposed measures).

The Cumulative Impact Analysis notes that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has regulatory authority over Yadon's piperia, as the species is a federally designated Endangered species. The analysis recommends that to mitigate overall cumulative impacts on this species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should continue efforts to address habitat restoration and protection, manage invasive species, and encourage responsible urban planning to minimize habitat loss. The agency should also continue to monitor and research the species and collaborate with other agencies and stakeholders to better inform conservation efforts. Finally, continued enforcement of mitigation measures and regular assessments of conservation efforts are crucial for effective protection of Yadon's piperia.

Visual/Aesthetic Resources

While design elements, standard specifications, and avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (including compensatory mitigation under CEQA) in the proposed project would partially alleviate the degradation of scenic views, the overall result of project implementation would be an increase in urban character and reduction of visual quality along the State Route 68 corridor and within the designated Resource Study Area. The Cumulative Impact Analysis report concludes that based on presently available information, the contribution of the proposed project to the cumulative visual impact may be, and would likely be, considerable.

Numerous measures are proposed to decrease urbanizing aesthetic effects that would result from the project (see Section 2.1.10). These include preserving existing vegetation and revegetating disturbed areas with native tree and plant species, grading to blend cut and fill slopes with the natural topography, darkening or coloring drainage components to reduce their visibility, painting visible electrical and traffic boxes to reduce reflectivity, and more. Overhead utility lines would be placed underground and light fixtures would be shielded to provide safe, but not excessive, illumination.

The Cumulative Impact Analysis report provides recommendations for the relevant regulatory agencies (Monterey County, local city planning departments, and the California Department of Transportation) to mitigate overall cumulative impacts to visual and aesthetic resources in the Resource Study Area. These include prioritizing tree preservation and replacement

planting, applying aesthetic treatments to hardscape elements, and enacting policies to protect, preserve, and enhance the character of visual resources.

Paleontological Resources

The proposed project would use design features, standard measures, and best management practices to reduce potential impacts to paleontological resources. In addition, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures would be implemented to further reduce long-term impacts to these resources. For instance, qualified paleontological monitors would oversee ground-disturbing activities in high-paleontological-potential areas, and procedures for fossil recovery, preparation, identification, and curation would be specified. See Section 2.2.4 for more information.

Despite the finding in the Cumulative Impact Analysis report that the proposed project would contribute to an existing, adverse cumulative impact, the report's conclusion is that the potential impacts would be cumulatively considerable within the context of other current and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the Resource Study Area. This is because, as stated in the project Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report, paleontological resources on the Central Coast are not currently experiencing a cumulative effect in this regard. Exposures of paleontologically sensitive strata in this region include large swaths of rural and mountainous terrain that are unlikely to be disturbed by human activities and would be only minimally affected by natural processes, and the relatively small percentage of paleontologically sensitive strata in the area that may be disturbed by current or future development would be offset by mitigation strategies required for regulatory compliance.

Because the project would not require coordination or permits from resource agencies pertaining to paleontological resources, the Cumulative Impact Analysis report does not contain any recommendations for regulatory authorities.

Chapter 4 Comments and Coordination

This chapter has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for public comment. Early and continuing coordination with the general public and public agencies is an essential part of the environmental review process. Coordination with the public helps project planners determine the necessary scope of environmental documentation and the level of analysis required, and to identify potential impacts and avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures and related environmental requirements. Agency and tribal consultation and public participation regarding this project have been accomplished through formal and informal methods, including public meetings, public notices, and interagency coordination meetings.

This chapter summarizes the results of Caltrans' and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's efforts to identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing consultation. In addition to the specific meetings discussed below, Transportation Agency for Monterey County has held meetings with various stakeholders for the project, including but not limited to a meeting on February 24, 2020 with the Monterey County Regional Fire District at the Laureles Grade-Seca Place station, and Stakeholder Project Development Team meeting on December 10, 2020 via WebEx.

4.1 Project Scoping Process and Notice of Preparation

The State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan was completed by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County in August 2017. The plan addressed the feasibility of affordable mid-term operational and capacity improvements in the State Route 68 corridor and potential for wildlife connectivity enhancements in response to known issues related to traffic congestion, safety, and reliability along the corridor. The plan considered three corridor concepts that were developed from extensive analysis of existing and future conditions, with input from the public through workshops, meetings, and on-line engagement.

Caltrans prepared a Project Study Report-Project Development Support (PSR-PDS) report which included a Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report completed in December 2018. Caltrans began preliminary design efforts in coordination with Transportation Agency for Monterey County and its design consultant GHD, after which a project description was developed in fall 2019 which excluded Torero Drive and included Ragsdale Drive in the project limits.

The Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was submitted to the California Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse on September 13, 2019, the

County Clerk Recorder, Monterey County on September 25, 2019, and the California Transportation Commission on October 8, 2019. The Notice of Preparation describes the proposed project, the project location, and probable environmental effects. The Notice of Preparation was distributed to the responsible and trustee agencies for comment. The Notice of Preparation is provided in Appendix G.

A public scoping meeting was held on October 3, 2019, at the Monterey-Salinas Transit boardroom at 19 Upper Ragsdale, Monterey, California. The public and agency comment period for the Notice of Preparation was extended to November 8, 2019.

The scoping meeting was announced to the public via a formal public notice advertisement in *The Monterey Herald* two weeks prior to the meeting date; other methods of notification included press releases, news articles in the *Monterey Herald* on-line, email blast to a list of local and regional stakeholders, information on Caltrans' project information webpage, and a postcard mailing to responsible agencies, local and regional stakeholders, Native American groups, and property owners and occupants within 300 feet of the project area. These notification methods were implemented during the latter half of September 2019.

The main purpose of the scoping meeting was to hear from the public on scoping of the environmental document (major issues of concern) and project alternatives, and to provide the public with information about the upcoming environmental document process, the project timeline, and future opportunities for public input. The second priority for the scoping meeting was to open channels of communication with the public regarding the proposed project.

The meeting was an open house meeting format to allow the public maximum time to provide comments. Display boards with project description information, schedule, and preliminary design concepts were placed around the room, and staff from the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Caltrans were available to answer questions. Attendees had several options for providing comments and questions about the project, either on written comment cards, via email to Caltrans, or orally to an onsite court reporter.

Public input and comments received during the meeting and by mail after the meeting mainly included the following topics and issues:

- Highway widening instead of roundabouts
- Roundabouts and driver safety
- Property acquisitions
- Pedestrians and safe crossings at roundabouts
- Direct access to State Route 68 from side streets and driveways

- Corral de Tierra By-Pass preference over the proposed project
- Project timing and construction phasing
- Travel time and traffic congestion improvement
- Greenhouse gas reduction
- Support for roundabouts and design for best diameter
- Stormwater flooding during storms at the intersection of State Route 68 and Josselyn Canyon Road
- Side street access into roundabouts
- Roundabout safety with larger and emergency vehicles
- Scenic corridor protection
- Effectiveness of wildlife crossings
- Construction impacts on traffic
- Tribal consultation compliance with Assembly Bill 52
- Use of project funding for other infrastructure purposes
- Not in favor of roundabouts/questions about roundabout effectiveness
- Access to Seca Place
- Future land use plans for Saucito Land Company parcels
- Coordination with Monterey County Airport
- Air quality emissions with roundabouts
- Pasadera Homeowners Association concerns about project taking portions of their property; requested inclusion in landscape planning for a roundabout at Pasadera Drive-Boots Road intersection at State Route 68
- Residents of the San Benancio State Route 68 intersection area concerns regarding project design aesthetics, the amount of right-of-way that may be required for Alternative 2, and construction impacts to driveways

4.2 Consultation and Coordination with Public Agencies

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The preferred alternative for the project was selected after the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was circulated for public review as discussed in Section 1.6. Caltrans will submit applications for permits to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board for project impacts related to wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the U.S., impacts to listed species and their habitats, and water quality certification under Section

401 of the Clean Water Act. Permit applications will be submitted during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project when a sufficient level of final design is completed. Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for Technical Assistance in regard to the federally listed species of California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, and Yadon's piperia was formally initiated in November 2024 and will continue through the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project. Caltrans coordinated with the Service informally in 2021 for information about species occurrences in the region as noted in the Natural Environment Study (Caltrans 2023).

This paragraph was added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Additional permits are required from the above listed agencies for potential impacts to sensitive jurisdictional resources from geotechnical investigative drilling for purposes of final design of project retaining walls and soil nail walls and other structural features required for the project roundabouts. Coordination with the agencies for environmental clearance for geotechnical drilling has been initiated and will continue through permit acquisition during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase.

Caltrans' cultural resources staff initiated consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer in accordance with the January 1, 2014 First Amended Programmatic Agreement Among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer and Caltrans regarding compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the January 2019 Memorandum of Understanding between Caltrans and the State Historic Preservation Officer regarding compliance with Public Resources Code 5024 and as the proposed project pertains to cultural resources in the project Area of Potential Effect.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Caltrans submitted a Historic Property Survey Report, Archaeological Survey Report, Archaeological Evaluation Report, and a Historic Resources Evaluation Report to the State Historic Preservation Officer in July 2023 for review and concurrence on Caltrans' findings regarding historic resources (built environment and archaeological sites) within the project Area of Potential Effect for cultural resources. Caltrans included a draft Finding of Effect and Cultural Resources Management Plan proposing a minor phasing approach for completion of Section 106 archaeological studies within restricted access areas of the project to determine the project's effects on potential buried archaeological resources and prescriptive treatment steps depending on the findings of study results. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and interested Native American parties is ongoing.

This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Caltrans has coordinated with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land

Management, the County of Monterey, the City of Monterey, and the City of Del Rey Oaks in regard to potential effects on the properties under the jurisdiction of those agencies pertaining to Section 4(f) of the federal Transportation Act. No comments were received from these agencies on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Coordination meetings and email communications with the Bureau of Land Management, the City of Monterey and the County of Monterey were held pertaining to the project's effects on public recreational properties in the jurisdiction of these agencies that are protected under Section 4(f). Meetings were held on September 3, 2024 with Bureau of Land Management, October 14, 2024 with City of Monterey, and November 14, 2024 with County of Monterey during which the project design plans were shared, and the project's potential use of the agencies' properties were discussed. Caltrans requested and received concurrence from these agencies on the *de minimis* determination of use of the properties as addressed in Appendix A, Final Section 4(f) Analysis. Concurrence documentation is included in Appendix K.

This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Caltrans also coordinated with the U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation regarding the project's potential effects on properties funded with grants from the Land and Water Conservation Funds Act, Section 6(f) near the Laureles Grade intersection with State Route 68. The preferred alternative, Alternative 1, roundabout at this location would not impact the Laguna Seca Recreational Area parcels, which received funding through the Land and Water Conservation Funds. Documentation confirming this determination is included in Appendix K.

Coordination with these public agencies will continue through the remaining phases of the project development process as necessary.

4.3 Consultation and Coordination with Native American Tribes and Representatives

The following is a summary of Caltrans' coordination and consultation with Native American tribes, entities, and individuals knowledgeable about cultural resources in the project area. A detailed description of the coordination efforts is provided in the Historic Property Survey Report (July 2023).

- June 28, 2019: Caltrans archaeologist Christina MacDonald sent the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) a request to search the Sacred Lands Files for cultural resources within the project area, and a list of Native American individuals familiar with the project area and may have information pertinent to the cultural resources studies. Gayle Totton of the Native American Heritage Commission replied on July 1, 2019 that the Sacred Lands Files search was negative for cultural resources in the

project area, and provided a list of Native American tribes and individuals who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area.

- July 30, 2019: Caltrans archaeologist Christina MacDonald send out letters to the list of individuals and groups provided by the Native American Heritage Commission initiating consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), specifically Assembly Bill 52 (Public Resources Code 21080.3.1 and Chapter 532 Statutes of 2014). The letter described the proposed project and project limits, and included a list of known cultural resources within the Caltrans state highway right-of-way within the project limits.
- Caltrans contacted the Esselen Tribe of Monterey via email October 23, 2019 to secure a member to participate in the archaeological field survey of the project study area. The archaeological survey was conducted from October 1 to November 1, 2019 and on November 20 and 21, 2019 by Caltrans' consultants, accompanied by Cari Herthel of the Esselen Tribe.
- A Native American Consultation Group was established for the project, and meetings were held starting in January 2020 to introduce the consultation group to the project and report the results of the field survey. The Draft Archaeological Study Report prepared by Caltrans was shared with the consultation group January 21, 2020 for input on the results. The Draft Extended Phase I/Phase II archaeological testing proposal was emailed to the Consultation Group on April 22, 2020. Native American representatives in the Consultation Group included: Valentin Lopez, Irenne Zwierlein, Patrick Orozco, Tony Cerda, Tom Little Bear Nason, Sue Morely, Ann Marie Sayers, Louise Miranda Ramirez, Christianne Arias, and Cari Herthel.
- Coordination continued between Caltrans archaeological staff and members of the Consultation Group regarding the cultural reports and site testing work. On September 8, 2022, Ms. MacDonald sent a copy of the Draft Programmatic Agreement and the Draft Cultural Resources Management Plan that outlines how Caltrans plans to address the area near Corral de Tierra Road where identification of cultural resources would not be completed due to biological resources sensitivity in the area, and how that will be treated going forward to carry out Section 106 consultation compliance and responsibilities. Caltrans received comments on these documents from the Tribal Administrator, Ms. Jana Nason, September 21, 2022.
- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. On March 3, 2023, Caltrans archaeologist Robert Johnson-Ramirez provided a project update via email to Ms. Jana Nason, Tribal Administrator.
- This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. On September 17, 2024, Blaize Uva had an in-person project discussion with Ms. Jana Nason and provided a project update and that the tribe would be

contacted for monitoring needs when additional archaeological investigations are proposed.

- This paragraph has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Consultation with interested tribal parties is ongoing. Supplemental documents and updated project information will be provided by the District.

4.4 Public Open House Meeting

A public open house meeting was held on July 19, 2023 to provide the public an update on the proposed project and the environmental review process underway. The meeting was held at the Laguna Seca Raceway meeting room from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The meeting was attended by an estimated 150 members of the public, about 93 of which signed in on a meeting sign-in sheet that recorded the names and contact information of the attendees.

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County notified the public about the open house meeting though various methods of communication, including website publication and an email blast of the meeting invitation postcard to community stakeholder organizations, public agencies, area residents and interested parties. The postcard invitation included information about the open house location and time, and a QR code for more information about the project. The postcard was presented in both English and Spanish.

Members of the public provided suggestions and comments during the open house, some of which included the following:

- Suggestions for improving roll-out of information to the public about the project such as using the platform Next Door, concerned about government agencies having access to neighborhood information
- Suggestion for installing roadway signage on State Route 68 alerting the public about engagement events for the project
- Concerns that people that use State Route 68 to commute but that do not live along the corridor may not be included in the notifications about the project and public meetings
- Design of the wildlife crossings and whether lighting would be included for those culverts
- Inquiries about project phasing, greenhouse gas reduction information, project schedule
- Concerns regarding access onto the highway from side streets and other specific intersection design questions about the roundabouts and expanded signal options under evaluation
- Questions about the traffic studies and delay savings analysis

4.5 Public Hearings on Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment

This section was added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Three public hearings were held during the public review period for the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The public review period ran from November 8, 2023 to January 8, 2024. The hearings were held to provide information about the project alternatives and the environmental analysis, to address questions from the public, and to provide opportunity for the public to submit comments. The hearings were held in open forum format as follows:

- November 15, 2023, 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at WeatherTech Raceway/Laguna Seca Hospitality Pavilion, 1021 Monterey-Salinas Highway, Salinas, California; about 57 members of the public attended.
- November 16, 2023, 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at The Armory Police Activities League, 100 Howard Street, Salinas, California; fifteen members of the public attended.
- December 6, 2023, 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at Monterey Conference Center, 1 Portola Plaza, Monterey, California; about 54 members of the public attended.

Project personnel from Caltrans District 5 and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County spoke with the attending members of the public and answered questions. Project information was provided on mounted display boards, including plan view and cross-section design plans of both Build Alternatives, visual simulations, traffic forecast information, wildlife crossing design, biological impacts, proposed project schedule, project area maps, and instructional information for how to comment and the review period dates. Information sheets were provided with a summary of the environmental impacts of the Build Alternatives and biological impacts to species and habitats.

A PowerPoint presentation of the project and environmental analysis was presented, followed by question-and-answer sessions.

Attendance sheets (paper copy and computer) were used for the public to sign in to each of the open forum hearings.

Comment forms were available in English and Spanish. A total of 16 comment forms were submitted either at the meetings or via mail afterward.

A voice-recording software system was available for members of the public to verbally provide their comments.

Most of the comments submitted during the public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment were via email. See Section 4.6 below for further information.

Title VI demographic survey forms were provided in English and Spanish; four surveys were received.

Because the three public hearings were open forum style, attending members of the public asked questions of Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County staffs at tables with informational materials and graphic displays. Questions and comments were received about various topics and issues including, but not limited to, aspects about the two Build Alternative designs at the nine project intersections, elements of the traffic operational analysis, whether another wildlife crossing could be added near York Road and State Route 218, and whether Artificial Intelligence (AI)-controlled signalization would be considered instead of roundabouts or other intersection modifications.

4.6 Public Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment

This section has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Comments were received during the public review period for the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment from about 125 members of the public, seven organizations, and five public agencies. About 345 comments were received. Comments were received via email and regular mail. A large portion of the comments from members of the public stated a preference for one or the other of the two Build Alternatives, or the No-Build Alternative, and other suggested alternatives to the project. Numerous comments inquired about and/or stated preferences for an Artificial Intelligence-controlled signal system for the nine project intersections in the highway corridor instead of constructing roundabouts (Build Alternative 1).

Commenters also raised concerns regarding impacts from the project Build Alternatives to their properties, and others raised concerns about another potential development unrelated to but near the State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project.

The Monterey County Regional Fire District submitted comments concerning the intersection improvements under evaluation for both Build Alternatives at the Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection and whether they would impact access to and from the adjacent Laureles Fire Station and/or cause response time delays for emergency calls.

Following is a list of the main topics and issues raised in the public comments:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Signal Control Technology as alternative to roundabouts; request for a trial of this alternative
- Efficacy of roundabouts compared with signal-controlled intersections to achieve project purpose of travel delay savings
- Concern about roundabouts being dangerous for drivers to navigate, questions about roundabout safety overall
- Concerns about emergency vehicle response times being reduced due to changing nine signalized intersections to roundabouts
- Fire/emergency vehicle access impacts to the highway from the Laureles Fire Station due to changes to intersection design
- Traffic from cross-streets accessing the highway efficiently (more delay) and safely with roundabouts
- Property impacts due to proposed right-of-way for highway intersection improvements (permanent acquisition areas)
- Need for resolution to traffic congestion in the morning peak period in the Portola Parkway to Torero Drive area east of the project limits due to the existing highway westbound travel lanes merging from two to one lane, which has resulted in traffic cutting through the Portola neighborhood to avoid the highway congestion; comments included safety concerns for children walking and biking to the school in the neighborhood during the morning peak traffic period
- Preference (opinions) for either one of the two Build Alternatives studied in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment
- Preference for other alternatives previously considered but eliminated from further study, such as full four-lane widening of the highway corridor, or construction of alternative routes to Route 68, including extension of roads on former Fort Ord property and/or bypass alignments off of existing Route 68
- Concerns about a potential high-density residential development near the intersection of State Route 68/Olmsted Road and related traffic added to the highway system
- Project cost concerns
- Concerns that the project does not address anticipated trip growth in the area.

All comments (verbatim text as submitted without graphics or other non-text attachments) and the responses to comments are included in Appendix L of this document. The public comments, including text, graphics, and other attachments, are included in Volume 3 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Volume 3 is available upon request. Refer to Appendix M for Caltrans contact information.

Chapter 5 List of Preparers

The following Caltrans personnel contributed to the preparation of this document and/or its supporting technical studies:

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Phlora Barbash, Landscape Architect. Bachelor of Science, Landscape Architecture, University of California, Davis; 8 years of experience in the field of Landscape Architecture. Contribution: Preparation of Visual Simulations, grading design refinements, and onsite revegetation approach.

Myles Barker, Editorial Specialist. Bachelor of Arts, Mass Communication and Journalism, California State University, Fresno; 7 years of writing and editing experience. Contribution: Technical Editor.

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Adam DiGiovine, Environmental Scientist, Environmental Planning. Bachelor of Science, Anthropology and Geography, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; archeological field work, field surveying, and extensive work with geospatial data. Contribution: Cumulative Impact Report.

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David Ewing, Staff Services Manager I. B.A., Graphic Design, Minor in Business Administration, California State University, Fresno; more than 23 years of graphic design, transportation graphics, and public participation experience. Contribution: Project Overview Map and ADA consultation on graphics.

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Geramaldi, Environmental Scientist (Generalist). B.S., Environmental Geography, California Polytechnic State University - Pomona; over 7 years of environmental analysis experience. Contribution: Community Impact Assessment.

Christopher Hamma, Caltrans District 5 Environmental Scientist/Coordinator. B.S., Forestry and Natural Resources Management; M.S., Forestry Sciences; Master of City and Regional Planning – California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; more than 4 years of experience in environmental planning, more than 5 years' experience in ecological research, more than 10 years' experience in document control. Contribution: Reviewing technical reports; researching, writing, editing, and proofing sections of the draft environmental document.

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Principal Architectural Historian, preparation of the Historic Resources Evaluation Report.

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Sunny McBride, Associate Environmental Planner. B.S., Biological Sciences, Utah State University; 11 years of experience in environmental analysis. Contribution: Co-analyst for First Cut Growth Induced Impacts Assessment, co-wrote Hydrology and Floodplain and Consistency with State, Regional, and Local Plans and Programs sections, and peer reviewer.

Karl Mikel, Professional Engineer, Qualified Stormwater Prevention Plan Developer, Senior Transportation Engineer (Branch Chief). Bachelor of Science, Environmental Engineering, California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo; Master of Science, Civil/Environmental Engineering, California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo; 20 years of experience in the field of environmental engineering. Contribution: Oversight of project Air Quality Report, Noise Study Report, Noise Abatement Decision Report, Initial Site Assessment, Paleontological Identification Report, Paleontological Evaluation Report, Paleontological Mitigation Plan, Paleontological Mitigation Plan, and Water Quality Assessment studies.

Jennifer Moonjian, Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor, Biology. Masters and Bachelors of Biological Sciences from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; 19 years of experience in Biological Resource Analysis. Contribution: Review and approval of Natural Environment Study.

Dario Moreno, Office Chief, Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Over 25 years of experience in Geogra]phic Information Systems (GIS) in various sectors in asset management, environmental studies, and transportation planning. Contribution: Oversight of GIS mapping and figure preparation.

Jill O'Connor, Associate Environmental Planner. M.A., History, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; B.S., Natural Resources Management, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; over 40 years of environmental impact analysis and planning experience. Contribution: Lead Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment preparer, Environmental Coordinator, Section 4(f) Analysis preparer.

Margaret "Meg" Perry, Associate Environmental Planner (Natural Sciences). B.S., Soil Science, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; 14 years of experience in California biology and habitat studies, emphasizing botany, wetland science, permitting, and environmental compliance. Contribution: Wetland delineation and wetlands analysis.

Pete Riegelhuth, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System/Stormwater Coordinator, Landscape Associate. Bachelor of Landscape Architecture, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; 4 years of experience as District Construction Stormwater Coordinator and 19 years as District 5 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System/Design Stormwater Coordinator. Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control, CPESC #5336. Contribution: Water Quality review.

Morgan Robertson, Biology Branch Chief, District 5. M.S., Wildlife Biology, University of Alaska, Fairbanks; B.S., Biology, University of California, Davis; more than 22 years of biology experience. Contribution: Biology field studies, wildlife crossing design and biological management.

Ed Schefter, Senior Transportation Surveyor. B.S., Surveying, California State University, Fresno; more than 22 years of GPS/GIS experience. Contribution: GIS mapping and exhibit preparation.

Jane Sellers, Associate Environmental Planner. B.A., Journalism, California State University, Fresno; 24 years of environmental compliance experience, focusing on Quality Assurance/Quality Control and

reviewing and editing NEPA and CEQA environmental documents. Contribution: Technical Editor.

Angelina Taylor, Student Assistant – Senior at California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, majoring in Environmental Management and Protection, with a minor in Anthropology and Geography. Contribution: Preparation of GIS figures for the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Mindy Trask, Associate Environmental Planner (Natural Sciences). M.R.P., Environmental and Regional Planning, Washington State University, Pullman; M.S., Rangeland Resources, Oregon State University, Corvallis; B.S., Ecology and Systematic Biology, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; more than 23 years of environmental planning and biological sciences experience. Contribution: Biological field studies and analysis, coordination with resources agencies, wildlife crossing design, and preparation of biological resources documents.

Blaize Uva, Environmental Scientist (Archaeology). Bachelor of Science in Anthropology and Geography, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; 12 years in the field of cultural resource management and geographic information system analyst/cartography. Contribution: Historic Property Survey Report, cultural resources reports and mapping of Areas of Potential Effects.

Jason Wilkinson, Deputy District Director/Senior Environmental Planner. B.S., Natural Resource Management, Minor in Geographical Information System (GIS), California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; 16 years of environmental planning experience. Contribution: Environmental Procedures Oversight.

Matthew Willis, Environmental Scientist. B.S., Ecology and Systematic Biology, Minor in Geography, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; 20 years of environmental impact assessment, environmental compliance, and biological resources experience. Contribution: Field studies and biological document (Natural Environment Study) preparation.

Chris Zotovich, Environmental Scientist, Biologist. Bachelor of Science, Environmental Science: Energy and Climate, (Cal Poly) Humboldt State University; 3 years in the fields of environmental science, biological analysis, GIS analysis. Contribution: Biological studies, biological surveys, environmental and biological impact mapping, GIS impact analysis, and GIS mapping for figures in the environmental document and Natural Environment Study.

Chapter 6 Distribution List

The Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and/or a Notice of Availability was distributed to the following federal, state, regional, and local agencies, elected officials, interested groups, organizations and individuals, and utilities and service providers in the project area. In addition, all property owners and residents/occupants located within 500 feet of the proposed project were provided with a Notice of Availability.

Federal Agencies

Bureau of Land Management, Fort Ord National Monument – Eric Morgan, National Monument Manager

Federal Aviation Administration - Chief, San Francisco Airports District Office

Federal Emergency Management Agency - Regional Director

Federal Highway Administration

Federal Transit Administration, Region IX

National Marine Fisheries Service, Sacramento Field Office

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Intergovernmental Reviewer

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service - Area Conservationist

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Secretary

U.S. Department of Commerce. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - Director, Office of Ecology and Conservation

U.S. Department of Energy - Director, Office of Environmental Management

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - Environmental Clearance Officer

U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance - Intergovernmental Reviewer

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX - Federal Activities Office, CMD-2

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Intergovernmental Reviewer

State Agencies

California Air Resources Board - Land Use/CEQA/VMT Reductions

California Department of Conservation, Environmental Review

California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 4 - Carrie Swanberg, Senior Environmental Scientist

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection - Current CEQA Coordinator

California Department of Housing and Community Development - Current CEQA Coordinator

California Department of Parks and Recreation, Monterey District - Current CEQA Coordinator

California Department of Toxic Substances Control - Current CEQA Coordinator

California Department of Water Resources - Intergovernmental Reviewer

California Energy Commission - Current CEQA Coordinator

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services - Current CEQA Coordinator

California Governor's Office of Planning and Research

California Highway Patrol

California Highway Patrol, Enforcement and Planning Division

California Native American Heritage Commission - NAHC Chairperson

California Office of Historic Preservation - State Historic Preservation Officer

California Public Utilities Commission - Current CEQA Coordinator

California State Lands Commission - Executive Officer

California State University, Monterey Bay - President

California State Water Resources Control Board - Eileen Sobeck, Executive Director

California Transportation Commission - Commission Chair

California Transportation Commission, Headquarters Division of Environmental Analysis

Caltrans District 5 - Scott Eades, District Director

Caltrans Scenic Highway Program Coordinator

Caltrans, Division of Environmental Analysis - NEPA Assignment Office – MS 27

Local Area Formation Commission of Monterey County - Executive Officer

Regional Agencies

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments - Executive Director

Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 3)

Monterey Bay Air Resources District - Air Pollution Control Officer

Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District - General Manager

Monterey Regional Airport - Executive Director

Monterey-Salinas Transit - General Manager/CEO

County and City Agencies

City of Del Rey Oaks - City Manager

City of Del Rey Oaks Planning Commission - Planning Commission Chair

City of Monterey - City Manager

City of Monterey - Planning Manager

City of Monterey - Traffic Engineer

City of Monterey Fire Department - Chief

City of Monterey Planning Commission - Planning Commission Chair

City of Pacific Grove - City Manager

City of Salinas - City Manager

City of Salinas - Public Works Director

City of Salinas Bicycle Committee - Senior Planner

City of Salinas Planning Commission - Planning Commission Chair

City of Salinas Planning Division - Community Development Director

City of Sand City - City Manager

City of Sand City - City Planner

City of Seaside - City Manager

City of Seaside Fire Department - Chief

City of Seaside - Planning Commission Chair

County of Monterey, County Administrative Office - Chief Public Information Officer

County of Monterey, Office of Emergency Services - OES Manager

County of Monterey, Parks Department - Chief of Parks

County of Monterey, Planning Division - Chief of Planning

County of Monterey, Public Works Department - Chief of Public Works

County of Monterey, Regional Fire District - Deputy Fire Marshal

County of Monterey, Resource Management Agency - Director

Transportation Agency for Monterey County - Chair, Board of Directors

Elected Officials

City of Carmel-By-The-Sea - Mayor

City of Del Rey Oaks - Mayor

City of Gonzales - Mayor

City of Greenfield, City Council - Councilmember

City of King City - Mayor

City of Marina - Mayor

City of Monterey - Mayor

City of Monterey, City Council - Councilmember

City of Pacific Grove, City Council - Councilmember

City of Salinas, City Council - Councilmember

City of Sand City, City Council - Councilmember

City of Seaside - Mayor

City of Seaside, City Council - Councilmember

City of Soledad - City Representative

City of Watsonville - City Clerk

County of Monterey - Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder

County of Monterey, Board of Supervisors District 1 – The Honorable Luis Alejo

County of Monterey, Board of Supervisors District 2 – The Honorable Glenn Church

County of Monterey, Board of Supervisors District 3 – The Honorable Chris Lopez

County of Monterey, Board of Supervisors District 4 – The Honorable Wendy Root-Askew

County of Monterey, Board of Supervisors District 5 – The Honorable Mary Adams

County of Monterey, Sheriff's Department - Sheriff

The Honorable Dawn Addis, District Office of Assembly Member, 30th District

The Honorable Laphonza Butler, Member, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Shannon Grove, District Office of California State Senator, 12th District

The Honorable John Laird, District Office of California State Senator, 17th District

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren, District Office of U.S. Representative, 18th District

The Honorable Alex Padilla, Member, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Jimmy Panetta, District Office of U.S. Representative, 19th District

The Honorable Robert Rivas, District Office of Assembly Member, 29th District

Utility Providers

Alco Water Service

American Telephone and Telegraph Corporate Office, Facilities Planning

California American Water

California Water Service

Central Coast Community Energy

Monterey One Water

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Interested Groups and Organizations

Ag Land Trust - Executive Director

Amah Mutsun Tribal Band - Chairperson

Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista - Chairperson

American Institute of Architects, Monterey Bay - Executive Director

Bicycling Monterey

Big Sur Land Trust - President/Chief Executive Officer

California Native Plant Society, Monterey Bay Chapter - President

Cavalry Church Monterey - Event and Facilities Director

Central Coast Center for Independent Living - Executive Director

Communities Organized for Relational Power in Action (COPA) - Tim McManus

Community Foundation for Monterey County - President

Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Associations, Inc. (CHISPA) - Director

Corral de Tierra Country Club - Manager

Costanoan Ohlone Rumsen-Mutsun Tribe - Chairman

Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe - Chairperson

Cypress Community Church - Director of Finance and Facilities

Domain Corporation, Ferrini Ranch

Ecology Action

Esselen Tribe of Monterey County - Chairman

The Farm - Owner

Fisherman Flats Neighborhood Association - President

Fort Ord Rec Trail and Greenway

Friends of the Fort Ord Warhorse

Gino's Pizza - Owners

Gourley Construction

Grower-Shipper Association of Central California - President

Highway 68 Coalition - Chair

Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan - Chairperson

International Brotherhood of Electric Workers (IBEW)

Laguna Seca Golf Ranch - General Manager

Laguna Seca Raceway Foundation - Director

Laguna Seca Raceway Foundation - President

LandWatch Monterey County - Executive Director

LandWatch Monterey County – President and Board of Directors

League of Women Voters of Monterey County - Natural Resources Committee

League of Women Voters of Monterey County - President

McShane's Landscaping - Owner

Meals on Wheels of the Monterey Peninsula - Executive Director

Monterey Audubon Society - President

The Monterey Bay Aquarium - Executive Director

Monterey Bay Central Labor Council

Monterey Bay Economic Partnership - President

Monterey Bay Electric Vehicle Alliance

Monterey County Association of Realtors - Government Affairs Director

Monterey County Business Council - Executive Director

The Monterey County Democratic Club

Monterey County Democrats - Chair

Monterey County Farm Bureau - Executive Director

Monterey County Herald - President and Publisher

Monterey County Historical Society

Monterey County Hospitality Association, Government Affairs

Monterey County Vintners and Grower's Association - Executive Director

Monterey County Weekly

Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce - Membership Development Manager

Monterey Peninsula Hospitality Association

The Muller Company (Ryan Ranch Property Management) - Director of Property Management

The Nature Conservancy

Nicklaus Club - General Manager

North County Fire Protection District of Monterey County - Chief

North Monterey County League of United Latin American Citizens - President

Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation - Tribal Headwoman

Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation - Vice Chairperson

Operating Engineers 3 - District 90 Representative

The Salinas League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Council #2055/Youth Council 2087 - President

Salinas United Business Association

Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce - President/Chief Executive Officer

Salinas Valley Taxpayers Association

Service Employees' International Union, Local 521 - Chief Elected Officer

Sierra Club, Ventana Chapter

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Monterey County - Executive Director

Sotheby's International Realty - GRI Realtor

Sports Car Racing Association of the Monterey Peninsula - Government Affairs Director

Store Master Funding VII, LLC - Director

Sustainable Monterey - Co-Chair

Sustainable Seaside

Tarpy's Roadhouse - General Manager

Tehama - Events Coordinator

Toro Park Estates Home Owners' Association - Newsletter Editor

The Villas

Washington Union School District - Executive Administrative Asst.

WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca - Chief Executive Officer

Xolon-Salinan Tribe - Chairperson

York School - Communications and Marketing Director

Interested Individuals

Janet Abla
Teri Adam
Mary Adams
Dan Albert
Jeanette Alegar-Rocha
Kathy Anderson
Geoff Arnold
Eric Azriel
Susan Bacigalupi
Ginger Basset
John and Emily Bausch
Joy Black
Michael Black
Linda Borgman
Rene Boskoff
Wan and Mary Bowman
John Bramers
Tom Bramers
F.R. Braugh
Beth Brookhouser
Mike Brown
Halleck Butts
Rosemary B. Butts
Winston Butts
Ron Cantu
Elizabeth Caraker
Zoe Carter

Elisa Cavaliere
Gary Cho
Carl Christensen
Kim Cole
Richard Cornels
Barbara and Bill Creelman
Catherine Crockett
Lynda Cunningham
Gary Cursio
R D
Scott D
Kevin Dayton
Peter De Gregorio
Bruce Delgado
Michael Dove
Vicky Duke
Hetty Eddy
R.W. Eiukauf
Sue Erickson
Sharyn Evers
Todd Evers
Dave Fox
Charles Franklin
George Garibay
Margaret Garibay
Richard Gerber
Kathy Giger
Lorraine Gorezyca
Norm Groot
Heidi Guillermo
Marvin Guillermo
Ron Guzman
Tom H
Sarah Hardgrave
Ray Harrod, Jr.

Sheri Havswirth
Daryl Hawkins
Pricilla and Reg Henry
Joseph Hertlein
Joseph Heston
S Hooper
Jim Horde
Kendra Howell
Bill Huggins
Ursula Hurek
Octavio Hurtado
Madilyn Jacobsen
Dan Johanson
Rodger Johnson
Russ Johnson
Jolynn Johnsson
Kevin Johnston
David Kanyer
Lauren Keenan
Lynn Kennedy
Julie King
Laurie Kleinman
Phil Korchek
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Monica Lal
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Bob Martin
Mike McCullough
Tim McGrane
Mick and Lisa McGuire
Nancy McInnis
Phyllis and Fred Mensor
Charles Meyer
Deidre Monroe
Carl Morello
Chris Morello
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Nathan Muck
Stephen Myrick
Annicla Nardeuse
Nikki Nedeff
Wes Ng
Justine Nghiem
Sarah Nicole
Elaine Noll
O'Shea O'Mary
Terese Ortiz
Gabriella Oyana
Donald Payton
Elizabeth Pelley
Eric Petersen
K Pfeiffer
Eric Phelps
Jeff Philpott
Valerie Piekon
Carolyn Pybas
Gary Pybas
Henry and Amy Ramirez
Bill Reichmuth
Bill Reichrenilt

Cynthia Reindl
Bob Rieger
Denise and Brent Rieker
George Riley
Douglas Roberts
D Rojas
Carol Romo
Tanja Roos
Tom Rowley
Pamela and Dale Rush
Enrique S
David Sargenti
Rachel T. Saunders
Debra Schadeck
Teri Schadeck
Myron Seres
Bob Shanteau
John Shearer
Nora Shen
Wayne Shen
Kim Shirley
Pennington Shortes
Mike Singh
Sharon and Ansison Sinsetus
Sgt. Brandon Smith, Monterey County Sheriff's Department
Dwight Stump
RB Sweet
Sam Teel
Laureuse Thomas
Neal Thompson
John Tomlin
J Trenton
Tom Tuttle
Deb and Dave Vaudeuberg
Scott Violini

Frank Vogl

Mike Weaver

Lowell Webster

Judy Williamson

Bruce Winge

Temby Wishnak

Julie Work Beck

Andy and Mara Yuan

Appendix A Final Section 4(f) Analysis

Section 4(f) De Minimis Determinations

This section of the document discusses *de minimis* impact determinations under Section 4(f). Section 6009(a) of SAFETEA-LU amended Section 4(f) legislation at 23 U.S. Code (USC) 138 and 49 USC 303 to simplify the processing and approval of projects that have only *de minimis* impacts on lands protected by Section 4(f). This amendment provides that once the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) determines that a transportation use of Section 4(f) property, after consideration of any impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation or enhancement measures, results in a *de minimis* impact on that property, an analysis of avoidance alternatives is not required, and the Section 4(f) evaluation process is complete. The Federal Highway Administration's final rule on Section 4(f) *de minimis* findings is codified in 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 774.3 and CFR 774.17.

Responsibility for compliance with Section 4(f) has been assigned to the Department pursuant to 23 USC 326 and 327, including *de minimis* impact determinations, as well as coordination with those agencies that have jurisdiction over a Section 4(f) resource that may be affected by a project action.

In accordance with the Federal Highway Administration's Section 4(f) Policy Paper (July 12, 2012, pp 23-24), a park, recreational area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge is defined for purposes of Section 4(f) analysis as when the land has been officially designated as such by a Federal, State, or local agency and officials with jurisdiction over the land determine that its primary purpose is a park, recreational area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge. A property's primary purpose is its primary function and how it is intended to be managed. The Section 4(f) statute states that a property must be a significant public park, recreational area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge to be considered in Section 4(f) evaluations; significance means that the property serves an important role in meeting the objectives for parks, recreational areas, and/or refuges of the public agency or community authority with jurisdiction over the property.

The following section discusses the publicly owned recreational resources adjacent to the project limits and the project's uses of those properties. The properties evaluated include Ryan Ranch Park, Fort Ord National Monument, and two properties under the jurisdiction of the County of Monterey. Table S4-1 lists the permanent right-of-way uses estimated for both build alternatives at publicly owned recreational properties adjacent to the State Route 68 project limits. Data in the table has been updated since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was circulated for public review.

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was circulated for public review. The public was afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Section 4(f) analysis as part of the public review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for a period of 60 days. Subsequent to the public review period for the draft environmental document, Caltrans' Project Development Team formally selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project. In

addition, Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County considered additional ways to enhance the operational performance of the preferred Alternative 1 roundabouts. Conversion of the three easternmost roundabout designs from single-lane to hybrid (a combination of single and dual lanes) was analyzed and found to further reduce travel delay in the corridor for the projected 20-year horizon. Therefore, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Caltrans determined that a design modification to hybrid roundabouts is warranted at the project intersections of State Route 68/Laureles Grade, State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road, and State Route 68/San Benancio Road. Updated preliminary designs for the hybrid roundabouts have been prepared and the analysis herein updated to include the hybrid roundabout design for Alternative 1. No design modifications were made to the elements of Alternative 2. See Table S4-1.

Table S4-1 Permanent Section 4(f) Use Summary for Build Alternatives

Section 4(f) Resource	Alternative 1 Roundabouts Permanent Right of Way Use	Alternative 2 Signals Permanent Right of Way Use
Ryan Ranch Park City of Monterey Assessor's Parcel Number 259-031-003 (74.5 acres) Land Use: city park (recr)	**4.20 acres** (State Route 218 to Ragsdale Drive, north side of State Route 68) including 2.26 acres for roundabout features and 1.94 acres for slope easements at landform grading areas	**1.94 acres** (State Route 218 to Ragsdale Drive, north side of State Route 68) including 1.39 acres for intersection improvements and 0.55 acre for slope easements at landform grading areas
Fort Ord National Monument U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management Assessor's Parcel Number 031-011-014 (724.5 acres) Land Use: Habitat Management (County Fort Ord Master Plan, Map 6A)	**Single Lane Roundabout: 0.43 acre** (Corral de Tierra-Cypress Church Drive/State Route 68 intersection) **Hybrid Roundabout: 0.67 acre**	**1.97 acres** (Corral de Tierra-Cypress Church Drive/State Route 68 intersection)
County of Monterey Assessor's Parcel Number 031-131-002 (247.2 acres) Land Use: Habitat Management (Fort Ord Master Plan LU Map 6A)	**Single Lane Roundabout: 1.92 acres** (Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection) **Hybrid Roundabout: 1.77 acres**	**3.31 acres** (Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection)
County of Monterey **Laguna Seca Recreation Area,** Assessor's Parcel Number 173-011-025 (27.14 acres) Land Use: Public-Quasi-Public parcel includes "A Road" loop	**None (Single Lane and Hybrid Roundabout designs)** (Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection)	**0.96 acre** (Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection)

Ryan Ranch Park (City of Monterey)

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. The Ryan Ranch Park in the City of Monterey sits on a 75-acre parcel (Assessor's Parcel Map 259-031-003) along the north side of State Route 68 between the intersections of State Route 218/State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68. The park contains an active recreational use, Ryan Ranch Disc Golf Course, which has 31 holes over the majority of the parcel. The course facilities include disc golf "tees" on permanent tee pads (dirt, grass, and/or rubber mats) and baskets (disc targets). Fairways and baskets are able to be relocated/rearranged to create various course layouts for different disc golf events and skill levels. Multiple optional course layouts are provided on the Ryan Ranch Disc Golf course website https://udisc.com/courses/ryan-ranch-tsYS/. The course layout information presented in the figures and analysis herein is based on information from the Ryan Ranch Disc Golf course website as of fall 2023. Because selected features of disc golf courses are movable by design, the course layout shown herein is likely to periodically change over time.

Permanent Use of Ryan Ranch Park Property

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. **Alternative 1** Location 3, Roundabouts, at the State Route 218/State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68 intersections: Permanent Use at Ryan Ranch Park (APN 259-031-003). The proposed roundabouts at the intersections of State Route 218/State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68 would have a combined permanent impact of about four and two-tenths (4.20) acres that would be required for acquisition on the Ryan Ranch Park property and portions of the active use disc golf course (refer to Table S4-1). The additional right-of-way would be needed for construction of the roundabout features, drainage infrastructure, and retaining wall elements. About half of the 4.20 acres would be necessary for several landform grading areas (permanent slope easements) associated with and/or in lieu of retaining walls. The proposed landform grading area just east of State Route 218, which would be constructed in place of a 40-plus-foot-tall retaining wall would impact the disc golf basket at fairway number 13 and a small portion of the course in that area, based on the "Bottom Course Layout" shown on the park's course website (https://udisc.com/courses/ryan-ranch-tsYS/map). Refer to Figure S4-1 which shows the approximate course layout as of fall 2023 over top of the proposed roundabout designs. The majority of the proposed landform grading area northeast of the State Route 218/State Route 68 intersection would impact the steeper slope area of the park property on the north side of the highway.

The disc golf course fairways, including the baskets are movable by design as noted previously (Professional Disc Golf Association Course Design information: https://pdga.com/course-development/). Disc golf tee pads are generally more fixed features of a course and, therefore, usually not relocated for course changes. Therefore, to minimize impacts to course facilities, the proposed roundabout at Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68 includes a retaining wall at the northwest quadrant of the intersection avoid impacting the 12th Tee Pad on the course. No other course facilities, tee pads or other permanent fixtures of the course would be affected by the

Alternative 1 roundabouts at State Route 218/State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68. The other slope easements for landform grading/slope easement areas would affect the steeper slope areas of the property adjacent to the north side of State Route 68 and along the west side of Ragsdale Drive, areas adjacent to the roadways and not the active recreational portions of the park.

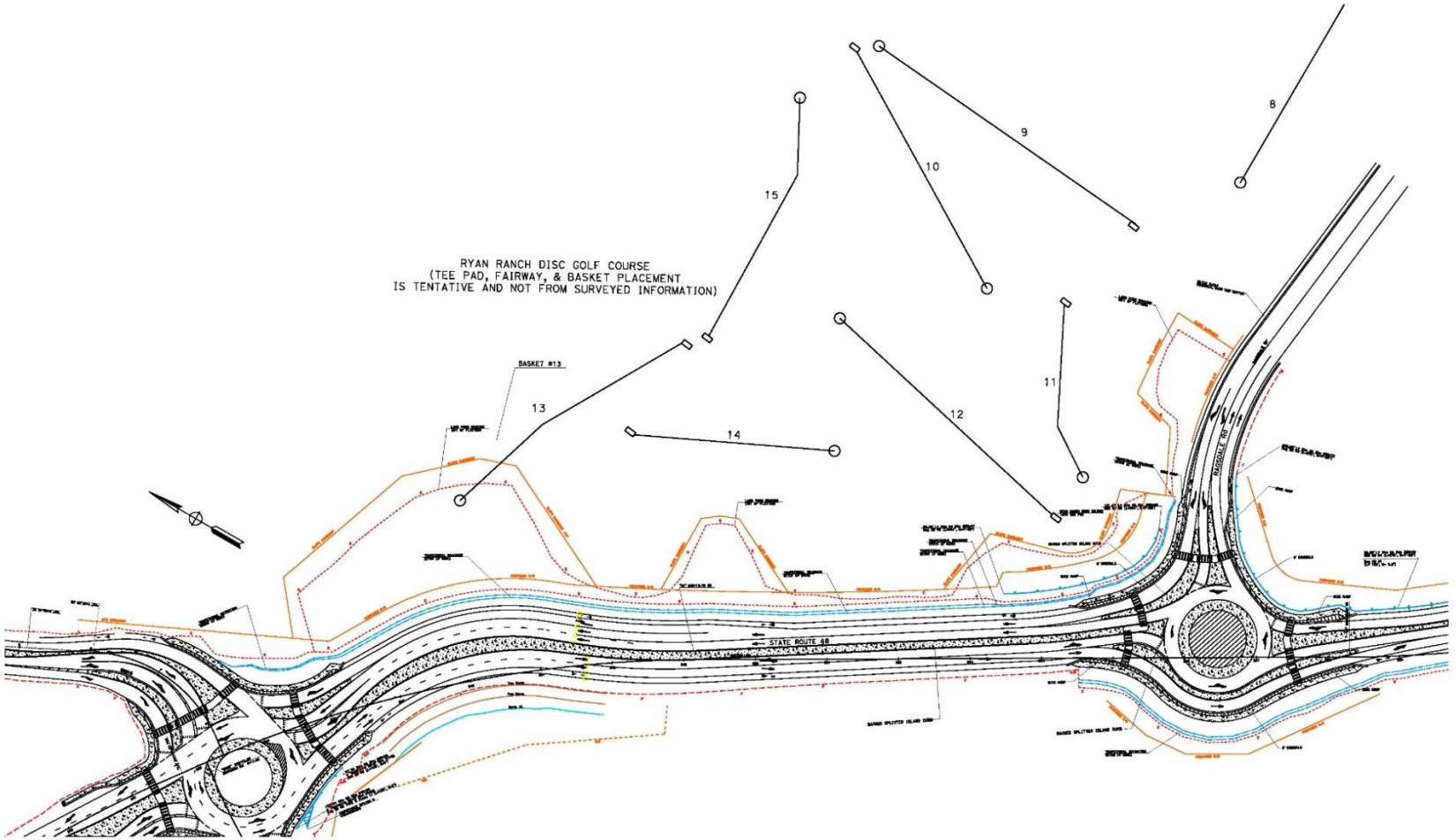
Alternative 1 would acquire right-of-way from the end portion of the 13th course fairway that includes the basket and requires property along the park parcel steep slopes abutting State Route 68, State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive. The acquisition of parkland and the need to relocate the disc basket and fairway would result in a "use" under Section 4(f). However, the relocation of the disc basket will be performed in a manner that will not disrupt the active play of disc golf and the fairway course will remain open to players. Coordination efforts will continue with park officials throughout the various project development phases.

After incorporation of the avoidance measure (retaining wall northwest of Ragsdale Drive at State Route 68) and the environmental commitment to relocate the disc basket while continuously maintaining active play for disc golf, it is anticipated that none of the activities, features, or attributes would be adversely affected. The preliminary designs for the proposed State Route 68/State Route 218 and State Route 68/Ragsdale Drive Alternative 1 intersection roundabouts were modified during the preliminary design process to minimize and avoid use of the park property features and attributes (disc golf course facilities) to the degree feasible. The proposed retaining walls at the northwest corner of the Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68 intersection and along the west side of Ragsdale Drive were designed to avoid direct impact on the 12th Tee Pad of the disc golf course.

Alternative 2, Location 2, State Route 218/State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68 intersections, Permanent Use at Ryan Ranch Park and Disc Golf Course. The design for Alternative 2 at State Route 218/State Route 68 intersection would also include a landform grading area northeast of the intersection in lieu of a retaining wall along the north side of State Route 68 and east side of State Route 68. The landform grading footprint would be slightly smaller than the landform grading area for the Alternative 1 roundabout design at the same location. In addition, the design for the roundabout would realign the State Route 68 east leg of the State Route 218/State Route 68 intersection to bow toward the northeast to slow traffic entering the roundabout, which would shift the landform grading area onto more of the park property. The Alternative 2 east leg maintains the current alignment of the highway. The preliminary design plans for both alternatives are included on the project webpage as referenced in Appendix H of the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

The required permanent right-of-way for the landform grading area for Alternative 2 would not impact the disc golf basket for fairway 13, based on the preliminary design plans. The exact locations of the disc golf fairways are approximate and would be confirmed after civil surveys during the final design phase of the project. As noted previously, disc golf course fairways and basket locations are movable for course variations.

Figure S4-1. Alternative 1 Roundabouts State Route 218/State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68 and Ryan Ranch Park Disc Golf Course Overlay



Alternative 2 would not require the other landform grading areas in the steeper slope areas of the park property adjacent to the north side of State Route 68 or along the west side of Ragsdale Drive that the roundabout designs would require. The tee pad for fairway number 12 would not be impacted. Therefore, the total permanent right-of-way acquisition at the park property for Alternative 2 for these two intersections would be just less than 2 acres in comparison to 3 acres for the Alternative 1 roundabout. Refer to Figure S4-2.

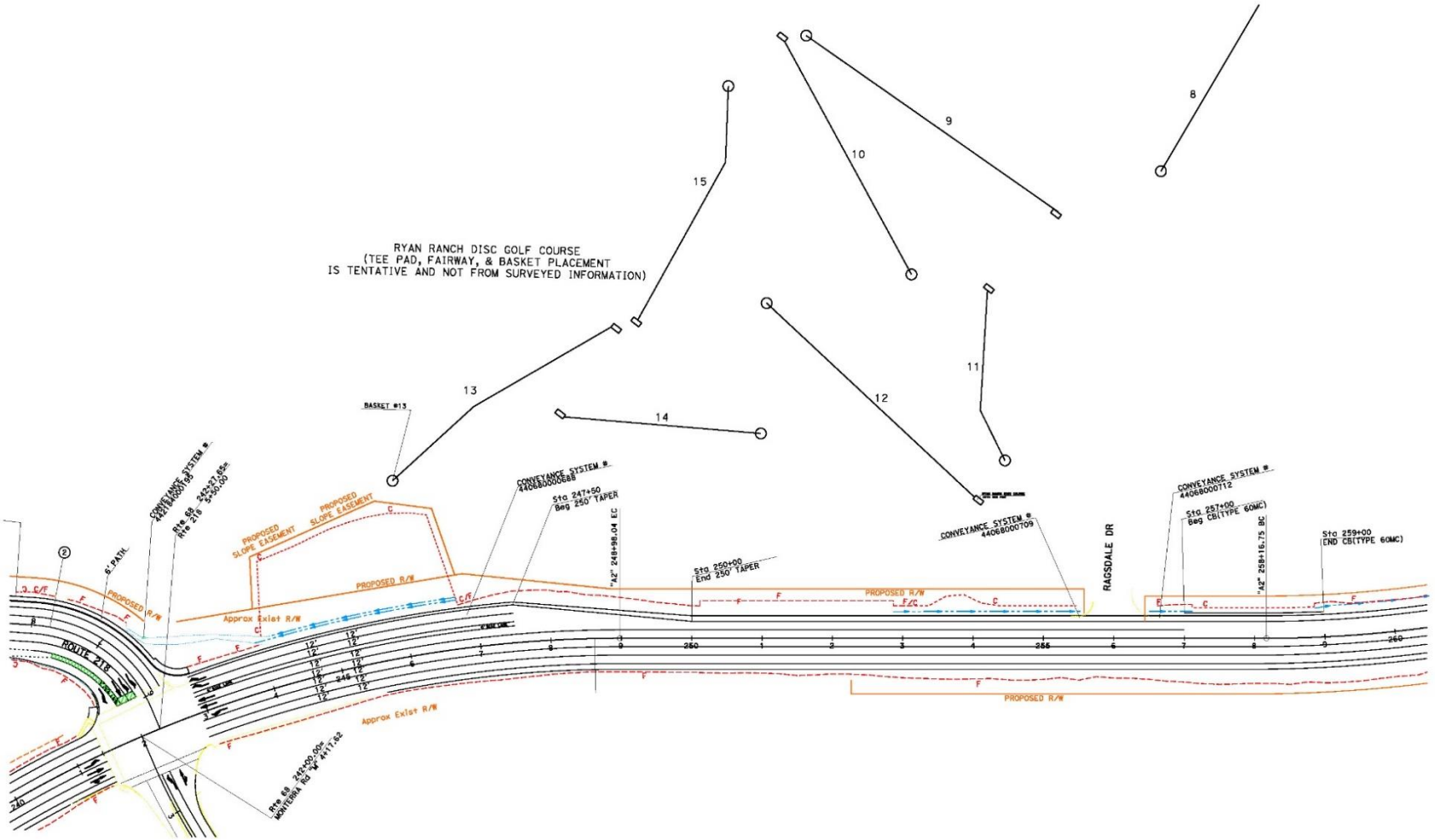
Therefore, Alternative 2 at the two intersections of State Route 218/State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68 would not adversely affect the activities, attributes, or features of the park that provide protection under Section 4(f) as a public recreational resource.

Fort Ord National Monument, Federal (U.S.A.) Property (APN: 031-011-014), U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

The Fort Ord National Monument property occupies the majority of the former Fort Ord Army facility along the north side of State Route 68 between Reservation Road near the city of Salinas and General Jim Moore Boulevard near the city of Seaside. The National Monument was established in April 2012 through *Proclamation 8803 – Establishment of the Fort Ord National Monument*, which identifies the land's values for large contiguous open space (habitat types of oak woodland, chaparral, streamside corridors, grasslands, and seasonal pools), recreational uses (trail system for hiking, biking, and equestrian riding), scientific research, outdoor education, and historical and cultural significance. About one-half of the 14,651-acre National Monument property is managed by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (7,205 acres) and the remaining half by the Department of the Army (7,446 acres). The portion managed by the Army is closed to public use and has munitions hazards from unexploded ordnance from the land's former military operation.

The portion of the National Monument managed by the Bureau of Land Management borders the north side of State Route 68 for about 5 miles from east of the Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection to Reservation Road. The Bureau of Land Management-managed area consists of large contiguous open space designated on the County of Monterey's Fort Ord Master Plan Land Use Map 6A as Habitat Management use and contains numerous hiking trails (about 85 trail segments) as well as non-motorized unpaved and paved roads. The northern portion of the Monument contains several ponds and vernal pools. This is a Section 4(f) resource because the property has been designated in an official management plan as recreational and is open to the public during normal operational hours. The Bureau of Land Management manages the property to protect the unique objects and values of the Monument property, including rare and unique flora and fauna, recreation resources, the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, and its military history and culture. Though the Monument property is managed to protect its rare and unique flora and faunal resources, it is not an officially designated wildlife or waterfowl refuge.

Figure S4-2. Alternative 2 and Ryan Ranch Disc Golf Course, State Route 68/State Route218 to State Route 68/Ragsdale Drive



The cultural and historical values of the Monument property are linked to its history as a part of the area through which the Juan Bautista de Anza overland trail traversed partially along the now Scenic Route 68 alignment in 1775-1776 during the Spanish settlement of California, and also for its being the home for the Fort Ord U.S. Army facility between 1917 and 1994 and the training of 1.5 million American troops for major military conflicts in the 20th century (source: Proclamation 8803 – Establishment of the Fort Ord National Monument, April 20, 2012, President of the United States, Barack Obama).

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. According to the Fort Ord National Monument Proclamation, the area's primary importance is for its undeveloped (open space and natural habitat) characteristics, and as such, the Monument is not likely to meet the eligibility criteria as an historic resource for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (Caltrans District 5 Architectural Historian Dan Leckie, 11-22-2022 email). The Historic Resource Evaluation Report prepared for the proposed State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project, consistent with the guidance in Caltrans' Standard Environmental Reference, does not evaluate large properties without nearby improvements, associated built features, or landscape elements. In addition, the Fort Ord National Monument is not included in the National Park Service GIS database.

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. Even though the National Monument property is not listed as an historic resource on the National Register, the property is still considered a Section 4(f) resource as a public recreational property. According to the County of Monterey Fort Ord Master Plan, page FO-12, the Bureau of Land Management Recreational Area contains several districts, including the Open Space Habitat District with 15,000 acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management designated as Open Space/Recreation and Habitat Management, and the Laguna Seca Regional Park District, 591 acres designated Public Facilities/Institutional to be dedicated for use in expanding the Laguna Seca Regional Park.

Permanent Use of Fort Ord National Monument

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. Assessor's Parcel Number 031-011-014 (724.5 acre) on the Fort Ord National Monument is in the ownership of, and managed by the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. The proposed project build alternatives would require linear permanent use areas through right-of-way acquisition adjacent to the north side of State Route 68 and along the western edge of Cypress Church Drive (the north leg of Corral de Tierra Road) for the proposed intersection improvements. Alternative 1 (Single-lane Roundabout design) would require an amount of permanent property use of less than one-half acre (0.43 acre) on the property for a proposed 4-to-1 ratio (horizontal to vertical) fill embankment slope to minimize impacts to the adjacent slope and sensitive resources. The preliminary hybrid roundabout

design is estimated to require an additional quarter of an acre, or 0.67 acre, of permanent use of the Monument property for the additional westbound lane on the north side of the roundabout and affiliated drainage infrastructure.

Alternative 2, the Signals and Lane Channelization design, would require a total of just under 2 acres of the monument property for permanent use, primarily due to the proposed lengthy westbound auxiliary through travel lane and reduction taper, and widening of the west leg (State Route 68 west of Corral de Tierra Road) to accommodate the lane configurations and standard shoulder widths. Widening of the west leg would require an approximately 720-foot-long retaining wall along the north side of State Route 68 to minimize the impacts to a riparian woodland/streambed that runs parallel to State Route 68. These design elements would necessitate some elongated encroachment onto the National Monument property compared to the roundabout design.

There are no active trails or other recreational uses in the peripheral areas of the National Monument property that would be used for permanent highway and cross-street improvements at the intersection of State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive. The permanent acquisition areas would be on the edge of the property adjacent to the State Route 68 highway and Cypress Church Drive roadways and their use would not impair the activities, features, or attributes of the recreational value of the National Monument property that is protected under Section 4(f).

Temporary Use of Fort Ord National Monument

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. Temporary occupancy of portions of the National Monument property would be necessary for either of the proposed build alternatives to construct project components such as retaining walls, sidewalks, bike ramps, and other components of the designs. Alternative 1 (single-lane roundabout design) at State Route 68/Corral de Tierra-Cypress Church Drive is estimated to require 0.22 acre (less than one-quarter acre) of temporary use area (i.e., temporary construction easement); the updated roundabout hybrid design would require about half of that amount (0.12 acre) for temporary construction uses, and Alternative 2 would require about less than one-tenth of an acre. This work does not meet all of the five criteria to apply for a temporary occupancy exception under the Section 4(f) regulation. Therefore, a *de minimis* determination is anticipated.

County of Monterey Assessor's Parcel Number 031-131-002 (247.2 acres), Land Use: Habitat Management (Fort Ord Master Plan LU Map 6A)

Monterey County parcel 031-131-002 is located within the Fort Ord National Monument, with the same land use designation of Habitat Management. This land use designation is described in the County's Fort Ord Master Plan (Chapter 9.E of the 2010 Monterey County General Plan) as intended for uses including

ecological restoration, environmental educational activities and facilities, and passive recreational activities such as hiking, bike and horse riding, and picnicking. The Planning Area Map identifies the property as augmentation to the Laguna Seca Recreation Area, therefore, it is available for recreational uses. The Habitat Management land use designation does not meet the criteria under Section 4(f) as a wildlife or waterfowl refuge wherein the primary purpose and function is that of a refuge and is designated as such. The Fort Ord Installation-wide Multispecies Habitat Management Plan (L20.6, Section 4.52) notes this property as a local agency parcel with no habitat management requirements. This parcel has activities and features of open space with native vegetation trails for hiking, mountain biking and horse riding. The Base Reuse Plan designates this property as open space/recreation. This is a Section 4(f) resource because the property has been designated as recreational and is open to the public during normal operational hours.

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. Both of the build alternatives would permanently use portions of this parcel for the proposed improvements of the State Route 68/Laureles Grade intersection. Alternative 1, the single-lane roundabout design at Laureles Grade/State Route 68 would require about 1.92 acres of permanent right-of-way from this County parcel for proposed drainage and retaining wall improvements. The updated (hybrid) roundabout design would require about 1.77 acres of the parcel, or 0.15 acre less. Alternative 2 at Laureles Grade/State Route 68 would require 3.3 acres of permanent use of this County property for intersection improvements, including the addition of an auxiliary lane and shoulder widening, and construction of a drainage ditch with forward and back slopes to contain runoff and enable the proposed wildlife crossing culvert to function.

The portions of this parcel adjacent to State Route 68 that would have permanent use for the proposed intersection improvements from both build alternatives are along the perimeter of the property and do not contain any recreational features, attributes or activities that would be adversely affected. Therefore, it is anticipated that the project would not adversely affect the qualities, attributes, or features of the National Monument that provide protection under Section 4(f) as a public recreational resource.

County of Monterey Assessor's Parcel Number 173-011-025 (27.14 acres) Land Use: Laguna Seca Recreation Area

County parcel 173-011-025 is adjacent to State Route 68 west of the Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection, and within the southern portion of the Laguna Seca Recreation Area. The parcel contains a portion of the "A Road" loop.

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. Alternative 1 (either the single-lane or hybrid designs) would require no permanent use of this County parcel (refer to the Section

below titled Resources Evaluated Relative to the Requirements of Section 4(f): No Use Determinations). Alternative 2 is estimated to require just under 1 acre of the southern periphery of the parcel along the north side of State Route 68. The permanent use of this parcel with Alternative 2 would be along the southern edge of the property adjacent to State Route 68 for the proposed intersection improvements, including an added westbound auxiliary lane on State Route 68 that would connect to a right-turn lane onto B Road, which provides access to the Laguna Seca recreational facilities. An existing drainage ditch on the north side of State Route 68 would be reconstructed to hydraulic design standards to contain highway runoff and to enable functionality of the proposed wildlife crossing culvert at post mile 11.16 west of Laureles Grade.

Portions of the existing alignments of B Road and A Road at the south end of this property adjacent to State Route 68 would potentially be impacted by the highway widening for Alternative 2 at Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection and segments of the highway on either side. B Road and A Road are on the Laguna Seca Recreation Area and provide access from State Route 68 to the recreational area facilities, therefore, they are features of the Section 4(f) resource. Affected portions of these access roads may require realignment or reconfiguration to restore connectivity to the recreational area facilities. During road realignment/reconstruction, a temporary detour would be implemented to maintain access to the recreational area facilities. A Transportation Management Plan would be implemented for the project that would prescribe specific traffic management procedures at the project locations to enable continued access to properties during the project construction phases. Therefore, the use of this parcel would not adversely affect the qualities, attributes, or features of the Laguna Seca Recreation Area that provide protection under Section 4(f) as a public recreational resource. Refer to the Attachments section of this document for mapping of Alternative 2 proposed right-of-way onto this parcel.

Resources Evaluated Relative to the Requirements of Section 4(f): No Use Determinations

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified in federal law at 49 United States Code (USC) 303, declares that “it is the policy of the United States Government that special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites.” This section of the document discusses parks, recreational facilities, wildlife refuges, and historic properties found within or next to the project area that do not trigger Section 4(f) protection because: 1) they are not publicly owned, 2) they are not open to the public, 3) they are not eligible historic properties, or 4) the project does not permanently use the property and does not hinder the preservation of the property.

Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail

The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail (de Anza Trail) is a 1,200-mile trail from Arizona to the San Francisco area of northern California. Portions of the trail are adjacent to Scenic Route 68 in the project area (refer to the trail map in the Attachments section of this document). The trail marks and commemorates the route taken by Spanish Lieutenant Colonel de Anza and a group of about 240 colonists in the years 1775 and 1776 from Sonora, Mexico (New Spain) to settle Alta California and establish a mission and presidio at what is now San Francisco. The de Anza Trail was designated a National Historic Trail by the U.S. Congress in 1990 through an amendment to the National Trails System Act (16 U.S. Code 1241-51).

Though the entire trail route passes through areas that are determined to be National Register of Historic Places, or eligible for the National Register, the trail as a whole is not a National Register resource. Public Law 95-625 states that “no land or sites located along a designated National Historic Trail is subject to the provisions of Section 4(f) of the National Transportation Act unless such land or site is deemed to be of historical significance under the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places. Only lands or sites adjacent to historic trails that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are subject to Section 4(f).” As such, National Historic trails in and of themselves are exempt from analysis under Section 4(f), and, therefore, the de Anza Trail is not evaluated herein as a resource protected under Section (f) (sources: https://blm.gov/programs/tantional-conservation-lands/national-scenic-and-historic-trails/Juan-Bautista-de-Anza#/, and https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_topics/4f_tutorial/properties_historic.aspx and https://anzahistorictrail.org/county/monterey-ca/).

No Temporary Use of Ryan Ranch Park Property and Monterey County Parcels 031-131-002 and 173-011-025

Neither build alternative would require any temporary construction easements on the Ryan Ranch Park property between the State Route 218/State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68 intersections. Therefore, neither design would have a temporary occupancy of the parkland because temporary construction easements are not needed from Ryan Ranch Park property. Neither build alternative would require temporary construction easements on County parcels 031-131-002, or Parcel 173-011-025 (part of the Laguna Seca Recreation Area lands.

No Permanent Use of County Parcel 173-011-025 by Alternative 1

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. Alternative 1, the roundabout alternative (single-lane or hybrid designs) at the intersection of State Route 68 at Laureles Grade is not anticipated to use any portion of the County parcel 173-011-025, which provides entry to the Laguna Seca Recreation Area.

Historic Properties

Historic sites are defined in Code of Federal Regulations 774.17. For purposes of Section 4(f), a historic site is significant if it is on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), and the land does not have to be publicly owned or open to the public. Section 4(f) does not apply to archaeological resources that are important chiefly because of what can be learned through data recovery and have minimal value for preservation in place [(23 CFR 774.13(b)(1)].

Multiple cultural resources studies were conducted for the proposed project and are referenced in Section 2.1.10 of the Draft (and Final) Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (Cultural Resources). Based on the historic-era studies conducted for the proposed project (Historic Resources Evaluation Report, Caltrans July 2023), Caltrans determined under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act that the proposed project build alternatives would result in a “no adverse effect” on any listed or eligible historic-era resources in the Architectural Study Area of the project.

Within the Architectural Study Area established for the project studies, there are 20 properties that required survey and evaluation for eligibility of listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources (California Register). The Historic Resources Evaluation Report concluded after evaluation that one of these resources, the Ryan House/Rancho Saucito/Tarpy’s Roadhouse complex met the criteria for eligibility in both registers, and therefore, was reevaluated as part of the project study. None of the other historic-era resources evaluated for the study met the eligibility criteria for the National or California registers.

The Tarpy’s Roadhouse (APN: 259-021-002) property is part of the Ryan House-Rancho Saucito built environment complex with a prehistoric habitation site (CA-MNT-1438/H). The property is on the north side of State Route 68, west of the State Route 218/State Route 68 intersection at 2999 Monterey-Salinas Highway (State Route 68). The site includes a main building housing the currently operating Tarpy’s Roadhouse restaurant and the Monterey Stone Wedding Chapel. This building was initially built as a residence around 1926 and has both single- and two-story components, an Arts and Crafts-style architecture with irregular footprint, multiple roof forms, red clay tiles and composition shingles, with masonry, brick, concrete and wood-frame construction elements. Also on the property are a two-story residential building, three modern detached sheds, a courtyard with pergolas, a bas-relief of the American Expeditionary Force of World War I, and a dining alcove. Flanking the gravel driveway extending from State Route 68 are circular stone posts, stone masonry retaining walls, landscaping, and sculptures. Those features are considered contributing elements of the property’s historical significance and eligibility for the National Register.

During the preliminary design phase of the proposed project, the design for the Alternative 2 intersection expansion at State Route 218/State Route 68 was revised to shift the centerline of State Route 68 and westbound lanes slightly south to avoid encroachment onto this property. Specifically, the shift avoids impacting the circular stone posts and retaining walls at the southern edge of the property adjacent to the highway. There would be no additional right-of-way acquired and no temporary construction easement needed from the boundaries of this historic property for either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2. Therefore, neither of the project build alternatives would impact the Ryan House-Rancho Saucito (Tarpy's Roadhouse) property, and the project would have no use of this resource.

The proposed determination in the Historic Resources Evaluation Report (July 2023) is that the proposed build alternatives would have no adverse effects on historic-era built-environment resources within the project Architectural Study Area. Upon selection of a Preferred Alternative, an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) action plan will be prepared and attached to the Finding of Effect for historic resources.

Pre-historic (Archaeological) Resources

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. Two of the seven sites within the project Area of Potential Effect are archaeological sites, CA-MNT-3 and CA-MNT-4, that were determined in prior studies for other projects in the study area to be eligible for listing on the National Register and the California Register. As part of the studies for this project, additional testing was conducted in portions of previously untested areas of these two archaeological sites. The deposits that were sampled and tested were determined to not contribute to the qualities for which the sites were previously determined eligible for listing on the National Register. Alternative 1 would likely affect a small portion of CA-MNT-4, and Alternative 2 may affect portions of CA-MNT-3. As noted previously, Caltrans has selected Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative to proceed with for final design. However, both sites will be protected from project impacts with establishment of an Environmentally Sensitive Area and implementation of a mitigation program specified in the Cultural Resources Management Plan. As such, the project will likely not have an adverse effect on the two known pre-historic sites and potential buried resources within the restricted areas to be tested.

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. In addition, an approximately 5-acre area with elevated level of buried site sensitivity, that is, that has a higher potential for buried archaeological remains due to the presence of known prehistoric habitation sites in the area, was unable to be tested because of the presence of sensitive biological resources. Therefore, Section 106 effects are still undetermined for that portion of the study area until testing is completed. A minor phased program approach is planned for the identification efforts to complete the

Section 106 studies, which will include further testing as part of a proposed Finding of Effect document and the Cultural Resources Management Plan prepared by Caltrans. The Cultural Resources Management Plan for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements (dated September 2022) presents a systematic approach to testing to determine the project's effects on potential sensitive archaeological resources, and prescriptive treatment steps pending the findings of completed testing. If any buried sites are found, they will be evaluated for national/state register eligibility and then analyzed to determine if the project would have any potential to adversely affect historic properties. Any adverse effects would be addressed by implementing procedures in the Cultural Resources Management Plan, including preconstruction, construction, and post-construction procedures. The post-construction procedures include the final finding of effect analysis process.

Section 4(f) does not apply to archaeological resources that are important chiefly because of what can be learned through data recovery and have minimal value for preservation in place.

Section 4(f) Designated Wildlife or Waterfowl Refuges

For the purposes of Section 4(f), wildlife and waterfowl refuges are areas that are officially designated as such by federal, state, or local agencies on any significant publicly owned property where the primary purpose of the land is as a refuge for the conservation, protection, and propagation of native species (Section 4(f) Policy Paper, FHWA, July 2012). There are no officially designated wildlife or waterfowl refuges in the project area.

Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

Throughout this preliminary design phase of the proposed project, Caltrans has revised the intersection designs for both alternatives where feasible to minimize use of properties adjacent to the project limits and outside of the state highway right-of-way, including the properties analyzed herein as protected under Section 4(f). The adjustments to the intersection design elements were made to avoid substantive effects on the features, attributes, and activities of Section 4(f) properties.

The following environmental commitment will be implemented:

PR-1. Ryan Ranch Park and Disc Golf Course Activities During Construction. Relocation of a disc basket or modification of other course features during construction as a result of permanent partial right-of-way acquisition for the project will be performed in a manner that does not disrupt active play of disc golf and the fairway course will remain open to players. Coordination efforts will continue with park officials throughout project development phases.

Section 6f of the Land and Water Conservation Act

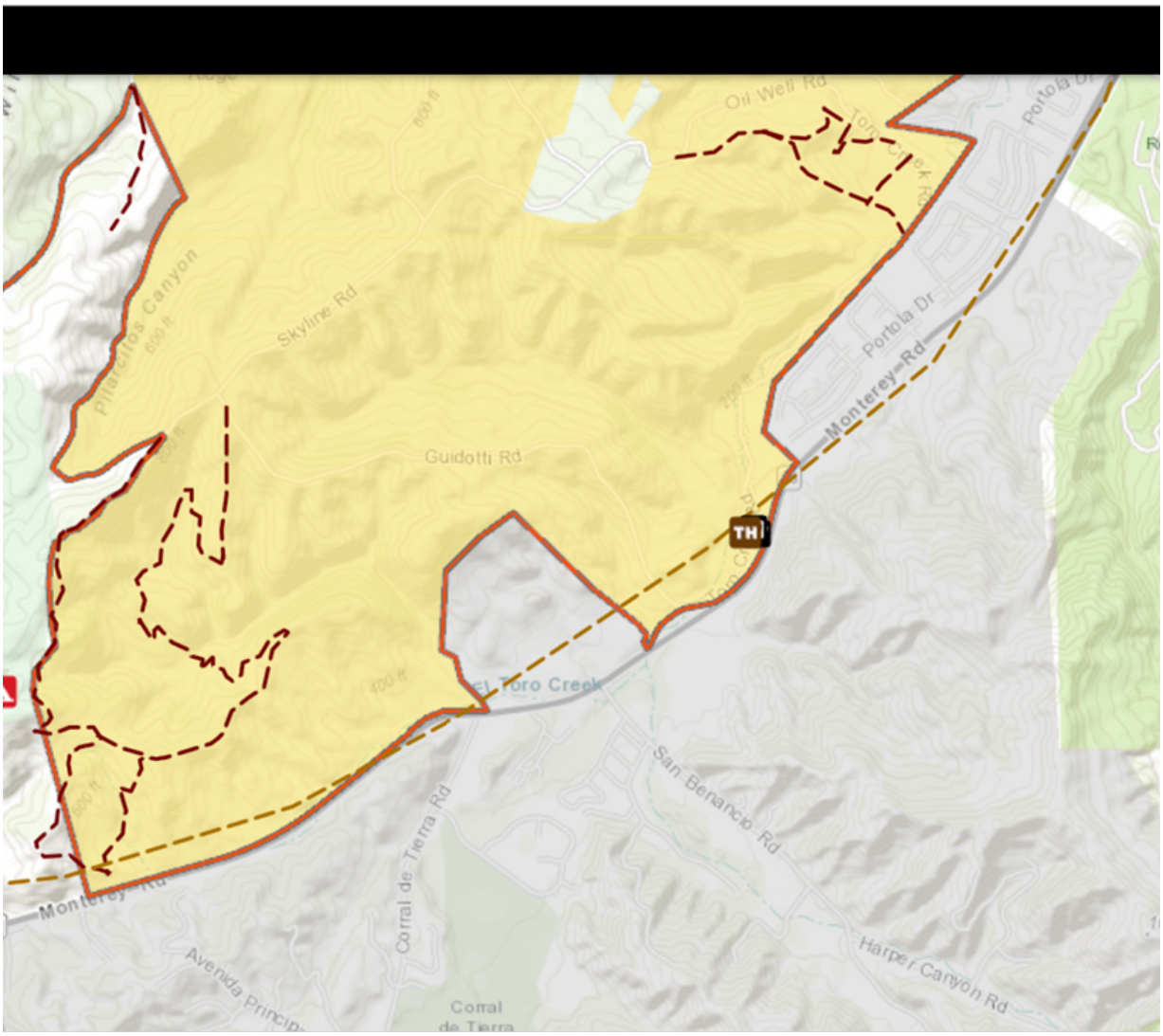
The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act was established by Congress in 1964 to fulfill a bipartisan commitment to safeguard natural areas, water resources, and cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. The Land and Water Conservation Fund program provides matching grants to states and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Section 6(f) of this act prohibits the conversion of property acquired or developed with these grants to a non-recreational purpose without the approval of the Department of Interior's National Park Service.

This paragraph was modified since the draft Section 4(f) analysis was originally circulated. The nearest public recreational facilities that received funding for improvements through the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act grants program include the Laguna Seca Recreational Area north of State Route 68 near the Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection, Toro Regional Park which is more than 2 miles east of the easterly limits of the project (San Benancio Road/State Route 68 and Frog Pond community park in Del Rey Oaks about 1 mile north of the State Route218/State Route 68 intersection (Source: Land and Water Conservation Fund, Past Projects Map, https://lwcf.tplgis.org/mappast/). The preferred alternative, Alternative 1 roundabouts, would not encroach on the Laguna Seca Recreational Area parcels, or the other two grant-funded recreational properties. Therefore, the project would not convert, either temporarily or permanently, any outdoor recreational areas or facilities established through this government fund to non-recreational purposes.

Attachments

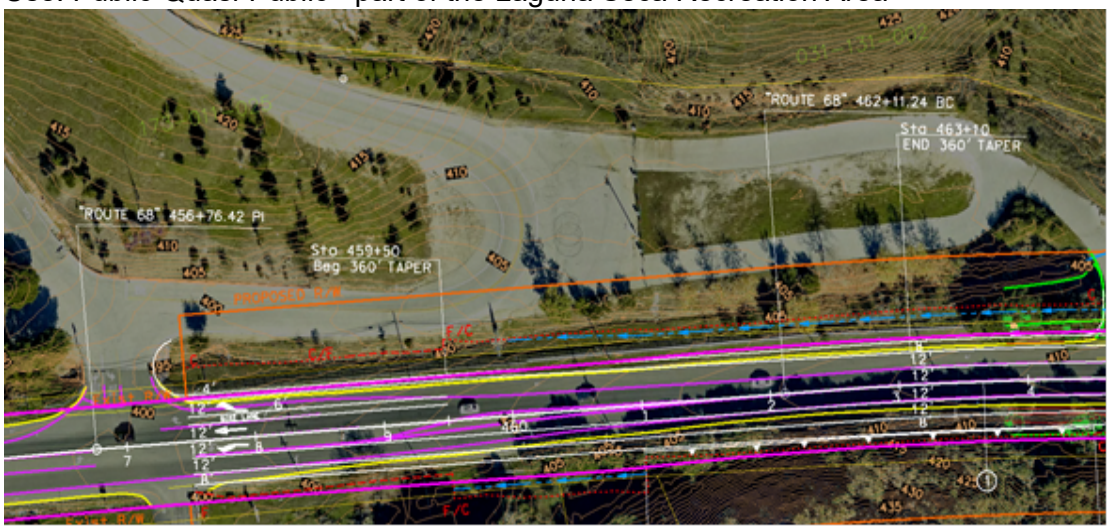
Reference Maps

Portion of BLM Trail map for Fort Ord National Monument showing the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail along State Route 68 in the vicinity of San Benancio Road and Corral de Tierra Road intersections

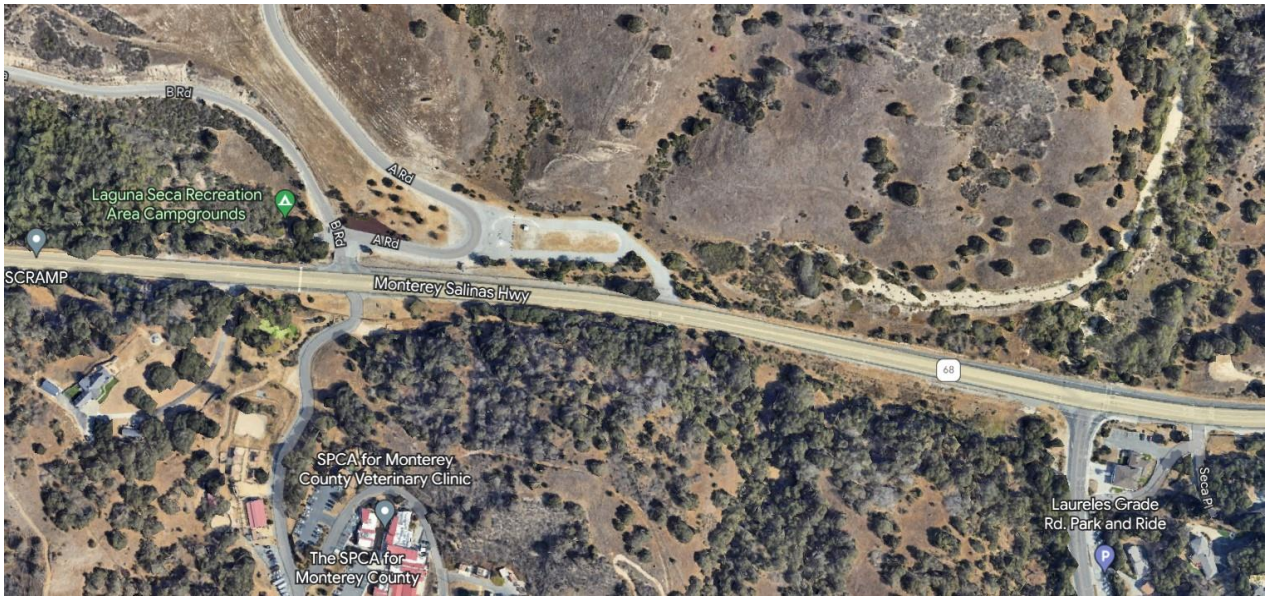


Source: Trail Map of Fort Ord National Monument, U.S. Department of the Interior/Bureau of Land Management (https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/california/fort-ord-national-monument/), and Caltrans internal email correspondence between Environmental Coordinator Meg Henry and Architectural Historian Lindsay Kozub, November 2019.

County of Monterey Assessor's Parcel Number 173-011-025 (27.14 acres) Land Use: Public-Quasi-Public - part of the Laguna Seca Recreation Area



B Road is the entrance road off of State Route 68 that goes north/northwest up to Laguna Seca Recreation Area, which includes the WeatherTech raceway; A road is the connecting loop road to the right of B Road.



Google Earth Aerial Photographic Mapping of B Road and A Road Entrance to Laguna Seca Recreation Area. Laureles Grade intersection at State Route 68 is on the right in the image.

Appendix B Title VI Policy Statement

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

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September 2024

TITLE VI/NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the assurances set forth in the Caltrans' Title VI Program Plan, to ensure that no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Related non-discrimination authorities, remedies, and state law further those protections, including sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age, low income, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Caltrans is committed to complying with 23 C.F.R. Part 200, 49 C.F.R. Part 21, 49 C.F.R. Part 303, and the Federal Transit Administration Circular 4702.1B. Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs, and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin (including LEP). In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a non-discriminatory manner.

The overall responsibility for this policy is assigned to the Caltrans Director. The Caltrans Title VI Coordinator is assigned to the Caltrans Office of Civil Rights Deputy Director, who then delegates sufficient responsibility and authority to the Office of Civil Rights' managers, including the Title VI Branch Manager, to effectively implement the Caltrans Title VI Program. Individuals with questions or requiring additional information relating to the policy or the implementation of the Caltrans Title VI Program should contact the Title VI Branch Manager at title.vi@dot.ca.gov or at (916) 639-6392, or visit the following web page: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi.

TONY TAVARES
Director

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

Appendix C Summary of Relocation Benefits

California Department of Transportation Relocation Assistance Program

DECLARATION OF POLICY

"The purpose of this title is to establish a uniform policy for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced as a result of federal and federally assisted programs in order that such persons shall not suffer disproportionate injuries as a result of programs designed for the benefit of the public as a whole."

The Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, "No Person shall…be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation." The Uniform Act sets forth in statute the due process that must be followed in Real Property acquisitions involving federal funds. Supplementing the Uniform Act is the government-wide single rule for all agencies to follow, set forth in 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 24. Displaced individuals, families, businesses, farms, and nonprofit organizations may be eligible for relocation advisory services and financial benefits, as discussed below.

FAIR HOUSING

The Fair Housing Law (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) sets forth the policy of the United States to provide, within constitutional limitations, for fair housing. This act, and as amended, makes discriminatory practices in the purchase and rental of most residential units illegal. Whenever possible, minority persons shall be given reasonable opportunities to relocate to any available housing regardless of neighborhood, as long as the replacement dwellings are decent, safe, and sanitary and are within their financial means. This policy, however, does not require the Department to provide a person a larger payment than is necessary to enable a person to relocate to a comparable replacement dwelling.

Any persons to be displaced will be assigned to a relocation advisor, who will work closely with each displacee in order to see that all payments and benefits are fully utilized and that all regulations are observed, thereby avoiding the possibility of displacees jeopardizing or forfeiting any of their benefits or payments. At the time of the initiation of negotiations (usually the first written offer to purchase), owner-occupants are given a detailed explanation of the state's relocation services. Tenant occupants of properties to be acquired are contacted soon after the initiation of negotiations and also are given a detailed explanation of the Caltrans Relocation Assistance Program. To avoid loss of possible benefits, no individual, family, business, farm, or nonprofit organization should commit to purchase or rent a replacement property without first contacting a Caltrans relocation advisor.

RELOCATION ASSISTANCE ADVISORY SERVICES

In accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, the Department will provide relocation advisory assistance to any person, business, farm, or nonprofit organization displaced as a result of the acquisition of real property for public use, so long as they are legally present in the United States. The Department will assist eligible displacees in obtaining comparable replacement housing by providing current and continuing information on the availability and prices of both houses for sale and rental units that are "decent, safe, and sanitary." Nonresidential displacees will receive information on comparable properties for lease or purchase (for business, farm, and nonprofit organization relocation services, see below).

Residential replacement dwellings will be in a location generally not less desirable than the displacement neighborhood at prices or rents within the financial ability of the individuals and families displaced, and reasonably accessible to their places of employment. Before any displacement occurs, comparable replacement dwellings will be offered to displacees that are open to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, and consistent with the requirements of Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. This assistance will also include the supplying of information concerning federal and state assisted housing programs and any other known services being offered by public and private agencies in the area.

Persons who are eligible for relocation payments and who are legally occupying the property required for the project will not be asked to move without first being given at least 90 days written notice. Residential occupants eligible for relocation payment(s) will not be required to move unless at least one comparable "decent, safe, and sanitary" replacement dwelling, available on the market, is offered to them by the Department.

RESIDENTIAL RELOCATION FINANCIAL BENEFITS

The Relocation Assistance Program will help eligible residential occupants by paying certain costs and expenses. These costs are limited to those necessary for or incidental to the purchase or rental of a replacement dwelling and actual reasonable moving expenses to a new location within 50 miles of the displacement property. Any actual moving costs in excess of the 50 miles are the responsibility of the displacee. The Residential Relocation Assistance Program can be summarized as follows:

Moving Costs

Any displaced person, who lawfully occupied the acquired property, regardless of the length of occupancy in the property acquired, will be eligible for reimbursement of moving costs. Displacees will receive either the actual reasonable costs involved in moving themselves and personal property up to a maximum of 50 miles, or a fixed payment based on a fixed moving cost schedule. Lawful occupants who move into the displacement property after

the initiation of negotiations must wait until the Department obtains control of the property in order to be eligible for relocation payments.

Purchase Differential

In addition to moving and related expense payments, fully eligible homeowners may be entitled to payments for increased costs of replacement housing.

Homeowners who have owned and occupied their property for 90 days or more prior to the date of the initiation of negotiations (usually the first written offer to purchase the property), may qualify to receive a price differential payment and may qualify to receive reimbursement for certain nonrecurring costs incidental to the purchase of the replacement property. An interest differential payment is also available if the interest rate for the loan on the replacement dwelling is higher than the loan rate on the displacement dwelling, subject to certain limitations on reimbursement based upon the replacement property interest rate.

Rent Differential

Tenants and certain owner-occupants (based on length of ownership) who have occupied the property to be acquired by the Department prior to the date of the initiation of negotiations may qualify to receive a rent differential payment. This payment is made when the Department determines that the cost to rent a comparable “decent, safe, and sanitary” replacement dwelling will be more than the present rent of the displacement dwelling. As an alternative, the tenant may qualify for a down payment benefit designed to assist in the purchase of a replacement property and the payment of certain costs incidental to the purchase, subject to certain limitations noted under the Down Payment section below.

To receive any relocation benefits, the displaced person must buy or rent and occupy a “decent, safe and sanitary” replacement dwelling within one year from the date the Department takes legal possession of the property, or from the date the displacee vacates the displacement property, whichever is later.

Down Payment

The down payment option has been designed to aid owner-occupants of less than 90 days and tenants in legal occupancy prior to the Department’s initiation of negotiations. The one-year eligibility period in which to purchase and occupy a “decent, safe and sanitary” replacement dwelling will apply.

Last Resort Housing

Federal regulations (49 CFR 24) contain the policy and procedure for implementing the Last Resort Housing Program on Federal-aid projects. Last Resort Housing benefits are, except for the amounts of payments and the methods in making them, the same as those benefits for standard residential relocation as explained above. Last Resort Housing has been designed primarily to cover situations where a displacee cannot be relocated because

of lack of available comparable replacement housing, or when the anticipated replacement housing payments exceed the limits of the standard relocation procedure, because either the displacee lacks the financial ability or other valid circumstances.

After the initiation of negotiations, the Department will within a reasonable length of time, personally contact the displacees to gather important information, including the following:

- Number of people to be displaced.
- Specific arrangements needed to accommodate any family member(s) with special needs.
- Financial ability to relocate into comparable replacement dwelling which will adequately house all members of the family.
- Preferences in area of relocation.
- Location of employment or school.

NONRESIDENTIAL RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

The Nonresidential Relocation Assistance Program provides assistance to businesses, farms and nonprofit organizations in locating suitable replacement property, and reimbursement for certain costs involved in relocation. The Relocation Advisory Assistance Program will provide current lists of properties offered for sale or rent, suitable for a particular business's specific relocation needs. The types of payments available to eligible businesses, farms, and nonprofit organizations are: searching and moving expenses, and possibly reestablishment expenses; or a fixed in lieu payment instead of any moving, searching and reestablishment expenses. The payment types can be summarized as follows:

Moving Expenses

Moving expenses may include the following actual, reasonable costs:

- The moving of inventory, machinery, equipment and similar business-related property, including: dismantling, disconnecting, crating, packing, loading, insuring, transporting, unloading, unpacking, and reconnecting of personal property. Items identified as real property may not be moved under the Relocation Assistance Program. If the displacee buys an Item Pertaining to the Realty back at salvage value, the cost to move that item is borne by the displacee.
- Loss of tangible personal property provides payment for actual, direct loss of personal property that the owner is permitted not to move.
- Expenses related to searching for a new business site, up to $2,500, for reasonable expenses actually incurred.

Reestablishment Expenses

Reestablishment expenses related to the operation of the business at the new location, up to $25,000 for reasonable expenses actually incurred.

Fixed In Lieu Payment

A fixed payment in lieu of moving, searching, and reestablishment payments may be available to businesses that meet certain eligibility requirements. This payment is an amount equal to half the average annual net earnings for the last two taxable years prior to the relocation and may not be less than $1,000 nor more than $40,000.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Reimbursement for moving costs and replacement housing payments are not considered income for the purpose of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, or for the purpose of determining the extent of eligibility of a displacee for assistance under the Social Security Act, or any other law, except for any federal law providing local “Section 8” Housing Programs.

Any person, business, farm or nonprofit organization that has been refused a relocation payment by the Department relocation advisor or believes that the payment(s) offered by the agency are inadequate may appeal for a special hearing of the complaint. No legal assistance is required. Information about the appeal procedure is available from the relocation advisor.

California law allows for the payment for lost goodwill that arises from the displacement for a public project. A list of ineligible expenses can be obtained from the Department’s Division of Right of Way and Land Surveys. California’s law and the federal regulations covering relocation assistance provide that no payment shall be duplicated by other payments being made by the displacing agency

Appendix D Project Consistency with State, Regional and Local Plans and Policies

LAND USE – Consistency with Relevant State, Regional, and Local Plans

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Agricultural Element	Monterey County	• **Goal AG-7, Policy AG-6.1**— Improvement of regional transportation systems to support the needs of the agricultural industry shall be encouraged and supported.	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Circulation Element	Monterey County	• **Goal C-1, Policy C-1.1** – Acceptable level of service for county roads and intersections is D.	The intersection improvements for both alternatives will support the goal of obtaining a level of service D or better. However, Caltrans current policies and goals for measuring traffic operations apply different metrics than legacy level of service in accordance with the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) and the 2020-2024 Caltrans Strategic Plan which prioritize vehicle miles traveled and assessment of Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay and Daily person Hours of Delay.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Circulation Element	Monterey County	• **Goal C-3, Policy C-3.1** – Transportation modes shall be planned, and strategies developed to protect air quality, reduce noise, reduce consumption of fossil fuels, minimize acquisition of land for roadway construction.	It is anticipated that Alternative 1 roundabouts will reduce hard starts at intersections, thus reducing noise and fuel consumption resulting from such starts.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Circulation Element	Monterey County	• **Goal C-3, Policy C-3.5** – Transportation alternatives such as bicycles, carpools, public transit…shall be encouraged and accommodated within and outside the public ROW.	Both build alternatives would maintain the existing transit stops within the project limits on State Route 68. Currently Monterey-Salinas Transit does not run many buses on State Route 68 due to reduced demand and unpredictability in service delays. It is expected that once the State Route 68 improvements are completed, service times will be more reliable, and Monterey-Salinas Transit would consider increasing transit service for that route, pending demand.	Partially consistent; Not consistent with encouragement of transit use, which is not part of the project.	Partially consistent; Not consistent with encouragement of transit use, which is not part of the project.

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Circulation Element	Monterey County	• **Goal C-4, Policy C-4.2** – All new road and interior circulation systems shall be designed, developed, and maintained according to adopted County standards or allowed through specific agreements and plans.	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Circulation Element	Monterey County	• **Goal C-4, Policy C-4.9** –In cooperation with TAMC and Caltrans, the County shall monitor key County-maintained roadways, intersections, bikeways, and pedestrian facilities to observe and analyze the functioning of these roadways, as well as to identify capacity and safety concerns.	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Circulation Element	Monterey County	• **Goal C-5, Policy C-5.3** – Guidelines shall be developed to assure development and land use are compatible using techniques including a) utilities underground, b) arch/landscape controls, d) encouragement of area native plants for landscaping.	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Circulation Element	Monterey County	• **Goal C-5, Policy C-5.6** – Special scenic treatment and design within the rights-of-way of officially designated State Scenic Highways and/or County Scenic Roads shall be implemented and may include highway directional signs, guardrails and fences, lighting and illumination, provision of scenic outlooks, road lanes, frontage roads, vegetation, grading, and highway structures.	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Circulation Element	Monterey County	• **Goal C-9, Policy C-9.2**—Construction or expansion of roadways within major transportation corridors shall consider improved bike routes.	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-1, Policy OS-1.2** – Development in designated visually sensitive areas shall be subordinate to the natural features of the area. (See Figure 14 of the GP for locations of designated visually sensitive and highly sensitive areas and critical viewsheds).	Both alternatives would include retaining walls at most of the project intersections, some of which would be tall and lengthy. Other project features would also cause substantive visual changes such as additional turn lanes, concrete barriers and generally enlarged intersection footprints. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures prescribed accordingly.	NO	NO
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-5** - Conserve listed species, critical habitat, habitat and species in area plans; avoid, minimize, and mitigation significant impacts to biological resources.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-5, Policy OS-5.4** – Development shall avoid, minimize and mitigation impacts to listed species and critical habitat to the extent feasible… if development may affect listed species, consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife may be required and impacts may be mitigated by expanding the resource elsewhere on-site or within close proximity off-site.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-5, Policy OS-5.6** – native and native compatible species shall be used in fulfilling landscaping requirements.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-5, Policy OS-5.9**— Tree removal that requires a permit shall be established by Area Plans.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-5, Policy OS-5.12**— The California Department of Fish and Wildlife shall be consulted, and appropriate measures shall be taken to protect Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS).	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-5, Policy OS-5.16**— A biological study shall be required for any development project requiring a discretionary permit and having the potential to substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species. An ordinance establishing minimum standards for a biological study and biological surveys shall be enacted. A biological study shall include a field reconnaissance performed at the appropriate time of year. Based on the results of the biological study, biological surveys may be necessary to identify, describe, and delineate the habitats or species that are potentially impacted. Feasible measures to reduce significant impacts to a less than significant level shall be adopted as conditions of approval.	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-5, Policy OS-5.25**— Occupied nests of statutorily protected migratory birds and raptors shall not be disturbed during the breeding season (generally February 1 to September 15). The county shall A) Consult, or require the developer to consult, with a qualified biologist prior to any site preparation or construction work in order to: 1) Determine whether work is proposed during nesting season for migratory birds or raptors, 2) Determine whether site vegetation is suitable to nesting migratory birds or raptors, 3) Identify any regulatory requirements for setbacks or other avoidance measures for migratory birds and raptors which could nest on the site, and 4) Establish project-specific requirements for setbacks, lock-out periods, or other methods of avoidance of disruption of nesting birds. b) Require the development to follow the recommendations of the biologist. This measure may be implemented in one of two ways: 1) Preconstruction surveys may be conducted to identify active nests and, if found, adequate buffers shall be provided to avoid active nest disruption until after the young have fledged; or 2) Vegetation removal may be conducted during the non-breeding season (generally September 16 to January 31); however, removal of vegetation along waterways shall require approval of all appropriate local, state, and federal agencies	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-6** – Encourage the conservation and identification of the county's archaeological resources, Policies OS-6.1 to OS-6.3.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-7** - Encourage the conservation and identification of the county's Paleontological resources, Policies OS-7.1 and OS-7.3.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-8** - Encourage the conservation and identification of the county's native Californian cultural sites, scared places, and burial sites, Policies OS-8.1 to OS-8.3.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-9, Policy OS-9.6**— Development shall incorporate features that reduce energy used for transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle pathways, access to transit, and roadway design as appropriate.	Both build alternatives would maintain the existing transit stops within the project limits on State Route 68. Currently Monterey-Salinas Transit does not run many buses on State Route 68 due to reduced demand and unpredictability in service delays. It is expected that once the State Route 68 improvements are completed, service times will be more reliable, and Monterey-Salinas Transit would consider increasing transit service for that route, pending demand.	Partially consistent; Not consistent with access to transit, which is not part of the project.	Partially consistent; Not consistent with access to transit, which is not part of the project.
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-10, Policy OS-10.7—** The Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District's air pollution control strategies, air quality monitoring, and enforcement activities shall be supported.	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Conservation and Open Space Element	Monterey County	• **Goal OS-10, Policy OS-10.10**— In the design of future development within Community Areas and Rural Centers, the following sustainable land use strategies shall be considered to reduce energy consumption, minimize greenhouse gas emissions, and fosters healthier environments for people: • Promote Transit Oriented Development (TOD) to increase mobility and reduce auto dependency	Both build alternatives would maintain the existing transit stops within the project limits on State Route 68. Currently Monterey-Salinas Transit does not run many buses on State Route 68 due to reduced demand and unpredictability in service delays. It is expected that once the State Route 68 improvements are completed, service times will be more reliable, and Monterey-Salinas Transit would consider increasing transit service for that route, pending demand.	Partially consistent; Not consistent with promotion of Transit Oriented Development, which is not part of the project.	Partially consistent; Not consistent with promotion of Transit Oriented Development, which is not part of the project.
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Land Use Element	Monterey County	• **Goal LU-1, Policy LU-1.13**— All exterior lighting shall be unobtrusive and constructed or located so that only the intended area is illuminated, long range visibility is reduced of the lighting source, and off-site glare is fully controlled. Criteria to guide the review and approval of exterior lighting shall be developed by the county in the form of enforceable design guidelines, which shall include but not be limited to guidelines for the direction of light, such as shields, where lighting is allowed.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Area Plan Supplemental Policies. Section 1.0 Land Use:** **GMP-1.1** – identifies properties around State Route 68 as visually sensitive: The County shall overlay properties north and south of Highway 68 and west of Laureles Grade with a Visually Sensitive District ("VS") and/or other appropriate zoning designation to regulate the location, height, and design of structures within this unique scenic corridor.	The project is located within the Greater Monterey Peninsula, Fort Ord, and Toro Planning Areas. Visual Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures would be implemented as necessary.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Section 1.0 Land Use, GMP-1.4** – Development proposals shall include compatible open space uses located between other developed areas in order to maintain a rural atmosphere and to protect scenic resources.	No comments	Not applicable to project.	Not applicable to project.
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Area Plan Supplemental Policies. Section 2.0 Circulation:** **GMP-2.1** – identifies improvements to intersections, adding passing lanes, and public transit/bike safety measures along State Route 68 to be given priority for funding	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Section 2.0 Circulation, GMP-2.2** – Employers should stagger employee work hours in order to ease peak hour traffic congestion on Highway 68 and in other areas.	No comments	Not applicable to project.	Not applicable to project.
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Area Plan Supplemental Policies**. **Section 2.0 Circulation:** **GMP-2.4** – prohibits new direct access to State Route 68 from single family residences to minimize traffic safety hazards (unless no other feasible alternative).	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Area Plan Supplemental Policies. Section 2.0 Circulation:** **GMP-2.9** – requires construction or expansion of highways and arterials to provide bike paths.	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Area Plan Supplemental Policies. Section 3.0 Open Space/Conservation:** **GMP-3.3(d)** – New development prohibited on areas mapped as visually "highly sensitive". Where exceptions are appropriate to maximize goals/obj/policies of GP, development shall be sited in a manner that minimizes visible effects of proposed…roads… and utilize landscape screening.	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Area Plan Supplemental Policies. Section 3.0 Open Space/Conservation:** **GMP-3.3** – The Greater Monterey Peninsula Scenic Highway Corridors and Visual Sensitivity Map (Figure 14) shall be used to designate visually "sensitive" and "highly sensitive" areas generally visible from designated Scenic Highways. The following policies shall apply to areas that have one of these designations: **GMP-3.3(a)** – All areas designated as "sensitive" or "highly sensitive" shall be interpreted within the meaning of this policy and are to be protected. **GMP-3.3(e)** – New development to be located in areas mapped as "sensitive" or "highly sensitive" and which would be visible from a designated scenic route shall maintain the visual character of the area. In order to adequately mitigate the visual impacts of development in such areas, the following shall be required: **GMP-3.3(e)(1)** – Development shall be rendered compatible with the visual character of the area using appropriate siting, design, materials, and landscaping; **GMP-3.3(e)(3)** – the impact of any earth movement associated with the development shall be mitigated in such a manner that permanent scarring is not created; **GMP-3.3(e)(5)** – Landscape screening/restoration shall consist of locally native plant and tree species consistent with surrounding vegetation; **GMP-3.3(e)(6)** – Architectural review of projects shall be required to ensure visual compatibility of the development with the surrounding area	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Greater Monterey Peninsula Area Plan	Monterey County	• Area Plan Supplemental Policies. Section 3.0 Open Space/Conservation: **GMP-3.6** – 100-ft setback required for wetlands. Alterations in setback area require restoration and enhancement plan. **GMP-3.7** – County shall encourage other local agencies to take appropriate measures for the protection of wetlands under their jurisdiction.	GMP-3.6 – a 100-ft setback from wetlands may not be possible at all project intersections - TBD in project design phase. If 100-ft setback is not possible at all locations, a restoration and enhancement plan would be prepared. Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	NO	NO
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Section 1.0 Land Use, T-1.1**— Development proposals on Corral de tierra Road from "Four Corners" (Corral de Tierra, Calera Canyon, and Robley Road intersection) to Corral de Cielo shall complete safety improvements concurrently with development.	No comments	Not applicable to project.	Not applicable to project.
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Section 2.0 Circulation, T-2.2**— Davis and Reservation Roads shall be encouraged as alternate routes between the Monterey Peninsula and Salinas to alleviate traffic on Highway 68.	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Area Plan Supplemental Policies. Section 2.0 Circulation:** **T-2.3** -Continue to work with the state, local agencies, and citizen groups to alleviate congestion while maintaining the scenic beauty of State Route 68. With the goal of eventually constructing a four-lane divided highway, the county shall support the following measures: a) coordination with Caltrans and TAMC for the construction of a four-lane facility between the Toro interchange and State Route 218 and b) construction of bus stops, pull-outs and shelters where needed.	Caltrans is not proposing the complete four-lane widening of State Route 68 at this time and that concept is also not included in the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, or TAMC's Regional Transportation Plan. The roundabout alternative is still consistent with the policy for alleviating congestion and Alternative 2 may include limited widening approaching and departing from project intersections.	Partially consistent; Not consistent with 4-lane widening which is no longer included on regional transportation plans.	Partially consistent; Not consistent with 4-lane widening which is no longer included on area regional transportation plans.
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Area Plan Supplemental Policies. Section 2.0 Circulation:** **T-2.4** – Improvement of State Route 68 intersections, construction of alternate passing lanes, public transit roadway improvements, and improved bicycle safety measures should be undertaken at the earliest time that funding becomes available.	No additional transit facilities are proposed with the project.	Partially consistent; Not consistent with public transit roadway improvements, which are not part of the project.	Partially consistent; Not consistent with public transit roadway improvements, which are not part of the project.
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Section 2.0 Circulation, T-2.5**— Fair-share financial contributions from each new development in the Toro Planning Area shall be required to expedite funding and construction of Highway 68 improvements.	No comments	Not applicable to project.	Not applicable to project.
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Section 2.0 Circulation, T-2.7**— To minimize traffic safety hazards, creation of new direct access points should be prohibited from single-family residences onto Highway 68 and discouraged onto Laureles Grade, River Road, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road.	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Section 3.0 Conservation/Open Space, T-3.1**— Within areas designated as "visually sensitive" on the Toro Scenic Highway Corridors and Visual Sensitivity Map (Figure 16), landscaping or new development may be permitted if the development is located and designed (building design, exterior lighting, and siting) in such a manner that will enhance the scenic value of the area. Architectural design consistent with the rural nature of the plan area shall be encouraged.	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Section 3.0 Conservation/Open Space, T-3.2**— Land use, architectural, and landscaping controls shall be applied, and sensitive site design encouraged, to preserve Toro's visually sensitive areas and scenic entrances: a) River Road/Highway 68 intersection; and b) Laureles Grade scenic vista overlooking the Planning Area	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Section 3.0 Conservation/Open Space, T-3.3**— Portions of the County and State designated scenic routes shall be designated as critical viewshed as shown on the Toro Scenic Highway corridors and Visual Sensitivity Map. Except for driveways, pedestrian walkways, and paths, a 100-foot building setback shall be required on all lots adjacent to these routes to provide open space and landscape buffers. This setback may be reduced for existing lots of record that have no developable area outside the setback and to accommodate additions to existing structures that become non-conforming due to this policy. New development shall dedicate open space easements over setback areas established by this policy.	No comments	Not applicable to project.	Not applicable to project.
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Section 3.0 Conservation/Open Space, T-3.4**— Placement of existing utility lines underground shall be encouraged, particularly along Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra, San Benancio, River Road, and Highway 68.	Utility lines would be undergrounded at intersections where construction is taking place in accordance with California Public Utilities Code 320.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Section 3.0 Conservation/Open Space, T-3.5**— Exterior/outdoor lighting shall be located, designed, and enforced to minimize light sources and preserve the quality of darkness. Street lighting shall be as unobtrusive as practicable and shall be consistent in intensity throughout the Toro area.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Toro Area Plan	Monterey County	• **Policy 7.2.3** – The preservation of oak trees in Toro shall be promoted by discouraging removal of healthy trees with diameters in excess of 8 inches.	Oak trees would be removed with either build alternative. Address with Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures for oak woodland and tree replanting where necessary.	NO	NO
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Fort Ord Master Plan	Monterey County	• **Circulation Element** - Manage congestion and de-emphasize the need for vehicle travel to and within the former Fort Ord, and to develop transportation systems that support the planned use of development patterns.	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Fort Ord Master Plan	Monterey County	• **Biological Resources Policy B-3**— The County shall preserve, enhance, restore, and protect vernal ponds, riparian corridors, and other wetland areas. • **Program B-3.4**—The County shall coordinate with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the design of State Route 68 to assess the feasibility of avoiding the riparian forest within the alignment. Where riparian forest removal is unavoidable, the County shall request Caltrans to compensate at a 2:1 ratio of newly created habitat to lost habitat or at a 4:1 acreage ratio of enhanced habitat to lost habitat. Compensation and restoration could occur in other areas of Toro Creek. • **Biological Resources Policy C-3**— Lighting of outdoor areas shall be minimized and carefully controlled to maintain habitat quality for wildlife in undeveloped natural lands. Street lighting shall be as unobtrusive as practicable and shall be consistent in intensity throughout development areas adjacent to undeveloped natural lands.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
Monterey County General Plan 2010 – Fort Ord Master Plan	Monterey County	• **Air Quality Policy A-1**—The County shall participate in regional planning efforts to improve air quality. • **Program A-1.2**—The County shall coordinate with the TAMC to carry out the Congestion Management Plan.	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County Oak Woodlands Protection Planning http://oakwoodlands.org/about/monterey-county/	Monterey County	Monterey County has committed to oak tree preservation by adopting a tree ordinance and forest preservation policies (**Chapter 16.60 of the Monterey County Code and Section 21.64.260 of the Monterey County Zoning Ordinance**). The County has already set aside approximately 1,572 acres as Habitat for ecosystem-level preservation and restoration of the approximately 3,709 acres of former Fort Ord that come under its land use authority. Approximately 2,103 acres are set aside for development of housing, industry and office parks. Monterey County worked with FORA to develop policies and programs to meet the Base Reuse Plan vision for former Fort Ord development areas so that it retains the natural beauty and historical character. The policies and programs that pertain to oaks for Monterey County are: **Biological Resources Policy B-2**: • **Program B-2.1**: For lands within the jurisdictional limits of the County that are components of the designated oak woodland conservation area, the County shall ensure that those areas are managed to maintain or enhance habitat values existing at the time of base closure so that suitable habitat is available for the range of sensitive species known or expected to use those oak woodland environments. Management measures shall include, but not be limited to maintenance of large, contiguous block of oak woodland habitat, access control, erosion control and non-native species eradication. Specific management measures should be coordinated through the CRMP. • **Program B-2.2**: For lands within the jurisdictional limits of the County that are components of the designated oak woodland conservation area, the County shall monitor, or cause to be monitored, those areas in conformance with the habitat management compliance monitoring protocol specified in the HMP Implementing/Management Agreement and shall submit annual monitoring reports to the CRMP.	Address oak tree preservation with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where it is necessary to remove trees.	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County Oak Woodlands Protection Planning http://oakwoodlands.org/about/monterey-county/	Monterey County	B) **Biological Resources Policy C-2**: The County shall preserve and enhance the oak woodland elements in the natural and built environments. • Program C-2.1: The County shall cluster development wherever possible so that contiguous stands of oak trees can be maintained in the non-developed natural land areas. • Program C-2.2: The County shall apply restrictions for the preservation of oak and other protected trees in accordance with Chapter 16.60 of the Title 16 of the Monterey County Code (Ordinance 3420). • Program C-2.3: The County shall require the use of oaks and other native plant species for project landscaping. To that end, the County shall collect and propagate acorns and other plant material from the former Fort Ord oak woodlands to be used for restoration areas or as landscape plants. However, this program does not exclude the use of non-native plant species. • **Program C-2.4:** The County shall provide the following standards for plantings that may occur under oak trees; 1) plantings may occur within the dripline of mature trees, but only at a distance of five feet from the trunk and 2) plantings under and around oaks should be selected from the list of approved species compiled by the California Oak Foundation (see *Compatible Plants Under and Around Oaks*). • **Program C-2.5**: The County shall require that paving within the dripline of preserved oak trees be avoided wherever possible. To minimize paving impacts, the surfaces around tree trunks shall be mulched, paving materials shall be used that are permeable to water, aeration vents shall be installed in impervious pavement, and root zone excavation shall be avoided.	Address oak tree preservation with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where it is necessary to remove trees.	YES	YES
Monterey County Oak Woodlands Protection Planning http://oakwoodlands.org/about/monterey-county/	Monterey County	• **Recreation Policy C-1:** Monterey County shall establish an oak tree protection program to ensure conservation of existing coastal live oak woodlands in large corridors within a comprehensive open space system.	Address oak tree preservation with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where it is necessary to remove trees.	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County Code of Ordinances https://library.municode.com/ca/monterey_ county/codes/code_of_ordinances/	Monterey County	• **16.08.300 Design standards—Excavations.** • Design standards for excavations shall be as follows: • A. Slope. Cut slopes shall be no steeper than two horizontal to one vertical. Steeper slopes may be allowed if the Building Official determines they will be stable or if a civil engineer or geologist certifies that the site has been investigated and that the proposed deviation will be and remain structurally stable. The top of cut slopes may be required to be rounded off so as to blend in with the natural terrain. • B. Drainage and Terraces. Drainage and terraces shall be provided as required by Section 117. • C. Vegetation Removal: • 1. If vegetation removal takes place prior to a grading operation and the actual grading does not begin within thirty (30) days from the date of removal, then that area shall be planted under the provisions of Section 16.08.340 to control erosion. • 2. No vegetation removal or grading will be allowed which will result in siltation or watercourses or uncontrollable erosion.	No comments	YES	YES

Monterey County Code of Ordinances https://library.municode.com/ca/monterey_ county/codes/code_of_ordinances	Monterey County	• **16.08.300 - Design standards—Excavations**. • Design standards for fills shall be as follows: A. General. Unless otherwise recommended in the approved soil engineering report, fills shall conform to the provisions of this Section. B. Slopes—Fill Location. Fill slopes shall not be constructed on natural slopes steeper than two to one unless a civil engineer or geologist devises a method of placement which will assure the fill will remain in place. Slough shall not be placed on any slope where it is likely that it will enter a drainage course. Fill slopes shall toe out no closer than twelve (12) feet horizontally to the top of existing or planned cut slopes (see Figures 3 included following this Chapter.) C. Preparation of Ground for Fill. The ground surface shall be prepared to receive fill by the removal of topsoil and other unsuitable materials as determined by the soil engineer and, where the slopes are five to one or steeper, by keying into sound bedrock or other competent material. D. Preparation of Ground. The ground surface shall be prepared to receive fill by removing vegetation, noncomplying fill, topsoil and other unsuitable materials scarifying to provide a bond with the new fill, and, where slopes are steeper than five to one, and the height is greater than five feet, by benching into sound bedrock or other competent material as determined by the soils engineer. The bench under the toe of a fill on a slope steeper than five to one shall be at least twelve (12) feet wide. The area beyond the toe of fill shall be sloped for sheet overflow or a paved drain shall be provided. Where fill is to be placed over a cut, the bench under the toe of fill shall be at least ten (10) feet wide but the cut must be made before placing fill and approved by the soils engineer and engineering geologist as a suitable foundation for fill. Unsuitable soil is soil which, in the opinion of the Building Official or the civil engineer or the soils engineer or the geologist, is not competent to support other soil or fill, to support structures or to satisfactorily perform the other functions for which the soil is intended. E. Fill Material Permitted. No organic material shall be permitted in fills except as topsoil used for surface plant growth only and which does not exceed four inches in depth. The Building Official may permit placement of imported rock over twelve (12) inches in its maximum dimension only when a civil engineer, soils engineer, or engineering geologist properly devises a method of placement, supervises its placement under continuous inspection, and provides assurance of fill stability. F. Fill Slopes. No compacted fill shall be made which creates an exposed surface steeper in slope than two horizontal to one vertical. The Building Official may require that the fill be constructed with an exposed surface flatter than one and one-half horizontal to one vertical if he or she finds this necessary for stability and safety. G. Compaction of Fills. All fills shall be compacted to a minimum of ninety (90) percent of maximum density as determined by the Uniform Building Code, Standard No. 70-1. Compaction tests may be required on any fill. As a minimum requirement, filed density verification must be submitted for any fill greater than twelve (12) inches in depth where such fill may support the foundation of a structure. H. Drainage and Terraces. Drainage and terraces shall be provided in the area above fill slopes and the surfaces of terraces shall be graded and paved as required by Section 16.08.330. I. Levees. Design plans shall be approved by a Registered Civil Engineer and be based on standards established by the Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers, as published in that agency's Engineer Manual EM1110-2-1913.	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey County Code of Ordinances https://library.municode.com/ca/monterey_ county/codes/code_of_ordinances	Monterey County	• **16.08.320 - Cut and fill slope setbacks.** • The tops and toes of cut and fill slopes shall be set back from property boundaries as far as necessary for safety of the adjacent properties and to prevent damage resulting from water run-off or erosion of the slopes. Retaining walls may be used to reduce the required setbacks when approved by the Building Official. • The tops and toes of cut and fill slopes shall be set back from structures as far as is necessary for adequate foundation support and to prevent damage to slopes. • Unless otherwise recommended in the approved soil engineering or engineering geology report and shown on the approved grading plan, setbacks shall be no less than shown in Table B included following this Chapter.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Circulation Element	City of Monterey	• **Goal c, Policy c.3.3**—Develop roadway safety improvement projects that result in self-enforcing conditions and require a minimum amount of signage in order to reduce driver confusion.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Circulation Element	City of Monterey	• **Goal c, Policy c.3.4**—Create and maintain a roadway system that is safe, unobtrusive, and easy to use for all modes of transportation.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Circulation Element	City of Monterey	• **Goal c, Policy c.4.1**— Consider the needs of buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians when planning road improvements.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Circulation Element	City of Monterey	• **Goal c, Policy c.5.4**—Maintain the major entrances to the city as scenic, landscaped corridors.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Circulation Element	City of Monterey	• **Program c.13.2** – Support Monterey Salinas Highway 68 widening to four lanes along entire length.	Caltrans is not proposing the complete four-lane widening of State Route 68 at this time and that concept is also not included in the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, or TAMC's Regional Transportation Plan. The roundabout alternative is still consistent with the policy for alleviating congestion and Alternative 2 may include limited widening approaching and departing from project intersections.	NO	NO

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Circulation Element	City of Monterey	• **Policy c.15** – Continue to coordinate with Caltrans and TAMC to identify improvements and funding for improvements to… Highway 68…deemed important to the function of the regional transportation network so that the LOS standards for such facilities are met.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Noise Element	City of Monterey	• **Goal a, Policy a.1**—Re-evaluate City traffic flow systems periodically to determine whether traffic flows can be adjusted through synchronized signalization or other means to minimize traffic stops.	No comments	Not applicable to project	Not applicable to project
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Urban Design Element	City of Monterey	• **Goal c., Policy c.1**—Maintain the canyons and their native vegetation throughout their lengths.	Avoidance and minimize where possible. Mitigate where it is necessary to remove trees.	YES	YES
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Urban Design Element	City of Monterey	• **Goal h** – Protect and enhance scenic entrances **Policy h.1** – Significant natural features within scenic corridors should be preserved and enhanced to the maximum extent possible in the design and construction of scenic entrances. These natural features include ridgelines, hilltops, rock outcroppings, stream and creek beds, scenic vistas, wildlife habitats, Monterey pine and oak groves, and other significant natural vegetation.	Avoidance and minimize where possible. Mitigate where it is necessary to remove trees.	YES	YES
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Urban Design Element	City of Monterey	• **Goal h** – Protect and enhance scenic entrances. **Policy h.2** – Highway construction grading should not take place outside the roadway right-of-way.	Additional right of way from multiple adjacent properties (partial property acquisitions) would be required to construct the improvements for both build alternatives	NO	NO
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Urban Design Element	City of Monterey	• **Goal h** – Protect and enhance scenic entrances. **Policy h.4**—Roadway lighting and signing should be minimized, of low-profiles design, and designed to enhance the scenic character of the corridor.	For all scenic highway goals and policies both build alternatives would implement applicable Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures to reduce project impacts on trees and other vegetation.	YES	YES
City of Monterey General Plan Amended 2016 – Urban Design Element	City of Monterey	• **Goal h** – Protect and enhance scenic entrances. **Policy h.14**—Work with Caltrans to maintain or reinforce native landscaping, with appropriate planting	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Scenic Character** **Policy 2**: Large continuous expanses of native vegetation and trees should be conserved as the most suitable habitat for maintaining abundant and diverse wildlife.	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Scenic Character** **Policy 3:** Trees shall be preserved wherever possible and where appropriate, trees of indigenous nature will be added.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Traffic and Transportation** **Policy 1**: Planning should address the ultimate freeway construction on Highway 68 and the expansion of Highway 218.	The proposed project does not propose construction of a full freeway on State Route 68 or expansion of State Route 218 for increased highway capacities.	Not applicable to project	Not applicable to project
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Traffic and Transportation** **Policy 2**: Facilities, including routes and stops, for public transportation shall be provided to serve the Highway 68 area.	The project would maintain the existing transit stops along the project limits of State Route 68 and would not include any additional transit facilities.	NO	NO
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Traffic and Transportation** **Policy 4:** Development shall provide pedestrian pathways to minimize safety hazards to pedestrians from vehicular traffic, especially in areas where higher densities are planned.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Traffic and Transportation** **Policy 5:** Bikeways should be planned to ease to the transportation needs of Highway 68 area residents.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Tarpey Flats - Goal B:** To preserve the scenic character of Tarpey Flats **Policy 6:** The knoll and its trees (as depicted on the Tarpey Flats Map page 20a) shall be retained in its natural state.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Tarpey Flats - Goal C:** To maintain the Highway 68 and Olmsted **Policy 1**: A greenbelt shall be established from the property line fronting Highway 68 as shown on the Tarpey Flats Map.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Tarpey Flats - Goal C**: To maintain the Highway 68 and Olmsted scenic corridors **Policy 2:** Greenbelts shall be established from the property line fronting both sides of Olmsted Road a shown on the Tarpey Flats Map.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Monterra - Goal D**: To maintain the Highway 68 and Olmsted Road as scenic corridors.. **Policy 1:** Viewsheds seem from Highway 68 toward all sections of Monterra shall be preserved.	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Monterra - Goal D**: To maintain the Highway 68 and Olmsted Road as scenic corridors **Policy 6**: A greenbelt shall be established from the property line fronting Highway 68 as shown on the Monterra Map, page 22a.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Tarpey Flats Area of Monterra – Goal B:** To maintain the Highway 68 and Olmsted scenic corridors. **Policy 1**: Greenbelt shall be established from the property lines fronting both sides of Olmsted Road a shown on the Tarpey Flats Area of the Monterra Map.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Monterey – Highway 68 Area Plan 1984	City of Monterey	• **Laguna Seca - Goal D**: To maintain the Highway 68 scenic corridor. **Policy 3:** A greenbelt shall be established from the property line fronting Highway 68 as shown on the Laguna Seca Map, page 24a.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan 1997 – Circulation Element	City of Del Rey Oaks	• **Policy C-8 –** The City does not support any realignment of State Route 68 which will significantly impact the intersection of Canyon Del Rey and State Route 68 and result in land use and fiscal impacts on the City due to loss of commercial property at the east entrance to the community.	The preliminary roundabout footprint is mostly within the existing ROW and does affect the commercial development on the NW corner of State Route 68/218.	YES	YES
City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan 1997 – Circulation Element	City of Del Rey Oaks	• **Policy C-9**—The city supports the Monterey County Congestion Management Program and voluntary Trip Reduction Ordinance adopted by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan 1997 – Circulation Element	City of Del Rey Oaks	• **Policy C-10a** – The City will coordinate and assist with TAMC and AMBAG in providing funding for an efficient regional transportation network. • **Policy C-10b** – Support and participate in regional and state planning efforts and funding programs to provide an efficient regional transportation network. • **Policy C-10c**—Land use and circulation plans shall be integrated to create an environment that supports a multimodal transportation system. Development shall be directed to areas with a confluence of transportation facilities (auto, bus, bicycle, pedestrian, etc.).	No comments	YES	YES
City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan 1997 – Circulation Element	City of Del Rey Oaks	• **Policy C-12** – Any improvement, repavement or signalization on the three designated City bike routes shall include Type II bike lanes on both sides of the affected segments of those routes.	No comments	YES	YES
City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan 1997 – Circulation Element	City of Del Rey Oaks	• **Policy C/OS-3** – Wildlife habitat and corridors shall be preserved.	The proposed wildlife crossing improvements will support wildlife travel. Address habitat protection with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan 1997 – Circulation Element	City of Del Rey Oaks	• **Policy C/OS-4** – Significant stands of riparian vegetation shall be subject to only minimal cutting and removal and then only when proved unavoidable.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan 1997 – Circulation Element	City of Del Rey Oaks	• **Policy C/OS-5f** – The City shall encourage the preservation of small pockets of habitat and populations of special status species within and around developed areas, in accordance with the recommendations of the HMP and Fort Ord Reuse Area Plan. This shall be accomplished by requiring project applicants to conduct surveys to verify sensitive species and/or habitats. • **Policy C/OS-5g** – The City shall provide for the protection and mitigation of impacts to wetland areas.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan 1997 – Circulation Element	City of Del Rey Oaks	• **Policy C/OS 15** – If development of a site uncovers cultural resources, the recommendations of Appendix K, of the Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA shall be followed for identification, documentation and preservation of the resource.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan 1997 – Circulation Element	City of Del Rey Oaks	• **Policy L-7** – Undergrounding of utilities and other forms of enhancement shall be pursued as practicable on public and private property.	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
City of Del Rey Oaks General Plan 1997 – Circulation Element	City of Del Rey Oaks	• **Policy L-9** – Native vegetation along Canyon Del Rey should be preserved and entrances to the City enhanced by landscaping	Address with avoidance and minimization where possible. Mitigate where necessary.	YES	YES
Fort Ord Reuse Plan 1996 - Conservation Element Biological Resources	Fort Ord Reuse Authority	• **Policy B-3**—The County of Monterey shall preserve, enhance, restore, and protect vernal ponds, riparian corridors, and other wetland areas. Program B-3.4: The County shall coordinate with the State Department of Transportation in the design of State Route 68 to assess the feasibility of avoiding the riparian forest within the alignment. Where riparian forest removal is unavoidable, the County shall request Caltrans to compensate at a 2:1 ratio of newly created habitat to lost habitat or a 4: 1 acreage ratio of enhanced habitat to lost habitat. Compensation and restoration could occur on other areas of Toro Creek.	Address with mitigation and avoidance where possible.	YES	YES
Fort Ord Reuse Plan 1996 - Circulation Element	Fort Ord Reuse Authority	• **Circulation Element Objective B**—Provide direct and efficient linkages from former Fort Ord lands to the regional transportation system. - Streets and Roads Policy B-1—FORA and each jurisdiction with lands at former Fort Ord shall design all major arterials within former Fort Ord to have direct connections to the regional network (or to another major arterial that has a direct connection to the regional network) consistent with the Reuse Plan circulation framework. - Program B-1.1 Each jurisdiction shall coordinate with FOR A to design and provide an efficient system of arterials consistent with Figures 4.2-2 (in the 2015 scenario) and Figure 4.2-3 (in the buildout scenario) in order to connect to the regional transportation network.	No comments	Indirectly YES	Indirectly YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Fort Ord Reuse Plan 1996 - Circulation Element	Fort Ord Reuse Authority	• **Circulation Element Objective C**—Provide a safe and efficient street system at the former Fort Ord. - Streets and Roads Policy C-2—Each jurisdiction shall provide improvements to the roadway network to address high accident locations. - Program C-2.1—Each jurisdiction shall collect accident data, identify and assess potential remedies at high accident locations and implement improvements to lower the identified high accident rates. (Again, this probably just applies to roads within Fort Ord/ Fort Ord streets?)	No comments	YES	YES
Fort Ord Reuse Plan 1996 - Land Use and Transportation Element	Fort Ord Reuse Authority	• **Land Use and Transportation Element, Objective A**: A transportation system that supports the planned land use development patterns. - Land Use and Transportation Policy A.12—The transportation system to serve former Fort Ord lands shall be designed to reflect the needs of surrounding land uses, proposed densities of development, and shall include streets, pedestrian access, bikeways, and landscaping as appropriate. - Program A.2-1—Each jurisdiction with lands at former Fort Ord shall develop transportation standards for implementation of the transportation system, including but not implemented to, rights-of-way widths, roadway capacity needs, design speeds, safety requirements, etc. Pedestrian and bicycle access shall be considered for all incorporation in all roadway designs.	No comments	Indirectly YES	Indirectly YES
Fort Ord Reuse Plan 1996 - Recreation and Open Space Element	Fort Ord Reuse Authority	• **Recreation and Open Space Element, Objective B**—Protect scenic views, and preserve and enhance visual quality. - Recreation Policy B-2—The City of Marina shall establish landscape gateways into the former Fort Ord along major transportation corridors with the intent of establishing a regional landscape character. - Recreation Policy B-2—The City of Seaside shall establish landscape gateways into the former Fort Ord along major transportation corridors with the intent of establishing a regional landscape character.	While Rec Policy B-2 is not specific to State Route 68, the overall Objective B would apply.	YES	YES
Fort Ord Reuse Plan 1996 - Conservation Element	Fort Ord Reuse Authority	• **Conservation Element Air Quality Objective A:** Protect and improve air quality. - Air quality Policy A-1—Each jurisdiction shall participate in regional planning efforts to improve air quality. - Program A-1.2—Each jurisdiction shall coordinate with the TAMC to carry out the Congestion Management Plan.	No comments	YES	YES
2018 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan	Transportation Agency for Monterey County	• **Transportation investment:** Corridor 3: Salinas-Monterey Corridor— Improvement C - State Route 68 Safety and Traffic Flow: this project will construct safety, congestion relief, and wildlife connectivity projects along State Route 68 between Blanco Road in Salinas and State route 1 in Monterey.	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
2018 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan	Transportation Agency for Monterey County	• **Appendix C** – Regional Transportation Plan Project List: extension of 4-lane segment on State Route 68 from existing 4-lane to Corral De Tierra. (#MON-CT011-CT)	Caltrans is not proposing the complete four-lane widening of State Route 68 at this time and that concept is also not included in the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, or TAMC's Regional Transportation Plan. The roundabout alternative is still consistent with the policy for alleviating congestion and Alternative 2 may include limited widening approaching and departing from project intersections.	NO	NO
2018 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan	Transportation Agency for Monterey County	• **Appendix C** – Regional Transportation Plan Project List: lists construction of safety, congestion relief, and wildlife connectivity project along State Route 68 from Blanco Road to Highway 1.	No comments	YES	YES
2018 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan	Transportation Agency for Monterey County	• **Local Streets and Roads- Roundabouts—**Complementary to the complete streets policy approach… consideration and implementation of roundabouts at intersections is an important strategy for achieving the goals of the 2018 Monterey County Regional Transportation Plan. Roundabouts at intersections allows for free movement of vehicles at intersections, which reduces vehicle emissions. Roundabout intersections are proven to be safer than signalized intersections given low design speeds, simplified turn movements and the reduced number of conflicts through intersections. Roundabouts also incorporate pedestrian and bicycle friendly accommodations that make these types of intersections safer and easier to navigate for all users. - Roundabouts are increasingly supported by state and federal policy and technical guidance. Specifically, Intersection Control Evaluation is a framework adopted by Caltrans that includes consideration of roundabouts for intersection improvements. The Transportation Agency recommends that member jurisdictions utilize the Intersection Control Evaluation guidance available through Caltrans whenever considering intersection improvements. - Several projects in the plan will use the intersection control evaluation to determine whether roundabouts are a cost-effective strategy, most notably the State Route 68 Scenic Corridor project.	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey Bay 2040: Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy - June 2018	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments	• **2.4040 MTP/SCS** Transportation Projects, Highway Operations, Maintenance, and Rehabilitation—Congestion relief improvements to State Route 68 from Blanco Road to State Route 1 in Monterey County (Page 64).	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Monterey Bay 2040: Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy - June 2018	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments	• **Monterey County**- The following roadway segments within Monterey County have been officially designated as **"State Scenic Highways"** under the California Scenic Highway System (Page 90): - State Route (State Route) 1 from San Luis Obispo County to State Route 68 - State Route 68 from State Route 1 in Monterey to the Salinas River	Caltrans has completed a Visual Impact Assessment for the project.	YES	YES
Monterey Bay 2040: Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy - June 2018	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments	• **Appendix C – Regional Transportation Plan Project List** - Project: State Route 68- Commuter Improvements - Project Description: extension of 4-lane segment on State Route 68 from existing 4-lane to Corral De Tierra - AMBAG ID# MON-CT011-CT	Caltrans is not proposing the complete four-lane widening of State Route 68 at this time and that concept is also not included in the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, or TAMC's Regional Transportation Plan. The roundabout alternative is still consistent with the policy for alleviating congestion and Alternative 2 may include limited widening approaching and departing from project intersections.	NO	NO
Monterey Bay 2040: Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy - June 2018	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments	• **Appendix C – Regional Transportation Plan Project List** - Project: State Route 68-Safety and Traffic Flow-Salinas to Monterey - Project description: construction of safety, congestion relief, and wildlife connectivity project along State Route 68 from Blanco Road to Highway 1 - AMBAG ID# MON-CTXXX-CT	No comments	YES	YES
Monterey Bay 2040: Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT - June 2018	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments	• **Chapter 4 Table 5** lists 2040 MTP/SCS that may result in visual impacts. **MON-CT011-CT** is included on this list.	For MON-CT011-CT, EIR notes potential impact as AES-1: "Proposed project envisioned by 2040 MTP/SCS may affect public views of scenic vistas and along designated scenic corridors, including state scenic highways. This would be a significant and unavoidable impact."	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan Final	Transportation Agency for Monterey County	• **Page 146: Table 48- Preferred Intersection Control Type: Benefit-Cost**: - INT-01 Josselyn Canyon Road- Roundabout Preferred - INT-02 Olmsted Road- Roundabout Preferred - INT-03 State Route 218- Roundabout Preferred - INT-05 York Road – Roundabout Preferred - INT-06 Pasadera Drive- Roundabout Preferred - INT-07 Laureles Grade- Roundabout Preferred - INT-08 Corral De Tierra Road- Roundabout Preferred - INT-09 San Benancio Drive- Roundabout Preferred - INT-10 Torero Drive- Roundabout Preferred - INT-11 Blanco Road- Roundabout Preferred	Intersections 10 and 11 were previously removed from the project: Intersection 10, Torero Drive at SR 68 was removed from the project by TAMC during a meeting in May 2018; this decision is documented in the project traffic study (Traffic Operations Analysis Report, Sept 2020). Intersection 11, Blanco Road, was removed from the project during the pre-Project Initiation Document (PID) meeting with TAMC on August 16, 2017, during which the project team agreed not to include Blanco Road intersection because the proposed concepts in the Scenic Highway Plan showed no improvement at that location.	YES	NO
Monterey Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan	Monterey Regional Airport	• Monterey Regional Airport is accessed from State Route 68 by way of Olmsted Road. A portion of State Route 68 is within MRA's **"airport influence area" (AIA).** - **Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3.4** indicates that land uses which may cause wildlife hazards are incompatible in the AIA, including uses that attract wildlife. An exception to that policy are wetlands or other environmental mitigation projects required under NEPA.	The project includes improvements to wildlife crossings of the State Route 68 to reduce conflicts with vehicles and wildlife.	YES	YES
Scenic Highway Guidelines	Caltrans	• The development of scenic highways will not only add to the pleasure of the residents of this State but will also play an important role in encouraging the growth of the recreation and tourism industries upon which the economy of many areas of this State depend.	No comments	YES	YES
Scenic Highway Guidelines	Caltrans	• The department shall cause appropriate signs to be placed and maintained along the portions of the state scenic highway system which the department has designated as official state scenic highways that indicate that the highways are official state scenic highways.	No comments	YES	YES
Scenic Highway Guidelines	Caltrans	• The Legislature hereby declares that it is the policy of this State to achieve, whenever feasible and not inconsistent with sound environmental planning, the undergrounding of all future electric and communication distribution facilities which are proposed to be erected in proximity to any highway designated a state scenic highway pursuant to Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 260) of Chapter 2 of Division 1 of the Streets and Highways Code and which would be visible from such scenic highways if erected above ground.	No comments	YES	YES

Plan Name	Agency	State Route 68 or Relevant Transportation References	Comments	Alternative 1 Consistent With Plan/Policy?	Alternative 2 Consistent With Plan/Policy?
Scenic Highway Guidelines	Caltrans	• No project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway designated as an official state scenic highway, pursuant to Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 260) of Chapter 2 of Division 1 of the Streets and Highways Code, shall be exempted from this division pursuant to subdivision (a). This subdivision does not apply to improvements as mitigation for a project for which a negative declaration has been approved or an environmental impact report has been certified.	No comments	YES	YES
Scenic Highway Guidelines	Caltrans	• The standards for official scenic highways shall also require that local governmental agencies have taken such action as may be necessary to protect the scenic appearance of the scenic corridor, the band of land generally adjacent to the highway right-of-way, including, but not limited to, (1) regulation of land use and intensity (density) of development; (2) detailed land and site planning; (3) control of outdoor advertising; (4) careful attention to and control of earthmoving and landscaping; and (5) the design and appearance of structures and equipment.	No comments	Not applicable to project.	Not applicable to project.
Transportation Concept Report State Route 68, District 5, October 2015	Caltrans	• Recommended Strategies: Segment 1 (PMR3.95/19.97) - Discussion notes that widening along State Route 68 is planned from Corral de Tierra Road (PM 12.9) to existing 4-lane at PM 15.1.	Caltrans is not proposing the complete four-lane widening of State Route 68 at this time and that concept is also not included in the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, or TAMC's Regional Transportation Plan. The roundabout alternative is still consistent with the policy for alleviating congestion and Alternative 2 may include limited widening approaching and departing from project intersections.	NO	NO
State Transportation Improvement Program	Caltrans	• Regional Transportation Improvement Program funds	Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements (proposed project) is funded through Regional Transportation Improvement Program 20.10.075.600 funds through local county Measure X and included in the 2024 State Transportation Improvement Program.	YES	YES

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Appendix E Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary

This paragraph has been modified since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The following measures will be included in the project to avoid or minimize impacts to environmental resources that may result from the project. Resource areas that are expected to experience significant impacts under CEQA include Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forest Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils and Paleontological Resources, Hydrology and Water Quality, and Tribal Cultural Resources. Measures to mitigate significant or potentially significant impacts under CEQA are identified. Impacts to other resources have been determined to be less than significant under CEQA. The potential impacts and specific measures are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 also includes standard procedures where applicable for certain environmental topics. Measures that have had wording revisions since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment are noted herein. Some measures have been renumbered since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment as a result of relocation within the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Note: Each numbered topic (impact area) referenced below represents the corresponding subsection number from Chapter 2.

2.1.3, Parks and Recreational Facilities

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

PR-1. Ryan Ranch Park and Disc Golf Course Activities During Construction. Relocation of a disc basket or modification of other course features during construction as a result of permanent partial right-of-way acquisition for the project would be performed in a manner that does not disrupt active play of disc golf, and the fairway course will remain open to players. Coordination efforts will continue with park officials throughout project development phases.

2.1.6, Relocations and Real Property Acquisition

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

Measure RRPA-1 has been modified since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

RRPA-1. Right of Way Acquisitions and Relocations. Final design of the preferred alternative will further refine the right-of-way needs for the roundabout improvements, and any necessary partial property acquisitions. For those properties where acquisition cannot be avoided, all property

acquisition activities will be conducted in accordance with the regulatory requirements of the Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. Owners of the affected parcels will be fully informed of their rights, and objective and fair property appraisals will be conducted. Offers will be prepared based on appraised fair market values. Should any property owners request that their property be purchased in its entirety to relocate their business or property occupancy, Caltrans Right of Way agents would coordinate with the property owner(s) in accordance with Caltrans' Relocation Assistance Program. Appendix C explains the program and provides a summary of relocation benefits, as this procedure is a regulatory requirement.

All driveways that would be affected by the project would be reconstructed to conform to the new roadway profile, and all mailboxes that would require temporary removal for construction would be replaced upon completion of construction activities in those locations. The proposed edge of pavement would conform to all asphalt concrete driveways.

2.1.10, Visual/Aesthetics

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

VIS-1. Preserve Vegetation. Prescriptive clearing and grubbing techniques will be used to preserve as much existing vegetation and trees as possible during construction.

VIS-2. Revegetation of Disturbed Areas. All areas disturbed by project construction shall be revegetated including but not limited to temporary access roads, staging areas, and other areas with native plant species appropriate for each location.

VIS-3. Metal Components. All metal components related to visible down drains and inlets, including but not limited to corrugated metal pipe, flared end sections, connectors, anchorage systems, cable barriers, etc., shall be darkened or colored to blend with the surroundings and to reduce reflectivity. The specific color shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-4. Electrical and Traffic Boxes. All visible electrical and traffic-related boxes shall be painted or stained to blend with the surroundings and reduce reflectivity. The specific color shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-5. Guardrail. The posts and beams of all new or replaced guardrail shall be colored and/or darkened to blend with the surroundings and to reduce reflectivity. The specific color shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-6. Stormwater Prevention Measures. All permanent stormwater prevention measures shall be designed to visually fit with the ornamental or natural landscaped roadsides. Swales, ditches, and basins shall appear as

natural as possible. Built structures shall be architecturally treated, colored, or hidden from view with planting as recommended by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-7. Concrete Components. All concrete components related to headwalls, drain inlet aprons, flared end sections, other concrete elements shall be colored to blend with the surroundings and to reduce reflectivity. The specific color shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-8. Concrete Medians and Roadside Barriers. All proposed concrete medians and roadside barriers shall include aesthetic treatment such as coloring and/or texturing appropriate for the setting. The aesthetic treatment shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture with input from the County of Monterey and local communities.

VIS-9. Roundabout Aesthetic Treatment. Aesthetic treatment shall be applied to all hardscape elements. Sidewalks shall include color if determined appropriate for the surrounding context. Treatments shall compliment the natural and scenic visual setting. If feasible, the center island of the roundabouts shall be landscaped to reduce the urbanizing character and be consistent with local policies and guidelines. The specific types of aesthetic treatments and planting shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture with input from the County of Monterey and local communities.

VIS-10. Detectable Warning Surfaces. Detectable warning surfaces shall be a color congruent with local aesthetics as determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-11. Rock Slope Protection.

a) All rock slope protection shall be placed in natural appearing shapes rather than geometric patterns to the greatest extent possible to reduce engineered appearance.

b) Following placement of rock slope protection, the rock shall be colored to blend with the surroundings and to reduce reflectivity. The specific color shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-12. Zero Emission Charging Stations. The Zero Emissions Charging Stations shall be sited in a location that is least visible from State Route 68. Any associated aesthetics shall be determined and approved by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-13. Roadway Signage. The signage plan for the project shall consolidate signs as appropriate, avoid redundancy in signage, and locate traffic control cabinets out of sight as reasonably possible.

VIS-14. Lighting. Highway lighting fixtures, including but not limited to, decorative pedestrian-scale fixtures shall be appropriately shielded, cut-off types to direct lighting downward. Project lighting design shall not exceed the minimum required for operations and safety, consistent with Caltrans and County of Monterey lighting guidelines and standards as well as aesthetic standards. The lighting plan shall be approved by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA

VIS-15. Landscape Planting. New and replacement planting shall be included to the greatest extent possible to reduce the urbanizing effects of increasing paving, retaining walls, and other built features of the project, and for aesthetic attributes. The following shall be approved by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture:

a. New planting shall be a combination of trees, shrubs, and ground covers as appropriate.

b. New planting shall be native of horticulturally appropriate non-native species.

c. Trees and shrubs shall be planted from the largest container size horticulturally appropriate in order to shorten the amount of time required until they provide substantial visual benefit.

d. New planting shall not be placed such that it would block views of the hills.

e. All plantings shall be maintained until established.

VIS-16. Slope Grading. All excavation slopes shall include slope-rounding and landform grading as appropriate to reduce their engineered appearance and to visually blend with the natural topography of the region.

VIS-17. Retaining Walls. The following measures related to retaining walls shall be implemented during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the proposed project:

a) In areas where retaining walls are proposed landform grading shall be considered where feasible as a replacement for walls or to reduce the size of the walls.

b) Where large retaining walls are proposed and landform grading is not possible as a replacement, the design shall include measures such as benching or tiering to enable opportunities for integral planting.

c) All retaining walls including associated safety shape shall include aesthetic treatment such as texture and color appropriate for the

location. Any associated concrete gutters and cable barriers shall be integrally colored and/or stained. The aesthetic treatment shall be determined by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture with input from the County of Monterey and local communities.

d) Planting shall be included with all retaining walls to the greatest extent feasible.

2.1.11, Cultural Resources

Mitigation Measures under CEQA

Mitigation measure CR-1 has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

CR-1. Cultural Resources Management Plan. The project will adhere to the requirements specified in the Finding of Effect for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project, Monterey County (dated 2024) and the Cultural Resources Management Plan for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements (dated September 2022).

Within 30 days of Caltrans District 5 and the City determining that all fieldwork required under Stipulation II has been completed, District 5 shall provide a brief letter report to the Cultural Studies Office and State Historic Preservation Officer and any interested tribal parties. The letter report will summarize the field efforts and construction monitoring and any preliminary finds that resulted from them.

If Caltrans determines that historic properties were affected by the undertaking in accordance with the procedures specified in the Cultural Resources Management Plan, Caltrans will ensure the preparation and distribution of a Final Monitoring Report in accordance with the process specified in the Finding of Effect.

If Caltrans determines the project had an adverse effect on historic properties, Caltrans shall consult with the Cultural Studies Office and State Historic Preservation Officer and interested tribal parties on implementation of a mitigation program. This consultation will occur in accordance with the processes for Mitigation of Adverse Effects included in the Cultural Resources Management Plan. If the project results in no adverse effects to historic properties, there will be no obligation to develop alternative mitigation options.

CR-2. Treatment of Native American Remains if Discovered. Human remains and related items of Native American origin discovered during the implementation of the terms of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement and the proposed project will be treated in accordance with State Health and Safety Codes and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98(a) through (d). All activities within the vicinity of the discovery will be stopped and the Caltrans Archaeologist will be notified immediately and consulted on how to proceed. A

written report shall be prepared within 48 hours of notification of the Caltrans Archaeologist. A reburial plan will be developed in consultation with the Most Likely Descendent and implemented prior to construction as a condition of treatment in the event human remains are encountered.

CR-3. Discovery of Unanticipated Cultural Effects. If during construction activities Caltrans determines that either the undertaking would affect a previously unidentified property that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or affect a known historic property in an unanticipated manner, Caltrans will address the discovery or unanticipated effect in accordance with Stipulation XV.B of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement. Caltrans at its discretion may, pursuant to 36 Code of Federal Regulations Section 800.13(c), assume any discovered property to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

CR-4. Discovery of Native American Remains. If any unanticipated pre-historic cultural resources are discovered during project construction, all earth-moving activity around the immediate discovery area would be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find. If human remains are discovered, California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities should stop in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County coroner should be contacted. If the coroner thinks that the remains are Native American, the coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission representative, who, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, would then notify the Most Likely Descendent. At this time the person who discovered the remains would contact Terry Joslin, Caltrans' District 5 Native American Coordinator, to coordinate with the Most Likely Descendent on the respectful treatment and disposition of the remains. Further provisions in Public Resources Code 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

2.2.1, Hydrology and Floodplain

Mitigation Measures under CEQA

The following sentence was added after circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The following mitigation measure would have been implemented if Alternative 2 had been chosen as the preferred alternative, however, it is not required for the selected project Alternative 1 Roundabouts.

HYD-1. Alternative 2: Expanded Signalized Intersections. If Alternative 2 is selected as the Preferred Alternative during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project, Caltrans would coordinate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to confirm the base flood elevation of El Toro Creek at the State Route 68 bridge crossing. Additional hydraulic design review and revisions would be conducted as necessary for bridge alterations related to the San Benancio Road/State Route 68 intersection improvements,

to maintain the existing base flood elevation in accordance with Caltrans' and federal design criteria. If the findings of final design review and investigations determine that the Alternative 2 bridge design would raise or otherwise change the base flood elevation and there are no feasible avoidance alternatives to achieve the project improvements, Caltrans would file a Conditional Letter of Map Revision with the federal government.

2.2.4, Paleontology

Mitigation Measures Under CEQA

PALEO-1. Preparation of Paleontological Mitigation Plan. A Paleontological Mitigation Plan shall be prepared during the design phase of the project and implemented during project construction. The Paleontological Mitigation Plan shall include provisions for paleontological monitoring during excavations that may disturb deposits of high paleontological potential, and procedures for fossil recovery, fossil preparation and identification, and fossil curation.

PALEO-2. Implementation of Paleontological Mitigation Plan. Qualified paleontological monitor(s), under the direction of a Principal Paleontologist, shall be present during ground-disturbing activities in areas of high paleontological potential, as outlined in the paleontological mitigation plan. Monitors have the authority to temporarily halt or divert earthwork in the event of a fossil discovery. If scientifically significant fossils are discovered, they shall be recovered from the field, prepared in a fossil preparation laboratory, identified to the lowest taxonomic level, and curated into a recognized paleontological specimen repository with adequate storage and a permanent curator. A Paleontological Mitigation Report outlining the results of the paleontological mitigation program shall be prepared and submitted to Caltrans.

2.3, Biological Resources

Modifications to multiple measures in the Biological Resources sections in Section 2.3 have been made since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The modifications are mostly in the form of renumbering the measures due to relocation within the biological sections, consolidation of several measures into other measures for the same topics, and clarification of the type of measure, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation. Several measures had updates made to the content due to changes in status of sensitive species since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The updated measures from Sections 2.3.1 through 2.3.6 are provided below.

2.3.1, Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Natural Communities

Coast Live Oak and Monterey Pine Woodlands and Forests

BIO-1. Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest: Avoidance. Design and construct the project to avoid as many oak trees as possible.

BIO-2. Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest: Alternatives to Tree Removal. When feasible, oak trees will be trimmed or pruned rather than removed.

BIO-3. Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland: Avoidance. Design and construct the project to avoid as many Monterey pine trees as possible.

BIO-4. Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland: Alternatives to Tree Removal. When feasible, Monterey pines will be trimmed or pruned rather than removed.

Avoidance and Minimization Measure for Other Natural Communities: Purple Needlegrass and White-Root Beds

BIO-5. Purple Needlegrass and White-Root Beds: Minimization of Clearing and Grubbing. Where feasible, clearing and grubbing will be limited to the smallest footprint possible in temporary impacted areas so that roots of purple needlegrass and White-Root beds can persist and potentially resprout once construction is complete.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA for Impacts to Natural Communities

Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest; Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland

Mitigation measure BIO-6 has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-6. Compensatory Mitigation: Coast Live Oak Woodland and Monterey Pine Forest Restoration. Compensatory mitigation in the form of planting coast live oak and Monterey pine trees and associated plant species is proposed at a 1-to-1 ratio (acreage) for temporary impacts and a 3-to-1 ratio (acreage) for permanent impacts to Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest, and Monterey Pine Forest and Woodland. Locally sourced plant materials from these forest communities will be used as feasible. Mitigation for both temporary and permanent impacts to each of these natural communities is expected to be completed onsite, within or adjacent to existing habitat of the same type on Caltrans right-of-way within the project area, as well as offsite if sufficient area is not available onsite. Offsite mitigation would be conducted in coordination with a local land conservancy or restoration group.

Mitigation Measure BIO-7 has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-7. Compensatory Mitigation: Purple Needlegrass and White-Root Beds Habitat Restoration. Purple Needlegrass Grassland and White-Root Beds communities that are temporarily impacted will be restored with native plant species that occur in respective communities in the region.

Mitigation for both temporary and permanent impacts to each of these natural communities is expected to be completed onsite, within or adjacent to existing habitat of the same type on Caltrans right-of-way within the project area, as well as offsite if sufficient area is not available onsite. Offsite mitigation would be conducted in coordination with a local land conservancy or restoration group.

2.3.2, Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Impacts to Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters

BIO-8. Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters: Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Prior to ground-disturbing activities, Environmentally Sensitive Area boundary markers or fencing will be installed around jurisdictional resources, habitat for special-status animals designated to be protected, and the dripline of trees to be protected within the project limits. Caltrans-defined Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be noted on design plans and delineated in the field prior to the start of construction activities.

BIO-9. Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters: Hazardous Material Spill Cleanup. During construction, all project-related hazardous materials spills within the project site will be cleaned up immediately. Readily accessible spill prevention and cleanup materials will be kept onsite at all times by the contractor during construction.

BIO-10. Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters: Pollution and Erosion Control. During construction, pollution and erosion control measures will be implemented. Fencing, fiber rolls, or barriers will be installed as needed between the project construction features and any stream, waterbody, or riparian habitat. Discharge of wet concrete, concrete dust, sediment, construction debris or other pollutants into any stream or waterbody would be prevented.

BIO-11. Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters: Invasive Plant and Pathogen Removal/Avoidance. During construction, the project will avoid spreading invasive species and pathogens by requiring that weeds designated for removal will be removed prior to disturbing surface soils and disposed of the same day they are removed. All nursery stock and imported soil will be certified free of weeds, *Phytophthora* (fungus-like plant damaging microorganisms), and other plant diseases. Construction equipment will be confirmed clean and free of soil containing seeds and and/or invasive plant material prior to entering the construction site to avoid/minimize the spread of invasive species within the construction area.

Measures BIO-12 and BIO-13 were added since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-12. Abutment Pile Driving at San Benancio Road Bridge. Pile driving at the abutments of the State Route 68 bridge over Toro Creek south of San Benancio Road shall be restricted to the dry season when the creek is not

flowing. If pile driving work must occur in the wet season or when water is present in the creek a vibratory pile driving hammer will be used to install abutment piles to minimize potential harmful effects on aquatic species.

BIO-13. Geotechnical Subsurface Exploration Drilling at San Benancio Road Bridge. Geotechnical exploration within the creek channel at San Benancio Road will be restricted to the dry season.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA for Impacts to Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters

Mitigation Measure BIO-14 has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-14. Compensatory Mitigation: Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters Habitat Restoration. Compensatory mitigation to offset impacts to wetlands, other waters, and riparian habitat will be implemented to prevent a net loss of wetlands or other aquatic resource acreage, functions, and values. Compensatory mitigation will include creation, rehabilitation, and enhancement of wetland, stream, streambank, and riparian aquatic resources, proposed at a 1-to-1 ratio (acreage) for temporary impacts and a 3-to-1 ratio (acreage) for permanent impacts to these habitat types. After construction has been completed in the affected areas, natural contours and vegetation will be restored as closely as possible to their original condition, following landscaping plans and a Mitigation and Monitoring Plan to be prepared for jurisdictional wetlands and other waters.

Habitat restoration to mitigate for temporary impacts and possibly for permanent impacts is expected to be completed onsite within suitable habitat areas on Caltrans right-of-way. Additional mitigation for permanent impacts may also need to be completed offsite at an existing mitigation bank or in coordination with a local land conservancy or restoration group in accordance with consultation for permits from the resources agencies during the permitting process.

2.3.3, Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Special-Status Plants

Special-Status Manzanitas

BIO-15. Special-Status Manzanitas: Avoidance. Design and construct the project to avoid as many special-status manzanitas as possible.

BIO-16. Special-Status Manzanitas: Alternatives to Removal. When feasible, special-status manzanitas will be trimmed or pruned rather than removed, preserving the root system as much as possible.

BIO-17. Special-Status Manzanitas: Preconstruction Surveys. A qualified biologist will perform additional botanical surveys between two and three years prior to construction to update species presence, area of occupied

suitable habitat, and restoration and Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries. The limits of Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be established to avoid crushing sensitive roots.

Compensatory Mitigation Measure under CEQA for Special-Status Plants – Manzanitas

BIO-18. Compensatory Mitigation: Special-Status Manzanita- Replanting and Habitat Restoration. Using locally sourced material if feasible, special-status manzanitas will be planted in suitable habitat areas along with other native species appropriate for those habitats.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA for Special-Status Plants - Congdon's Tarplant

BIO-19. Compensatory Mitigation: Congdon's Tarplant Preconstruction Surveys and Seed Collection. A qualified biologist will perform additional botanical surveys between two and three years prior to construction to update species presence, area of occupied suitable habitat, and restoration and Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries. Additionally, seeds from individuals within the impact areas will be collected for replacement planting/restoration at the end of construction.

BIO-20. Compensatory Mitigation: Congdon's Tarplant Soil and Duff Salvage. Caltrans will develop plans and specifications to minimize impacts to Congdon's tarplant by salvaging the top 3 inches of soil and duff from permanent and temporary impact areas and replacing it to the same general location or suitable landscape settings (within 500 feet).

BIO-21. Compensatory Mitigation: Congdon's Tarplant Habitat Restoration. Annual grassland habitats that are temporarily impacted and within range of Congdon's tarplant will be restored with native grass and forb species at a ratio of 1 to 1, and in accordance with landscape plans and a Mitigation Monitoring Plan for grassland habitats.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Special-Status Plants – Lewis' Clarkia

Lewis' Clarkia

BIO-22. Lewis' Clarkia: Soil and Duff Salvage. Caltrans will develop plans and specifications to minimize impacts to Lewis' clarkia by salvaging the top 3 inches of soil and duff from permanent and temporary impact areas and replacing it to the same general location and suitable habitat conditions (within 500 feet).

BIO-23. Lewis' Clarkia: Seed Collection. Depending on timing of potential impacts, mature seed may be collected from impacted plants and redistributed in suitable habitat areas in the right-of-way.

2.3.4, Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Special-Status Animals

Special-Status and Other Nesting Birds

BIO-24. Special-Status and Other Nesting Birds: Construction Scheduling, Preconstruction Surveys, and Buffer Areas. Schedule vegetation removal between September 1 and February 14, outside of the typical bird nesting season. If construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the nesting season (February 15 to August 31), a nesting bird survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than three days prior to construction. If an active nest is found, the Caltrans biologist will determine an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area will be avoided until a qualified biologist has determined that juveniles have fledged and are no longer dependent on the nest.

BIO-25. Special-Status and Other Nesting Birds: Observance of Legal Protections. Active bird nests shall not be disturbed, and eggs or young birds covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Section 3503 shall not be killed, destroyed, injured, or harassed at any time.

BIO-26. Special-Status and Other Nesting Birds: Exclusionary Methods. During construction before typical nesting season, active exclusionary methods will be implemented to prevent birds from occupying nests in the construction zone. Removal of inactive nests will be monitored by a qualified biologist.

Roosting Bats

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Roosting Bats

BIO-27. Roosting Bats: Construction Scheduling, Roost Surveys, Exclusionary Methods, and Buffer Areas. Tree removal shall be scheduled to occur from September 2 to January 31, outside of the typical bat maternity roosting season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts to roosting bats. If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the bat maternity roosting season (February 1 to September 1), a bat roost survey shall be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans within 14 days prior to construction. The biologist(s) conducting the preconstruction surveys will also identify the nature of the bat utilization (i.e., no roosting, night roost, day roost, maternity roost) and determine if passive bat exclusion will be necessary and feasible. If an active day roost is found, a qualified Caltrans biologist shall determine an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer

area shall be avoided until a qualified biologist has determined that roosting activity has ceased, or exclusionary methods have successfully evicted roosting bats.

BIO-28. Roosting Bats: Preconstruction Surveys of Culverts. Prior to culvert construction activities for the proposed wildlife crossing improvements, a preconstruction survey for roosting bats shall be conducted by a biologist determined to be qualified by Caltrans within 14 days prior to construction. The biologist(s) conducting the preconstruction surveys will identify the nature of the bat utilization (i.e., no roosting, night roost, day roost, maternity roost) and determine if passive bat exclusion will be necessary and feasible. The qualified biologist will provide oversight on exclusion methods and installation and will determine whether exclusionary methods have successfully evicted roosting bats.

BIO-29. Roosting Bats: Avoidance of Active Maternity Roosts. If bats are found by a qualified biologist to be maternity roosting, active bat maternity roosts shall not be disturbed or destroyed until pups are volant (capable of flight).

BIO-30. Roosting Bats: Exclusion Zones. In areas where an occupied roost can be avoided, readily visible exclusion zones shall be established using Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing. The size/radius of the exclusion zone(s) shall be determined by a qualified biologist.

BIO-31. Roosting Bats: Habitat Incorporation into Wildlife Crossings. Where feasible, bat habitat may be incorporated into the large wildlife crossing culverts within the project area.

2.3.5, Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Threatened and Endangered Species

Yadon's Piperia

BIO-32. Yadon's Piperia: Agency Consultation. Prior to construction, Caltrans will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding impacts to Yadon's piperia.

BIO-33. Yadon's Piperia: Preconstruction Surveys. A qualified biologist will perform additional botanical surveys between two and three years prior to construction to update occupied suitable habitat, to flag locations where bulbs may be collected (if necessary), and to support placement of Environmentally Sensitive Area boundaries. Additionally, the surveys will identify suitable restoration sites if Yadon's piperia is found within an area to be impacted and must be relocated. Field surveys will be conducted in the early season when leaves have emerged, but grass cover is low. If Yadon's piperia plants are found in the project impact area during preconstruction surveys, Mitigation Measures BIO-34 through BIO-38 will be implemented.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA for Special-Status Plants: Yadon's Piperia

The following mitigation measures shall be implemented if Yadon's piperia plants are found in the project impact area during preconstruction surveys prescribed in Measure BIO-33.

BIO-34. Compensatory Mitigation: Yadon's Piperia. Compensatory mitigation would be required as a result of direct and indirect impacts to this species. Impacts to Yadon's piperia would be fully mitigated in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through a Biological Opinion document. Though Caltrans has proposed measures to offset direct impacts to Yadon's piperia, final mitigation measures would be developed during coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The proposed measures are similar to those that were included in the Biological Opinion for a project at the Monterey Regional Airport (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2019).

At this time, Caltrans proposes offsetting temporary and permanent impacts to Yadon's piperia-occupied habitat at a ratio of 2 to 1 (acres impacted to acres mitigated) through the translocation efforts described above. Habitat preservation and/or enhancement may also be performed as needed to fulfill the mitigation ratio. Mitigation is expected to be completed offsite, at a location within range and suitable habitat conditions for the Monterey peninsula population of Yadon's piperia, in coordination with a local land conservancy or restoration group.

BIO-35. Compensatory Mitigation: Yadon's Piperia Soil and Duff Salvage; Seed Collection and Storage. If Yadon's piperia is found within the area to be impacted, seeds, bulbs, and topsoil containing its mycorrhizal associations will be collected by qualified individuals at the appropriate season from the project's impact areas and other collection sites approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service one to two years prior to construction. Seed will be collected in the summer, processed, and stored according to seed storage best practices for up to two years before being planted. Bulbs and soil will be collected and translocated in the late fall when the plants are most dormant (anticipated to be October to December).

BIO-36. Compensatory Mitigation: Yadon's Piperia Plant Translocation. The plant materials will be translocated into designated and suitably protected sites within range of the Monterey population. The translocation sites will be prepared in advance by clearing invasive and competing vegetation. Site preparation and translocation work will be implemented by hand to avoid compacting the soil.

BIO-37. Compensatory Mitigation: Yadon's Piperia Translocation Site Monitoring. Following completion of the seed and bulb relocation efforts, a qualified biologist will monitor the translocation site for four consecutive years to

quantify and document the number of individuals that emerge, the presence of non-native vegetation, and overall success of the translocation efforts.

BIO-38. Compensatory Mitigation: Yadon's Piperia Translocation Site Maintenance. Invasive and competing vegetation will be removed from the translocation site by hand during the monitoring program.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for California Red-Legged Frog

Caltrans anticipates the proposed project would qualify for Federal Endangered Species Act incidental take coverage under the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Federal Highway Administration projects with potential impacts to California red-legged frog (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service No. 8-8-10-F-58), which includes the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures below, in addition to measures pertaining to jurisdictional areas mentioned above (see Section 2.3.2) and which would be implemented for either project alternative.

BIO-39. California Red-Legged Frog: Biologist Qualifications for Capture/Relocation of Frogs. Only U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologists will participate in activities associated with the capture and handling 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has revoked their approval at any time during the life of the Programmatic Biological Opinion.

BIO-40. California Red-Legged Frog: Biologist Qualifications and Initiation of Construction. Ground disturbance will not begin until written approval is received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the biologist(s) is qualified to conduct the work. Caltrans will request approval of the biologist(s) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

BIO-41. California Red-Legged Frog: Preconstruction Surveys and Capture/Relocation. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will survey the proposed action 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will relocate the California red-legged frogs the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by the activities associated with the proposed action. The relocation site should be in the same drainage to the extent practicable. Caltrans will coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the relocation site prior to the capture of any California red-legged frogs.

BIO-42. California Red-Legged Frog: Worker Awareness Training. Before any activities begin on a proposed action, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-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 proposed action, and the boundaries within which the proposed action 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.

BIO-43. California Red-Legged Frog: Monitor Designation; Procedure in the Event of Unanticipated Adverse Effects to Frogs. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will be present at the work site until California red-legged frogs have been relocated out of harm's way, workers have been instructed, and disturbance of the habitat has been completed. After this time, Caltrans will designate a person to monitor onsite compliance with minimization measures. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will ensure that this monitor receives the training outlined in the previous measure, as well as training in the identification of California red-legged frogs. If the monitor or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist recommends that work be stopped because California red-legged frogs would be affected in a manner not anticipated by Caltrans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during 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 by requiring that actions that are causing these effects be halted. If work is stopped, Caltrans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be notified as soon as is reasonably possible.

BIO-44. California Red-Legged Frog: Habitat Contours. Habitat contours will be returned to their original configuration to the greatest extent that is feasible at the end of the proposed project. This measure will be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with the proposed action, unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible, or modification of original contours would benefit the California red-legged frog.

BIO-45. California Red-Legged Frog: Construction Footprint Limitation; Environmentally Sensitive Areas. The number of access routes, size of staging areas, and the total area of activity will be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the proposed action. Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be established to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete construction and minimize the impact to California red-legged frog habitat; this goal includes locating access routes and construction areas outside of wetlands and riparian areas to the maximum extent practicable.

BIO-46. California Red-Legged Frog: Construction Scheduling. Caltrans 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 through May). Isolated pools that are important to maintain California red-legged frogs through the driest portions of the year would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the late summer and early fall. Habitat assessments, surveys, and technical assistance between Caltrans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during proposed action planning will be used to assist in scheduling work activities to avoid sensitive habitats during key times of year.

BIO-47. California Red-Legged Frog: Dewatering. If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes will be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.2 inch to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water will be released 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 proposed action.

BIO-48. California Red-Legged Frog: Water Impounding. Unless approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, water will not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.

BIO-49. California Red-Legged Frog: Invasive Wildlife Removal. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will permanently remove any individuals of invasive species, such as bullfrogs, crayfish, and centrarchid fishes, from the proposed project area to the maximum extent. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will be responsible for ensuring these activities are in compliance with the California Fish and Game Code.

BIO-50. California Red-Legged Frog: Calculation of Permanently Disturbed Area. If Caltrans demonstrates 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.

BIO-51. California Red-Legged Frog: Prevention of Disease Transfer. To ensure that diseases are not conveyed between work sites by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist, the fieldwork code of practice developed by the Declining Amphibian Task Force will be followed at all times.

BIO-52. California Red-Legged Frog: Herbicide Use Protocols. Caltrans will not use herbicides as the primary method to control invasive plants. However, if

Caltrans determines the use of herbicides is the only feasible method for controlling invasive plants at a specific proposed action area, it will implement the following additional measures to protect California red-legged frog:

a. Caltrans will not use herbicides during the breeding season for California red-legged frog.

b. Caltrans 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 proposed action area so that no direct contact with herbicide would occur.

c. Black locust 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 at an individual proposed action area.

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 three miles per hour.

h. No herbicides will be applied within 24 hours of forecasted rain.

i. Application of herbicides will be done by qualified Caltrans staff or contractors to ensure that overspray is minimized, application is made in accordance with the label recommendations and 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 US Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs Endangered Species Protection Program county 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 directly toward aquatic habitat. Caltrans 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-53. California Red-Legged Frog: Project Completion Report. Upon completion of the proposed action, Caltrans will ensure that a Project Completion Report is completed and provided to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ventura Field Office.

BIO-54. California Red-Legged Frog: Agency Permits/Agreements. Caltrans will obtain permits and agreements from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, as applicable to project impacts.

BIO-55. California Red-Legged Frog: Shielding of Night Lighting. Project plans and specifications will ensure that temporary construction lighting and permanent night lighting are shielded from illuminating natural habitat outside of the work limits.

Compensatory Mitigation Measure Under CEQA for California Red-legged Frog

Mitigation measure BIO-56 has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-56. Compensatory Mitigation: California Red-Legged Frog Habitat Restoration. Impacts to potential habitat for California red-legged frog would be offset by site restoration within the project limits using native plant species, at offsite mitigation areas associated with compensatory mitigation for jurisdictional areas, or by purchasing mitigation credits from a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved conservation bank such as Sparling Ranch Conservation Bank. Compensatory mitigation would replace potential breeding, non-breeding aquatic, and upland habitat, in-kind.

The proposed action area will be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area, using locally collected plant materials to the extent practicable. Invasive plants will be controlled to the maximum extent practicable. This measure will be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities with the proposed action, unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans have determined that it is not feasible or practical.

BIO-57. Compensatory Mitigation: California Red-Legged Frog Handling of Special-Status Animals. Only biologists approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife will participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California tiger salamander and other special-status animals.

BIO-58. Compensatory Mitigation: California Red-Legged Frog Species Protection and Relocation Plan. Caltrans will prepare a species protection and relocation plan for approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to comply with applicable regulatory permits.

Compensatory Mitigation Measure Under CEQA for California Tiger Salamander

Mitigation measure BIO-59 has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

BIO-59. Compensatory Mitigation: California Tiger Salamander. Compensatory mitigation would be required as a result of indirect and direct impacts to the California tiger salamander. Any impacts to this species would need to be fully mitigated in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife through the Biological Opinion and 2081 Incidental Take Permit processes, respectively. Upon completion of the project, Caltrans would restore temporarily impacted areas onsite with appropriate native vegetation.

Caltrans also anticipates permanently preserving suitable offsite habitat as compensation for the loss of California tiger salamander upland habitat. The amount of compensatory habitat is anticipated to be a minimum of 2 to 1 for permanent impacts and 1 to 1 for temporary impacts, but final compensatory mitigation would be determined in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the permitting process.

Caltrans anticipates that California tiger salamander mitigation credits would be purchased from the Sparling Ranch Conservation Bank. Also, the inclusion of wildlife crossing improvements into this project has the potential to decrease road mortality, as well as the indirect benefit of reducing habitat fragmentation.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for South-Central California Coast Steelhead (Only if Alternative 2 was selected)

BIO-60. South-Central California Coast Steelhead: Biologist Qualifications. Caltrans would retain a National Marine Fisheries Service-approved biologist(s) with expertise in anadromous salmonid biology, including handling, collecting, and relocating salmonids; salmonid/habitat relationships; and biological monitoring of salmonids. To ensure that all biologists working on the project are qualified to conduct fish collections in a manner which minimizes all potential risks to steelhead, Caltrans would submit the resumes of candidate biologists to the National Marine Fisheries Service for review and approval prior to conducting the work. Electrofishing, if used, would be performed by a qualified biologist and conducted according to the National Marine Fisheries Service Guidelines for Electrofishing Waters Containing Salmonids Listed under the Endangered Species Act. The biological monitor(s) would monitor placement and removal of any required stream diversions/dewatering and only the approved biologist would capture stranded steelhead and other native fish species and relocate them to suitable habitat, as appropriate. The approved biologist(s) would note the number of steelhead observed in the affected area, the number of steelhead relocated, and the date and time of the collection and relocation. Caltrans or

the biologist would notify the National Marine Fisheries Service one week prior to capture activities in order to provide an opportunity for National Marine Fisheries Service staff to observe the activities.

BIO-61. South-Central California Coast Steelhead: Worker Awareness Training. Prior to construction, all personnel would participate in an environmental awareness training program conducted by a qualified biologist. The program shall include a description of steelhead, steelhead critical habitat, its legal/protected status, avoidance/minimization measures to be implemented during the project, and the implications of violating federal Endangered Species Act and permit conditions.

Compensatory Mitigation Measures under CEQA for South-Central California Coast Steelhead (Only if Alternative 2 was selected)

BIO-62. Compensatory Mitigation: South-Central California Coast Steelhead-Dewatering. If pumps are needed to temporarily dewater the site, intakes would be screened according to the National Marine Fisheries Service's Pump Intake Screen Criteria for Water Drafting to prevent steelhead and other sensitive aquatic species from entering the pump system (typically wire mesh no larger than 5-millimeter). The pumps would be checked daily at a minimum, to ensure a dry work environment and minimize adverse effects to aquatic species and habitats.

BIO-63. Compensatory Mitigation: South-Central California Coast Steelhead - Capture, Handling, and Relocation. Steelhead would be handled with extreme care and kept in water to the maximum extent possible during rescue activities. All captured fish would be kept in cool, shaded, aerated water protected from excessive noise, jostling, or overcrowding any time they are not in the stream, and fish would not be removed from this water except when released. To avoid predation, the biologists would have at least two containers and segregate young-of-year fish from larger age-classes and other potential aquatic predators. Captured steelhead would be relocated, as soon as possible, to a suitable instream location in which suitable habitat conditions are present to allow for adequate survival of transported fish and fish already present.

BIO-64. South-Central California Coast Steelhead: Notification of Dead/Injured Steelhead to the National Marine Fisheries Service. If any salmonids are found dead or injured, the biological monitor would contact the National Marine Fisheries Service immediately. The purpose of the contact is to review the activities resulting in take, determine if additional protective measures are required, and to ensure appropriate collection and transfer of salmonid mortalities and tissue samples. All salmonid mortalities would be retained.

BIO-65. South-Central California Coast Steelhead: Site Visits by (or Approved by) the National Marine Fisheries Service. Caltrans would allow

any National Marine Fisheries Service employee(s) or any other person(s) designated by National Marine Fisheries Service, to accompany field personnel to visit the project site during activities.

BIO-66. South-Central California Coast Steelhead: Exclusion of Fill Material from Waterways. Fill material for cofferdams/in-stream diversions would be fully confined with the use of plastic sheeting, sandbags, or with other non-porous containment methods, such that sediment does not come in contact with stream flow or in direct contact with the natural streambed. All loose fill material for cofferdams or access ramps would be completely removed from the channel by October 31.

BIO-67. South-Central California Coast Steelhead: Creek Restoration; Written Report to the National Marine Fisheries Service. Once construction is completed, all project-introduced material (pipe, gravel, cofferdam, etc.) would be removed, leaving the creek as it was before construction. Excess materials would be disposed of at an appropriate disposal site. Caltrans must provide a written report to the National Marine Fisheries Service by January 15 of the year following construction of the project. The report must contain, at a minimum, the following information:

a. Project Construction and Fish Relocation Report -- The report(s) must include the dates construction began and was completed; a discussion of design compliance including: vegetation installation, and post-construction longitudinal profile and cross sections; a discussion of any unanticipated effects or unanticipated levels of effects on salmonids, including a description of any and all measures taken to minimize those unanticipated effects and a statement as to whether or not the unanticipated effects had any effect on Endangered Species Act-listed fish; the number of salmonids killed or injured during the project action; and photographs taken before, during, and after the activity from photo reference points.

b. Fish Relocation -- The report must include a description of the location from which fish were removed and the release site including photographs; the date and time of the relocation effort; a description of the equipment and methods used to collect, hold, and transport salmonids; if an electrofisher was used for fish collection, a copy of the logbook must be included; the number of fish relocated by species; the number of fish injured or killed by species and a brief narrative of the circumstances surrounding Endangered Species Act-listed fish injuries or mortalities; and a description of any problems which may have arisen during the relocation activities and a statement as to whether or not the activities had any unforeseen effects.

c. Post-Construction Vegetation Monitoring and Reporting – Caltrans must develop and submit for the National Marine Fisheries Service's

review a plan to assess the success of revegetation of the site. A draft of the revegetation monitoring plan must be submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service for review and approval prior to the beginning of the in-stream work season. Reports documenting post-project conditions of vegetation installed at the site would be prepared and submitted annually for the first five years following project completion, unless the site is documented to be performing poorly, then monitoring requirements would be extended. Reports would document vegetation health and survivorship and percent cover, natural recruitment of native vegetation (if any), and any maintenance or replanting needs. Photographs must be included. If poor establishment is documented, the report must include recommendations to address the source of the performance problems.

Compensatory Mitigation Measure under CEQA for Monarch Butterfly

BIO-68. Compensatory Mitigation: Monarch Butterfly - Habitat Restoration. Grassland and scrub habitats that are temporarily impacted during construction will be replaced onsite using a seed mixture containing native grass species and locally present, native flowering species with a one-year plant establishment period.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Southwestern Pond Turtle

BIO-69. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Preconstruction Surveys. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved southwestern pond turtle biologist will conduct a preconstruction survey of all portions of the project site for each life stage as appropriate to the season three times before the onset of work activities following the guidance from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) (2020; available at: https://www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy/docs/Appendix_N_VES_Protocol_April_2020.pdf).

a. Conduct one survey no more than 48 hours before the onset of work activities ideally when weather conditions are suitable to detect basking southwestern pond turtles.

b. Conduct one to two additional surveys prior to the onset of work activities with at least 3 days between surveys during suitable weather conditions during the southwestern pond turtle's active season generally March 1–September 30 (e.g., first 4 months best) when air temperatures regularly exceed 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

BIO-70. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Halt Work if Individuals Likely to be Harmed. 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 Service-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.

BIO-71. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Night Work Restrictions. 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 spill over into occupied or assumed occupied habitat outside the work area.

BIO-72. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Onsite Biologist. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will be present at the work site until all southwestern pond turtles have been relocated out of harm's way. The biologist will also conduct inspections of installed exclusion fencing and ensure that all workers have received Worker Environmental Awareness Training and that initial ground disturbance of habitat (5 inches of topsoil [12 cm]) is completed. After this time, Caltrans may designate a person to monitor onsite compliance with all minimization measures. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will ensure that this monitor receives the Worker Environmental Awareness Training in the identification of southwestern pond turtles.

BIO-73. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Construction Equipment Areas. To the extent feasible, no equipment will be left onsite 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approves, the area must be checked for southwestern pond turtles before the equipment is moved.

BIO-74. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Construction Vehicle Speed and Areas. 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.

BIO-75 Southwestern Pond Turtle: Basking Structures. After construction, Caltrans 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). See Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Guidance for Conserving Oregon's Native Turtles including Best Management Practices (2015, pp. 31-35) for additional information on installing basking structures (available at: https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/docs/ODFW_Turtle_BMPs_March_2015.pdf).

BIO-76. Southwestern Pond Turtle: No Pets. 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.

BIO-77. Southwestern Pond Turtle: Cover Holes and Trenches. 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-to-1 slope). The Service-approved biologist or project monitor will inspect holes, trenches, and other areas that may provide refugia for the southwestern pond turtles each morning.

Compensatory Mitigation Measure under CEQA for Southwestern Pond Turtle

BIO-78. Compensatory Mitigation: Southwestern Pond Turtle Habitat Mitigation Plan. If the southwestern pond turtle receives federal listing under the federal Endangered Species Act, and if the project causes permanent impacts to suitable aquatic or upland southwestern pond turtle habitat, Caltrans will submit an appropriate habitat mitigation proposal or purchase of credits in an approved conservation bank that fully offsets the proposed projects effects to the species. If appropriate, this may include a restoration, monitoring, and management plan, which will be developed in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The proposal must be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prior to initial ground disturbance. The project proponent will strive to provide mitigation within the same or nearby watershed in which the impact takes place. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will consider the proximity of proposed mitigation in relation to the impacts of a project.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Crotch Bumble Bee

BIO-79. Crotch Bumble Bee: Design Phase Surveys and Agency Coordination. During the design phase, focused bumble bee surveys will be conducted to determine if Crotch bumble bee occurs in the project area. If Crotch bumble bee is identified in the project area, Caltrans will coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and, if necessary, a 2081 Incidental Take Permit will be acquired.

BIO-80. Crotch Bumble Bee: Preconstruction Surveys for Nesting Bees. Surveys will occur prior to ground disturbance for nesting bumble bees. No work will occur within 50 feet of an active Crotch bumble bee nest unless approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

BIO-81. Crotch Bumble Bee: Worker Awareness Training. A Worker Environmental Awareness Training will be provided for all construction personnel prior to the start of any ground disturbance or vegetation removal to discuss Crotch bumble bee identification, ecology, habitat, and avoidance and minimization measures.

BIO-82. Crotch Bumble Bee: Flowering Plant Inspection. Blooming flowering plants that are scoped for removal would be inspected by a qualified biologist immediately prior to work to ensure that no bumble bees are on or near the plant. If a bumble bee is identified on or adjacent to vegetation that is to be removed, work in that area would not proceed until the bumble bee leaves the area of its own accord.

BIO-83. Crotch Bumble Bee: Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing shall be installed, as appropriate, around Crotch bumble bee feeding and nesting habitat to be avoided. Environmentally Sensitive Areas shall be noted on design plans and delineated in the field prior to the start of construction activities.

Compensatory Mitigation Measure under CEQA for Crotch Bumble Bee

The following mitigation measure would be implemented if Crotch bumble bees are discovered in the project impact areas during preconstruction surveys (Measures BIO-79 and/or BIO-80).

BIO-84. Compensatory Mitigation: Crotch Bumble Bee - Replacement of Impacted Habitat. If Crotch bumble bees are discovered in the project impact areas during preconstruction surveys, areas of suitable Crotch bumble bee habitat that are temporarily impacted during construction will be replaced onsite at a minimum ratio of 1 to 1.

2.3.6, Avoidance and Minimization Measures for Invasive Species

Avoidance and minimization measures would be implemented to avoid the spread of invasive plants and noxious weeds.

BIO-85. Invasive Plant Species Removal. As part of the project's landscaping, highly invasive and noxious weeds would be removed and replaced by California native plants suitable for the area (and locally collected, if possible).

BIO-86. Timing of Weed Removal. Weeds designated for removal would be removed prior to any soil disturbance.

BIO-87. Certification of Weed- and Disease-Free Materials. Nursery stock and imported soil would be certified weed- and disease-free.

BIO-88. Use of Clean Equipment. Construction equipment would be inspected and cleaned if necessary to ensure it is free of soil containing seeds and and/or invasive plant material prior to entering the construction sites.

BIO-89. Invasive Aquatic Wildlife Removal. Any invasive aquatic wildlife species observed within the project limits would be permanently removed by the project's monitoring biologist(s), as feasible.

Appendix F List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMBAG—Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments

Caltrans—California Department of Transportation

CalFire—California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

CEQA—California Environmental Quality Act

dBA—A-weighted decibels (noise level)

EIR—environmental impact report

FHWA—Federal Highway Administration

GHG—greenhouse gas

LOS—Level of Service

MPH—miles per hour

NEPA—National Environmental Policy Act

PM—post mile; particulate matter

SR—State Route

TAMC—Transportation Agency for Monterey County

TOAR—Traffic Operations Analysis Report

VMT—Vehicle Miles Traveled

Appendix G Notice of Preparation

Print Form

Appendix C

Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal

Mail to: State Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 (916) 445-0613
For Hand Delivery/Street Address: 1400 Tenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

SCH #2019090448

Project Title: Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements

Lead Agency: California Department of Transportation, District 5 — Contact Person: Jason Wilkinson

Mailing Address: 50 Higuera Street — Phone: (805) 542-4663

City: San Luis Obispo — Zip: 93401 — County: San Luis Obispo

Project Location: County: Monterey — City/Nearest Community: Monterey/Del Rey Oaks

Cross Streets: Various - from Josselyn Canyon Road to San Benancio Road (Postmile 4.8-13.7) — Zip Code: 93940

Longitude/Latitude (degrees, minutes and seconds): 36 ° 35 ′ 09 ″ N / 121 ° 51 ′ 45 ″ W Total Acres: _____

Assessor's Parcel No.: _____ Section: _____ Twp.: _____ Range: _____ Base: _____

Within 2 Miles: State Hwy #: SR 68/SR 218 — Waterways: various

Airports: Monterey Regional Airport — Railways: _____ — Schools: various

Document Type:

CEQA: ☒ NOP ☐ Early Cons ☐ Neg Dec ☐ Mit Neg Dec ☐ Draft EIR ☐ Supplement/Subsequent EIR (Prior SCH No.) _____ Other: _____

NEPA: ☐ NOI ☐ EA ☐ Draft EIS ☐ FONSI

Other: ☐ Joint Document ☐ Final Document ☐ Other: _____

Local Action Type:

☐ General Plan Update ☐ General Plan Amendment ☐ General Plan Element ☐ Community Plan
☐ Specific Plan ☐ Master Plan ☐ Planned Unit Development ☐ Site Plan
☐ Rezone ☐ Prezone ☐ Use Permit ☐ Land Division (Subdivision, etc.)
☐ Annexation ☐ Redevelopment ☐ Coastal Permit ☒ Other: Transportation

Development Type:

☐ Residential: Units _____ Acres _____
☐ Office: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____
☐ Commercial: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____
☐ Industrial: Sq.ft. _____ Acres _____ Employees _____
☐ Educational: _____
☐ Recreational: _____
☐ Water Facilities: Type _____ MGD _____
☒ Transportation: Type Intersection operation improvements
☐ Mining: Mineral _____
☐ Power: Type _____ MW _____
☐ Waste Treatment: Type _____ MGD _____
☐ Hazardous Waste: Type _____
☐ Other: _____

Project Issues Discussed in Document:

☒ Aesthetic/Visual
☒ Agricultural Land
☒ Air Quality
☒ Archeological/Historical
☒ Biological Resources
☐ Coastal Zone
☐ Drainage/Absorption
☐ Economic/Jobs
☐ Fiscal
☒ Flood Plain/Flooding
☒ Forest Land/Fire Hazard
☒ Geologic/Seismic
☐ Minerals
☒ Noise
☐ Population/Housing Balance
☐ Public Services/Facilities
☒ Recreation/Parks
☐ Schools/Universities
☐ Septic Systems
☐ Sewer Capacity
☐ Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading
☐ Solid Waste
☒ Toxic/Hazardous
☒ Traffic/Circulation
☒ Vegetation
☒ Water Quality
☐ Water Supply/Groundwater
☒ Wetland/Riparian
☒ Growth Inducement
☒ Land Use
☒ Cumulative Effects
☐ Other: _____

Present Land Use/Zoning/General Plan Designation:

multiple

Project Description: *(please use a separate page if necessary)*

The California Department of Transportation in partnership with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) proposes to improve intersection operations along Scenic Route (SR) 68 between Josselyn Canyon Road and San Benancio Road (Postmile 4.8 to 13.7) and enhance wildlife connectivity in order to reduce travel delays, vehicle collisions, and collisions between wildlife and vehicles. A no build alternative and two build alternatives are proposed. The build alternatives propose roundabout or intersection operational improvements to multiple intersections along SR 68, including possible mainline operational improvements (Alt 2 only) and installation of large mammal wildlife crossings.

Note: The State Clearinghouse will assign identification numbers for all new projects. If a SCH number already exists for a project (e.g. Notice of Preparation or previous draft document) please fill in.

Revised 2010

Reviewing Agencies Checklist

Lead Agencies may recommend State Clearinghouse distribution by marking agencies below with and "X".
If you have already sent your document to the agency please denote that with an "S".

X	Air Resources Board	X	Office of Historic Preservation
	Boating & Waterways, Department of		Office of Public School Construction
X	California Emergency Management Agency	X	Parks & Recreation, Department of
X	California Highway Patrol		Pesticide Regulation, Department of
	Caltrans District #	X	Public Utilities Commission
	Caltrans Division of Aeronautics	X	Regional WQCB #3
	Caltrans Planning	X	Resources Agency
	Central Valley Flood Protection Board		Resources Recycling and Recovery, Department of
	Coachella Valley Mtns. Conservancy		S.F. Bay Conservation & Development Comm.
	Coastal Commission		San Gabriel & Lower L.A. Rivers & Mtns. Conservancy
	Colorado River Board		San Joaquin River Conservancy
	Conservation, Department of		Santa Monica Mtns. Conservancy
	Corrections, Department of		State Lands Commission
	Delta Protection Commission		SWRCB: Clean Water Grants
	Education, Department of	X	SWRCB: Water Quality
X	Energy Commission		SWRCB: Water Rights
X	Fish & Game Region #4		Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
	Food & Agriculture, Department of	X	Toxic Substances Control, Department of
X	Forestry and Fire Protection, Department of		Water Resources, Department of
	General Services, Department of		
	Health Services, Department of		Other:
X	Housing & Community Development		Other:
X	Native American Heritage Commission		

Local Public Review Period (to be filled in by lead agency)

Starting Date _____ Ending Date _____

Lead Agency (Complete if applicable):

Consulting Firm: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Contact: _____
Phone: _____

Applicant: Caltrans District 5, Attn: Jason Wilkinson
Address: 50 Higuera Street
City/State/Zip: San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
Phone: (805) 542-4663

Signature of Lead Agency Representative: _____ **Date:** 9/24/19

Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21161, Public Resources Code.

Revised 2010

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
CALTRANS DISTRICT 5
50 HIGUERA STREET
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401-5415
PHONE (805) 549-3101
FAX (805) 549-3329
TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov

Making Conservation a California Way of Life.

September 24, 2019

California State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Revision request for NOP Submittal (SCH # 2019090448)

Enclosed, please find a revised copy of the completed NOC form for the Notice of Preparation for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project (SCH# 2019090448).

Minor revisions have been made on the following fields of this form:

- Cross streets
- Project description

These revisions update the noted postmile limits for the project to 4.8-13.7 (previously listed as 4.8-14.3).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (805) 542-4663 or by e-mail sent to Jason.wilkinson@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Jason Wilkinson
Senior Environmental Planner

Enclosures
Revised NOC

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"

Appendix H Preliminary Design Plans for Build Alternatives

This paragraph has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Preliminary design illustrations of the project intersections for both Build Alternative 1 and Build Alternative 2 are accessible from the following website: https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-5/district-5-current-projects/d5-scenic-route-68-improvements. The design illustrations for Alternative 1 at the Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road roundabout locations have been amended since the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was circulated for public review.

Printed format of the design illustrations may be requested by contacting Matt.c.fowler@dot.ca.gov, or by telephone at (805) 779-0793.

Appendix I Proposed Intersection Design Elements of the Build Alternatives

ALTERNATIVE 1 – Roundabouts Scope Descriptions

ALTERNATIVE 1 - LOCATION 1: ROUNDABOUT at Josselyn Canyon Road (Post Mile 5.22):

- Single-lane Roundabout.
- 3-leg intersection.
- Josselyn Canyon Road, realigned to improve intersection with less than 75-degree angle to 90 degrees.
- Crosswalks located on all legs of the roundabout.
- An 8-foot-wide shared use path for pedestrians and bicycles on all legs of the roundabout between the bike ramps.
- Raised splitter island on all legs between through lanes.
- Relocation and reconstruction of private mailboxes, monuments, and fences as applicable.
- Retaining Wall Number 1 length of 320 feet, height range of 4 feet to 22 feet, on the north side of State Route 68 adjacent to shared use path and starting at bicycle ramp west of roundabout. At the top of the retaining wall, on the back side, there will be a concrete drainage ditch and landform grading slope of 2 to1 until it catches original ground.
- Retaining Wall Number 2 with concrete barrier, length of 192 feet, height range from 4 to 18 feet, adjacent to northbound Josselyn Canyon Road. At the top of the retaining wall, on the back side, there will be a concrete drainage ditch and landform grading slope of 2 to1 until it meets original ground.
- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Concrete Barrier Number 1, length of 460 feet on north side of State Route 68 adjacent to edge of pavement, starts at end of bicycle ramp east of roundabout and extends to the east.
- Modifications to drainage infrastructure, including construction of new culverts and/or extension of existing culverts and installation of drain inlets in the splitter islands and curb and gutter areas to propagate the runoff into ditches and minimize the spread of runoff onto travel lanes.

- Hammond Drive approximately 350 feet east of the roundabout would have right-in/right-out only access due to the raised splitter island on State Route 68.
- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Realignment of Josselyn Canyon Road would result in modification of driveway and permanent property acquisition from Living Hope Church of Nazarene (APN 013-271-002), an area of approximately 0.31 acre on the southwest corner.
- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Permanent property (right-of-way) acquisition from six (6) Assessor Parcels has been identified. Up to 1.20 acres of permanent right-of-way is estimated to be necessary for the intersection modifications. A Slope/Subsurface Easement from one Assessor Parcel for up to 0.18 acre.
- Roundabout center island would be hardscaped to minimize maintenance and associated temporary travel lane closures, and to facilitate worker safety. Landscaping the center islands may be considered during the design phase.
- Widening of State Route 68 for the roundabout would result in removal of several trees.
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway Right of Way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

Overhead utility lines:

- Approximately 934 linear feet of eastbound State Route 68 PG&E electric overhead lines supported by 10 poles, and 300 linear feet of electric lines supported by two poles along Josselyn Canyon Road;

- Approximately 1,080 linear feet of westbound State Route 68 AT&T overhead telecommunication lines supported by nine (9) poles, and approximately 506 linear feet of AT&T line along northbound Josselyn Road supported by 2 poles;
- Approximately 938 linear feet of overhead Comcast TV lines supported by six (6) poles located both in the eastbound and westbound directions of State Route 68 and along Josselyn Canyon Road.

Underground Lines:

- Approximately 1,300 linear feet of subsurface gas lines ranging in size (2-, 4-, and 6-inch-diameter pipelines) mostly adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 edge of pavement;
- Approximately 450 linear feet of 6-inch water line owned by the City of Monterey that runs parallel to eastbound State Route 68 along with 180 linear feet of 12-inch water line that runs parallel to westbound State Route 68. An approximately 250-foot-long 6- and/or 12-inch water line is located along Josselyn Canyon Road (south leg of the intersection) and is proposed to be relocated to follow the proposed realigned road.

ALTERNATIVE 1 - LOCATION 2: ROUNDABOUT at Olmsted Airport Road (Post Mile 5.57):

- Single-lane Roundabout.
- 4-leg intersection.
- Crosswalks located on all legs of the roundabout.
- An 8-foot shared use path for pedestrians and bicycles on all legs of the roundabout between the bike ramps.
- Raised splitter island on all legs between through lanes.
- Relocation/reconstruction of private mailboxes, monuments, and fences as applicable.
- Olmsted Road (north leg of the intersection) includes an opening in the raised splitter island to allow for left-turn (in and out) access for northbound traffic to the driveway to Comfort Inn Monterey Peninsula Airport.
- The drainage system in the northwest quadrant of the intersection that parallels westbound State Route 68 and crosses the existing north leg of Olmsted Road would be relocated and/or modified to accommodate the roundabout footprint.
- Modifications to drainage infrastructure, including construction of new culverts and/or extension of existing culverts and installation of drain inlets in the splitter islands and curb and gutter areas to propagate the runoff into ditches and minimize the spread of runoff onto travel lanes.

- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Permanent Right-of-way acquisition from five (5) adjacent parcels has been identified. Up to 1.94 acres of permanent right-of-way is estimated to be necessary for the intersection modifications.
- Roundabout center island would be hardscaped to minimize maintenance and associated costs and temporary travel lane closures, and to facilitate worker safety. Landscaping the center islands may be considered during the final design phase.
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible, Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

Overhead utility lines:

- Approximately 1,238 linear feet of eastbound State Route 68 PG&E electric overhead lines supported by 8 poles;
- Approximately 1,107 linear feet of westbound State Route 68 AT&T overhead telecommunication lines supported by 10 poles, and approximately 1,186 linear feet of overhead telecommunication lines along northbound Olmsted Road supported by 2 poles;
- Approximately 1,792 linear feet of underground Comcast Television lines located both in the westbound direction along State Route 68 and along Olmsted Road.

Underground Lines:

- Approximately 2,642 linear feet of high-pressure gas lines ranging in size (2`-, 4-, and 6-inch diameter pipelines) located predominately adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 and southbound/northbound Olmsted Road edge of pavement; and

- Approximately 1,113 linear feet of water lines owned by the City of Monterey parallel to eastbound State Route 68; and 738 linear feet of water line parallel to Olmsted Road.

ALTERNATIVE 1 - Location 3: ROUNDABOUTS at State Route 218 (Post Mile 6.81) and Ragsdale Road Post Mile (7.08):

Location 3: State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard)/Monterra Ranch Road) (Post Mile 6.81):

- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Multi-lane Roundabout with two lanes in all directions except for a single-lane Northbound State Route 218 (Monterra Road), Southbound State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Blvd) and Westbound State Route 68, which would have a dedicated right-turn lane.
- 4-leg intersection.
- Crosswalks located on all legs of the roundabout.
- An 8-foot shared use path for pedestrians and bicycles on all legs of the roundabout between the bike ramps.
- Raised splitter island on all legs between through lanes. Dedicated right-turn lanes also have a raised splitter island between through lane and right-turn lanes.
- Relocation/reconstruction of private mailboxes, monuments, and fences as applicable.
- State Route 68 east of the roundabout would require realignment to accommodate chicanes (chicanes are features such as off-set curb extensions, bulb-outs, and raised planters incorporated into the roadway design) to slow traffic entering the roundabout).
- Realignment of State Route 68 for chicanes would result in the removal of several trees.
- On the north side of State Route 68, beginning shortly after the shared use path in the northeast quadrant of the roundabout and extending to the east a vertical landform grading cut slope of 74 feet is proposed at a 2-to-1 ratio (horizontal to vertical) slope. Landform grading was chosen in place of a tall retaining wall that would otherwise be required at this location for the roundabout design. The cut slope would start beyond an open channel trapezoidal ditch with back and forward slopes of 4-to-1 ratio.
- Retaining Wall Number 1: length of 119 feet long, height of 5 feet in the southwest quadrant from crosswalk to crosswalk. The purpose of the wall is to limit impacts to cut slope due to realignment of State Route 68.

- Retaining Wall Number 2: length of 105, height of 5 feet, in the southeast quadrant approximately from crosswalk to crosswalk. Purpose of the wall is to limit impacts to cut slope due to realignment of State Route 68.
- Modifications to drainage infrastructure include construction of new culverts and/or extension of existing culverts and installation of drain inlets in the splitter islands and curb and gutter areas to propagate the runoff into ditches and minimize the spread of runoff onto travel lanes.
- Modification or reconstruction of drainage facilities to existing riparian woodland habitat and to a streambed that runs parallel to State Route 68.
- Perpetuation of drainage ditches adjacent to southbound lanes of State Route 218 (north leg of the intersection) that connect to the regulatory floodway along southbound State Route 218.
- Relocation of City of Del Rey Oaks wall/monuments.
- Setback and reconstruction of a driveway to the City of Monterey sewer facility.
- Avoidance of the historic Tarpy's Roadhouse property on the north side of State Route 68 west of State Route 218, specifically the stone pillars and rock retaining system on the property, which are contributing elements to the property's eligible status as an historic resource protected under Section 4(f) of the federal Department of Transportation Act (49 USC 303).
- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Permanent right-of-way acquisition from 5 Assessor Parcels has been identified. As much as 2.70 acres of permanent right-of-way is estimated to be needed for the intersection modifications. A Temporary Construction Easement of about 0.38 acre from one Assessor Parcel. Permanent Slope Easements from two Assessor Parcels is estimated for up to a total of 1.61 acres.
- Roundabout center island would be hardscaped to minimize maintenance and associated maintenance costs and temporary travel lane closures, and to facilitate worker safety. Landscaping the center island may be considered during the final design phase.

Location 3: Ragsdale Drive (Post Mile 7.08):

- Single-lane Roundabout with a dedicated bypass lane for eastbound traffic. Southbound traffic would have a fully dedicated right-turn lane.
- 3-leg intersection.
- Crosswalks located on all legs of the roundabout.
- An 8-foot-wide shared use path for pedestrians and bicycles on all legs of the roundabout between the bike ramps.

- Raised splitter island on all legs between through lanes, between dedicated right-turn lane and through lane, and between bypass lane and through lane. The raised splitter on the west leg extends from the State Route 218 intersection to the Ragsdale Road intersection with no gaps.
- Relocation/reconstruction of private mailboxes, monuments, and fences as applicable.
- Retaining Wall Number 3 length of 254 feet, height of 4 to 20 feet, located in the northwest quadrant starting approximately 80 feet before the bike ramp extending to the north to approximately 20 feet beyond the crosswalk. In front of the retaining wall is a trapezoidal ditch. and at the top of the retaining wall, on the back side, there will be a concrete drainage ditch and landform grading slope of 2 to 1 until it catches original ground.
- Retaining Wall Number 4 length of 370 feet, height of 4 to 22 feet, is located in the northeast quadrant starting approximately 35 feet before the bike ramp on Ragsdale Drive to approximately 60 feet past the bike ramp on State Route 68. At the top of the retaining wall, on the back side, there will be a concrete drainage ditch.
- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Concrete Barrier Number 1: length of 100 feet on north side of State Route 68 adjacent to edge of pavement, starts at end of Retaining Wall Number 4 and extends east to Retaining Wall Number 5.
- Retaining Wall Number 5: length of 400 feet, height of 4 to 15 feet, located on the north side of State Route 68 starting at the end of Concrete Barrier Number 1 extending east. At the top of the retaining wall, on the back side, there will be a concrete drainage ditch.
- Modifications to drainage infrastructure, including construction of new culverts and/or extension of existing culverts and installation of drain inlets in the splitter islands and curb and gutter areas to propagate the runoff into ditches and minimize the spread of runoff onto travel lanes.
- Southerly gutter/ditch immediately parallel to State Route 68 would be modified to meet drainage capacity via the use of minimum forward and back slopes that would also comply with requirements for clear recovery areas. Clear Recovery zones are unobstructed traversable areas beyond the edge of the traveled way for recovery of errant vehicles. Clear zones can include road shoulder areas, bicycle lanes, auxiliary lanes, and other relatively flat areas adjacent to the highway free of obstruction hazards.
- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Permanent right-of-way acquisition from 5 Assessor Parcels is anticipated with up to 2.88 acres of permanent right-of-way needed for the intersection modifications.

- This sentence has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Slope easement of 0.58 acre west of Ragsdale Drive would be required from one parcel.
- Roundabout center island would be hardscaped to minimize maintenance and associated maintenance costs and temporary travel lane closures, and to facilitate worker safety. Landscaping the center island may be considered during the final design phase.

Location 3 (State Route 218 and Ragsdale Ranch Road intersections at State Route 68) - Utilities:

- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

Overhead utility lines:

- Approximately 3,387 linear feet of PG&E electric overhead lines supported by 11 poles along eastbound State Route 68, and 657 linear feet of electrical lines along State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive.

Underground Lines:

- Approximately 1,465 linear feet of westbound and eastbound State Route 68 AT&T underground telecommunication lines on both the eastbound and westbound sides of State Route 68; approximately 536 linear feet of telecommunication line along State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard/Monterra Road), and approximately 965 linear feet along Ragsdale Drive;
- Approximately 3,099 linear feet of natural gas lines ranging in size (2-, 4-, and 6-inch-diameter pipelines) mostly adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 edge of pavement; Approximately 1,306 linear feet of natural gas lines mostly adjacent to the northbound State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard/Monterra Road) edge of pavement;

- Approximately 1,127 linear feet of water line operated by the California American Water Company that runs parallel to westbound State Route 68, and 427 linear feet of water line that runs parallel to State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard/Monterra Road), and
- This text has been updated since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 2,672 linear feet of sewer line owned by the city of Monterey mostly parallel to westbound State Route 68, along with 410 linear feet of sewer line that runs parallel to northbound State Route 218 (Canyon del Rey Boulevard)/Monterra Road), and 270 linear feet of sewer line that runs parallel to northbound Ragsdale Road.

ALTERNATIVE 1 - Location 4: ROUNDABOUT at York Road (Post Mile 8.15):

- Single-lane Roundabout, with a dedicated right-turn lane for southbound traffic.
- 3-leg intersection.
- Crosswalks located on all legs of the roundabout.
- An 8-foot-wide shared use path for pedestrians and bicycles on all legs of the roundabout between the bike ramps.
- Raised splitter island on all legs between through lanes, and between dedicated right-turn lane and through lane.
- Relocation and/or reconstruction of private mailboxes, monuments, and fences as applicable.
- The roundabout widening would require several trees to be removed.
- Modifications to drainage infrastructure, including construction of new culverts and/or extension of existing culverts and installation of drain inlets in the splitter islands and curb and gutter areas to propagate the runoff into ditches and minimize the spread of runoff onto travel lanes.
- Permanent right-of-way acquisition from five (5) Assessor Parcels with an estimated total of 1.14 acres needed for the intersection modifications. Temporary Construction Easements would be required from four (4) Assessor Parcels for up to 1.24 acres combined.
- Roundabout center island would be hardscaped to minimize maintenance and associated maintenance costs and temporary travel lane closures, and to facilitate worker safety. Landscaping the center island may be considered during the final design phase.
- Wildlife Crossing (Site 1): A natural drainage channel (ditch) that flows from south to north under State Route 68 via an existing 4-foot by 6-foot reinforced concrete box would be realigned to the west and would use a larger precast reinforced concrete box (8-foot by 8-foot by about 83 feet at

Post Mile 8.13) with bottom of box filled with native material that would serve as a wildlife crossing (Site 1). The realignment of the drainage ditch would require construction of two temporary access roads, one on the north side and one on the south side of State Route 68.

- An existing reinforced concrete box for the regulated floodway/creek located about 260 feet north of State Route 68 and that crosses under York Road would be lengthened approximately 10 feet to the west and 8.5 feet to the east to accommodate the widening for the roundabout.
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

Overhead Utility Lines:

- Approximately 793 linear feet of eastbound State Route 68 PG&E electric overhead lines supported by 6 poles would be relocated subsurface.
- Approximately 380 linear feet of westbound State Route 68 AT&T overhead telecommunication lines supported by one pole will need to be relocated subsurface.
- Approximately 216 linear feet of Comcast TV overhead lines along westbound State Route 68 supported by 2 poles that would require relocation underground.

Underground Lines:

- Approximately 1,300 linear feet of natural gas distribution lines (6-inch diameter pipelines) located mostly adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 edge of pavement.
- Approximately 665 linear feet of PG&E electric underground lines crossing through or in the proximity of the intersection/roundabout.

- This sentence has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 380 linear feet of AT&T underground telecommunication lines along eastbound State Route 68 and 138 feet of underground telecommunication lines parallel to York Road will need to be relocated.
- Approximately 355 linear feet of Comcast TV underground lines are located in the vicinity of the intersection/roundabout and would need to be relocated.

ALTERNATIVE 1 - Location 5: ROUNDABOUT at Pasadera Drive-Boots Road (Post Mile 9.78):

- Single-lane Roundabout.
- 4-leg intersection.
- Crosswalks located on all legs of the roundabout.
- An 8-foot-wide shared use path for pedestrians and bicycles on all legs of the roundabout between the bike ramps.
- Raised splitter island on all legs between through lanes.
- Relocation and/or reconstruction of private mailboxes, monuments, and fences as applicable.
- The roundabout widening would require several trees to be removed.
- Modification or construction of new drainage systems in immediate vicinity of roundabout to convey runoff from the south side to the north side and into the regulated floodway/creek.
- Retaining Wall Number 1: length of 88 feet and height of 4 to 6 feet, to be located in the southwest quadrant starting approximately at the crosswalk and extending to the south. Purpose of the wall is to limit impacts to the slope and drainage facility.
- Permanent right-of-way acquisition from six (6) Assessor Parcels with a total of up to 1.01 acres of property acquisition for the intersection modifications.
- Temporary Construction Easements would be necessary from three (3) Assessor Parcels for a total of up to 0.11 acre.
- This sentence has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Permanent Drainage Easements totaling up to 1.42 acres from six (6) Assessor Parcels would be necessary for long-term maintenance of the drainage system by the State.
- Roundabout center island would be hardscaped to minimize maintenance and associated maintenance costs and temporary travel lane closures,

and to facilitate worker safety. Landscaping the center island may be considered during the final design phase.

- Wildlife Crossing (Site 2): Construction of a 12-foot by 11-foot by 88-foot reinforced concrete box at Post Mile 9.52, approximately 1,900 feet west of the intersection. The bottom of box would be filled with native soil material to serve as a Wildlife Crossing (Site 2). Wildlife fencing would also be included to direct wildlife to the reinforced concrete box.
- Wildlife Crossing (Site 3): Construction of an 8-foot by 8-foot by 125 foot reinforced concrete box at Post Mile 9.68, approximately 450 feet west of the intersection. The bottom of box would be filled with native material to serve as a Wildlife Crossing (Site 3). Wildlife fencing would also be included to direct wildlife to the reinforced concrete box.
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

Overhead Utility Lines:

- Approximately 1,343 linear feet of eastbound State Route 68 PG&E electric overhead lines supported by 11 poles would need to be relocated to underground.
- Approximately 450 linear feet of Comcast TV overhead lines would need to the relocated to subsurface conditions.

Underground Lines:

- Approximately 523 linear feet of PG&E electric underground lines crossing through or in the proximity of the intersection/roundabout and northbound Pasadera Drive would need to be relocated.
- Approximately 1,854 linear feet of natural gas distribution lines (2-, 4-, and 6-inch-diameter pipelines) located mostly adjacent to the eastbound State

Route 68 and northbound Pasadera Drive edge of pavement would be relocated.

- Approximately 1,170 linear feet of westbound State Route 68 AT&T underground telecommunication lines and 450 feet of lines eastbound State Route 68 would be relocated. Approximately 607 linear feet of telecommunication lines crossing State Route 68 would also need to be relocated.
- Approximately 160 linear feet of Comcast TV underground lines are located in the vicinity of the intersection/roundabout and would need to be relocated.

The following heading has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

ALTERNATIVE 1 - Location 6: HYBRID ROUNDABOUT at Laureles Grade (Post Mile 11.22):

- This statement has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Hybrid (2- by 1-lane) Roundabout, with a dedicated right-turn lane for northbound traffic.
- 3-leg intersection.
- Crosswalks located on all legs of the roundabout.
- An 8-foot-wide shared use path for pedestrians and bicycles on all legs of the roundabout between the bike ramps.
- Raised splitter island on all legs between through lanes, and between dedicated right-turn lane and through lane.
- Relocation and/or reconstruction of private mailboxes, monuments, and fences as applicable.
- The roundabout widening would require several trees to be removed.
- Modifications to drainage infrastructure, including construction of new culverts and/or extension of existing culverts and installation of drain inlets in the splitter islands and curb and gutter areas to propagate the runoff into ditches and minimize the spread of runoff onto travel lanes. Drainage ditches along westbound State Route 68 and southbound Laureles Grade would be realigned to propagate and convey runoff.
- Driveway access to Seca Plaza east of the Laureles Grade intersection would be modified to be a right-in-access-only; traffic leaving from Seca Plaza could turn left or right.
- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Retaining Wall Number 1 length of 105 feet, height of 4 feet to 10 feet, is located in the northeast quadrant starting approximately 278 feet east of the intersection

and extending eastward. The purpose of this wall is to limit impacts to the slope and private road.

- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Permanent right-of-way acquisition is estimated to be necessary from three (3) Assessor Parcels, with a combined total acquisition of up to 2.46 acres for the intersection modifications. Temporary Construction Easements from two (2) Assessor Parcels has been identified with an estimated 0.16 acre combined.
- Roundabout center island would be hardscaped to minimize maintenance and associated maintenance costs and temporary travel lane closures, and to facilitate worker safety. Landscaping the center island may be considered during the final design phase.
- Two Zero Emissions Vehicle charging station systems would be installed at the Park and Ride Lot operated by the County of Monterey on the east side of Laureles Grade. The charging stations would be a Level 2, solar-powered facility, and would provide charging capability for two vehicles to charge simultaneously. The existing lot has a total of 20 parking stalls, one of which is for handicapped parking. The lot is bisected by a residential driveway and the charging station systems would be placed in the portion of the lot south of the driveway. Up to three parking spaces would be removed to install the two charging station systems. The remainder of the southern portion of the lot would be restriped for 8 parking stalls (to current design standards). The southern portion of the lot currently has 13 parking stalls. The charging station systems and restriped stalls would reduce the spaces in the park and ride lot by 5 parking spaces, leaving a total of 15 parking stalls, including one handicapped. As proposed, the charging station equipment and lot modifications would be constructed and installed by Caltrans through an encroachment permit from the County of Monterey. The costs for the station would be sponsored by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and the County would maintain the facilities. No right-of-way acquisitions would be required.
- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Wildlife Crossing (Site 4) would consist of an 8-foot by 8-foot by 170-foot reinforced concrete box (RCB) at Post Mile 11.16, located approximately 320 feet west of the intersection. The bottom of box would be filled with native material to serve as a wildlife crossing.
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project

improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

Overhead Utility Lines:

- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 985 linear feet of eastbound State Route 68 PG&E electric overhead lines supported by 4 poles would be relocated subsurface.
- This paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 1,621 linear feet of westbound State Route 68 AT&T overhead telecommunication lines supported by 9 poles would be relocated subsurface.
- Approximately 520 linear feet of southbound Laureles Grade AT&T overhead telecommunication lines supported by 4 poles would be relocated subsurface.

Underground Lines:

- The following sentence has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 1,277 linear feet of gas lines (6-inch-diameter pipelines) and located mostly adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 and southbound Laureles Grade edge of pavement would be relocated.
- The following sentence has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 414 linear feet of southbound Laureles Grade AT&T underground telecommunication lines would need to be relocated.

The following heading has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

ALTERNATIVE 1 - Location 7: HYBRID ROUNDABOUTS at Corral De Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive (Post Mile 12.95) and San Benancio Road Post Mile (13.33):

Location 7: Corral De Tierra Road (Post Mile 12.95):

- This text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Hybrid (2- by 1-lane) Roundabout.
- 4-leg intersection.
- Crosswalks located on all legs of the roundabout.
- An 8-foot-wide shared use path for pedestrians and bicycles on all legs of the roundabout between the bike ramps.
- Raised splitter island on all legs between through lanes.
- Relocation and/or reconstruction of private mailboxes, monuments, and fences as applicable.
- Modifications to drainage infrastructure, including construction of new culverts and/or extension of existing culverts and installation of drain inlets in the splitter islands and curb and gutter areas to propagate the runoff into ditches and minimize the spread of runoff onto travel lanes.
- The following sentence has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. In the northwest quadrant, a 4-to-1 ratio (horizontal to vertical) fill embankment extending east from the proposed bike ramp to limit impacts to the adjacent slope and sensitive resources.
- Driveway access to Corral Market and Deli and Highway 68 Flowers and Pet Food on State Route 68 (West leg) would be modified, the eastern driveway would be removed, and the western driveway would be right-in/right-out-only access. Driveway access to the same facilities from Corral De Tierra Road (south leg of the intersection) would have full access. Any additional circulation improvements on the property would be the responsibility of private parties, which would be coordinated through Caltrans' Right of Way process during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project.
- The following paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The parcel on the immediate southeast corner would have access via the southern-most driveway from Corral De Tierra Road (south leg). Preliminary design of the roundabout currently allows for left-turn access from southbound Corral de Tierra Road to the southeast corner parcel. However, this access may be removed in the future pending County development review and conditions of approval for a proposed fueling station on this property.

- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Permanent right-of-way acquisition from five (5) Assessor Parcels with a combined total of up to 1.20 acres would be needed for the intersection modifications.
- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Temporary Construction Easements from one Assessor Parcel of up to 0.12 acre.
- Roundabout center island would be hardscaped to minimize maintenance and associated maintenance costs and temporary travel lane closures, and to facilitate worker safety. Landscaping the center island may be considered during the final design phase.
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

Overhead Utility Lines:

- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 1,270 linear feet of eastbound State Route 68 PG&E electric overhead lines supported by 4 poles would need to be relocated to subsurface.

Underground Lines:

- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 1,306 linear feet of natural gas distribution lines (6-inch-diameter pipelines) located mostly adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 and northbound/southbound Corral De Tierra Road edge of pavement with crossings at the east Cypress Church Drive would be relocated.
- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately

1,391 linear feet of AT&T underground telecommunication lines along westbound State Route 68 and northbound Corral De Tierra Road would need to be relocated.

- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 1,348 linear feet of Comcast TV underground lines along westbound State Route 68 and northbound Corral De Tierra Road underground lines would be relocated.

Location 7: San Benancio Road PM (13.33):

- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Hybrid (2- by 1-lane) Roundabout.
- 3-leg intersection.
- Crosswalks located on all legs of the roundabout.
- An 8-foot-wide shared use path for pedestrians and bicycles on all legs of the roundabout between the bike ramps
- Raised splitter island on all legs between through lanes.
- Relocation and/or reconstruction of private mailboxes, monuments, and fences as applicable.
- Modifications to drainage infrastructure, including construction of new culverts and/or extension of existing culverts and installation of drain inlets in the splitter islands and curb and gutter areas to propagate the runoff into ditches and minimize the spread of runoff onto travel lanes.
- The existing frontage road access at the north leg of the intersection would be moved to the east approximately 200 feet and would have left-turn access from State Route 68 onto San Benancio Road (east leg). Access from San Benancio Road onto State Route 68 would be changed to allow right-out-only for exiting traffic. Realignment of the frontage road would also be required resulting from the widening for the roundabout.
- The following paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Retaining Wall Number 1 with a length of 280 feet and height ranging from 4 to 18 feet would be located in the northwest quadrant starting approximately at the proposed bike ramp and extending east to midway around the roundabout. A concrete barrier atop the wall would serve to protect frontage road traffic from the 18-foot vertical drop in elevation. The modification to hybrid roundabout requires the addition of Retaining Wall Number 2, which would have a length of 132 feet and height ranging from 4 feet to 22 feet, located east of the proposed private driveway to limit impacts to the cut slope and the private frontage road.

- The north end of the San Benancio Road (Toro Creek) Bridge (#44C0117) and northern approach slab would require widening to accommodate the roundabout and shared use path geometrics. The proposed approach slab and bridge widening would require new wing wall/retaining walls to protect the slopes of Toro Creek. The proposed bridge widening would also include adding sidewalk within the current structure width from the southern end of the structure widening to the southern end of the bridge.
- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Permanent right-of-way acquisition from eight (8) Assessor Parcels with a combined total of up to 0.84 acre is estimated to be needed for the intersection modifications.
- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Temporary Construction Easements (TCEs) from nine (9) Assessor Parcels are anticipated with a combined total of up to 1.61 acres.
- The following text has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Subsurface easements would be required from three Assessor's Parcels for a combined total of 0.07 acre.
- Roundabout center island would be hardscaped to minimize maintenance and associated maintenance costs and temporary travel lane closures, and to facilitate worker safety. Landscaping the center island may be considered during the final design phase.
- The following paragraph has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Wildlife Crossing (Site 5); Construction of a 7-foot by 7-foot by 100-foot reinforced concrete box at Post Mile 13.18, approximately 740 feet west of the intersection. The bottom of box would be filled with native material to serve as a Wildlife Crossing. Wildlife fencing would also be included to direct wildlife to the reinforced concrete box.
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

Overhead Utility Lines:

- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 179 linear feet of Comcast TV overhead lines along westbound State Route 68, and 1,260 feet of lines along eastbound State Route 68 supported by four poles would require relocation to subsurface.
- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 156 linear feet of Comcast TV overhead lines cross State Route 68 east of the intersection and would require relocation to subsurface for the proposed roundabout.
- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 1,690 linear feet of PG&E electric overhead lines supported by six (6) poles along eastbound State Route 68 would be relocated to subsurface.

Underground Lines:

- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 2,874 linear feet of natural gas distribution lines (6-inch-diameter pipelines) located mostly adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 edge of pavement would be relocated.
- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Approximately 1,391 linear feet of AT&T underground telecommunication lines from the vicinity of the intersection/roundabout northwest to the frontage road would be relocated.

ALTERNATIVE 2 – SIGNALIZATION AND LANE CHANNELIZATION

ALTERNATIVE 2 - LOCATION 1: Signalization and Lane Improvements from west of Josselyn Canyon Road (Post Mile 4.8) to east of Olmsted Airport Road (Post Mile 5.9)

Proposed Josselyn Canyon Road/ State Route 68 3-legged Signalized Intersection Improvements

- Eastbound State Route 68 would be widened to the south for the addition of 12-foot-wide by 500-foot combination through/right-turn lane at the

eastbound State Route 68/Josselyn Canyon Road approach leg, preceded by a 250-foot-long standard lane widening taper.

- The eastbound State Route 68 through lane would continue for approximately 2,000 feet east of Josselyn Canyon Road to the State Route 68/Olmsted Road eastbound approach. Due to the close spacing of these intersections, the recommended through lane and standard lane taper lengths required could not be accommodated. Therefore, a continuous through lane would be constructed to Olmsted Road.
- Standard 8-foot-wide eastbound State Route 68 shoulders would be constructed throughout the improvements.
- Westbound State Route 68 on the departure side of the intersection to Josselyn Canyon Road would be widened to the north to add a 12-foot by 1,220-foot westbound auxiliary through lane just west of Josselyn and would taper in 720 feet to conform to existing westbound State Route 68.
- For the westbound State Route 68/Josselyn approach leg, the existing 200-foot left-turn lane would be extended by 300 feet and striped accordingly. Due to the short distance between intersections and the numerous driveways, the 12-foot-wide median to Olmsted Road would be extended and would function as a two-way left-turn lane between the proposed dedicated left-turn lanes at the Josselyn westbound approach and the Olmsted eastbound approach. This two-way left-turn lane would facilitate the southerly driveway access needs.
- Josselyn Canyon Road would be realigned to improve the angle of intersection to be greater than 75 degrees to improve the corner sight distance and the ability of motorists to judge the speed and distance of approaching traffic.
- Northbound Josselyn Canyon Road would be widened to accommodate a 125-foot-long dedicated left-turn lane and right-turn lane.
- The realignment and widening of Josselyn Canyon Road would require a 4-foot to 12-foot maximum height by 100-foot-long retaining wall along the northbound direction to minimize impacts to the adjacent cut slope that is heavily vegetated with Monterey pine trees.
- The traffic signal system equipment would be replaced with adaptive signal control technology that adjusts the timing of the red, yellow, and green light cycle times to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve traffic movement through the intersection.
- The roadway improvements would address the clear recovery requirement of 20 feet from edge of traveled way along the eastbound direction and the construction of a 4-to-1 (horizontal to vertical) embankment slope.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb ramps would be installed at all intersection crosswalks. Crosswalks would be restriped.

- Existing drainage culverts would be extended to daylight to the reconstructed ditches as applicable.

Proposed Olmsted Airport Road/State Route 68 4-legged Signalized Intersection Improvements

- Eastbound State Route 68 would be widened on the south side for the addition of a 12-foot-wide by 745-foot two-way left-turn lane, to be located between the westbound State Route 68 Josselyn left-turn lane approach and eastbound State Route 68/Olmsted Road left-turn lane approach and for the addition of a 12-foot-wide by 2,000-foot-long continuous through lane. The eastbound State Route 68 outer through lane at the Olmsted Road approach would also serve as a right-turn lane to southbound Olmsted Road.
- The existing 300-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 left-turn lane would be extended by 275 feet.
- The existing 355-foot-long westbound State Route 68 left-turn lane would be extended by 230 feet.
- A 990-foot-long westbound State Route 68 auxiliary through lane would be added and would be preceded by a 250-foot-long lane widening taper.
- The existing 175-foot-long westbound State Route 68 exclusive right-turn lane would be extended by 360 feet and realigned to accommodate a dedicated 6-foot-wide bike lane. A minimum 4-foot-wide outside shoulder would be constructed adjacent to the dedicated right-turn lane.
- Standard 8-foot-wide shoulders would be constructed on eastbound State Route 68 throughout the improvements with 4-foot-wide shoulders adjacent to dedicated right-turn lanes.
- The Olmsted Road south leg of the intersection would be modified to have a 295-foot-long dedicated left-turn lane and a combination through/right-turn lane in the northbound direction.
- The Olmsted Road north leg of the intersection would be modified to have a 330-foot-long dedicated left-turn lane and a combination through/right-turn lane in the southbound direction. The widening would require regrading of the Comfort Inn landscaped slope from State Route 68 up to Garden Road. Slope regrading areas would be about 12 feet wide by 140 feet long south and 22 feet wide by 168 feet long north of the entrance driveway. Up to 12 mature trees would be removed.

The following items are also associated with the proposed Location 1 intersection modifications:

- Acquisition of permanent right-of-way from 39 identified Assessor Parcels. As much as 6.8 acres of permanent right-of-way and 0.06 acre of slope easement, and 0.05 acre of Temporary Construction Easement.
- The following text has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Westbound State Route 68/Olmsted Road intersection modifications include Retaining Wall Number 1 that would vary in height from 4 feet to 10 feet and would be 1,013 feet long, a 500-foot-long concrete barrier with foundation system to retain a 3-foot maximum cut slope, and Retaining Wall Number 2 that would be 6 feet to 24 feet in height and 2,525 feet long.
- Existing southerly drainage ditch located parallel to State Route 68 would be realigned further south and have forward slopes of 4 to 1 (horizontal to vertical) and backslopes of 2 to 1.
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

- Approximately 5,730 linear feet of eastbound State Route 68 PG&E electric overhead lines supported by 35 poles along State Route 68 and 310 linear feet along Olmsted Road would need to be relocated to subsurface conditions.
- Approximately 7,700 linear feet of gas lines ranging in size (2-, 4-, and 6-inch-diameter pipelines) and located mostly adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 edge of pavement would need to be relocated.
- Approximately 5,415 linear feet of AT&T overhead telecommunication lines supported by 40 poles would need to be relocated subsurface. Approximately 1,130 linear feet of conduit located along the northbound direction at Olmsted Road south and north legs would need to be located through potholing during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (final Design) phase of the project to confirm horizontal and vertical locations and to confirm construction conflicts and compliance with utility policy.

- Comcast TV has approximately 860 linear feet of overhead lines supported by 8 poles that will require relocation to subsurface conditions. These overhead utilities are located both in the eastbound and westbound directions of State Route 68 and along Josselyn Canyon Road. Approximately 2,334 linear feet of Comcast Underground conduit would need to be located through potholing during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (final Design) phase of the project and relocated if in conflict with construction or if noncompliant with Department utility policies.
- The City of Monterey has approximately 4,645 linear feet of 6-inch water line that runs parallel to eastbound State Route 68 along with 3 fire hydrants that would need to be relocated due to conflicts with proposed improvements. A 500-foot-long City of Monterey storm drain system is located along northbound Josselyn and is proposed to be relocated to follow the realigned Josselyn Canyon road (south leg).
- Private driveways, fences and private mailboxes would need to be setback/relocated to accommodate the State Route 68 intersection widenings.
- Intersection signal and lighting system would be replaced and new electrical services for the proposed electrical work may require utility easements if PG&E facilities are located on privately owned property. Where possible, existing electric service enclosures would be used to avoid the need to acquire easements, to the fullest extent where possible.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb ramps would be installed at all intersection crosswalks. Crosswalks would be restriped.
- At Olmsted Road, additional electroliers (streetlights) may be necessary with the widened intersection under this design alternative. New electroliers would have a maximum height of 40 feet which may require review by the Monterey Regional Airport for design requirements pursuant to avoidance of aviation obstruction.

ALTERNATIVE 2 - LOCATION 2: Signalization and Lane Improvements from west of State Route 218/Monterra Ranch Road (Post Mile 6.45) to east of Ragsdale Drive (Post Mile 7.3)

Proposed State Route 218 (Canyon Del Rey Boulevard) – Monterra Ranch Road/ State Route 68 4-legged Signalized Intersection Improvements

During the cultural resources environmental studies, initial findings determined that impacts to historical stone pillars and a rock retaining system located within the northerly property along and adjacent to two northwest driveways immediately west of the State Route 218/State Route 68 should be avoided, as any right-of-way acquisitions that includes these resources would result in an impact, or “use” of the resource under Section 4(f) of the federal

Department of Transportation Act. To avoid these resources under Alternative 2, it was determined feasible to abandon the symmetrical widening of the intersection and instead to realign and widen State Route 68 to the south to protect these cultural resources. The realignment also eliminates the need for two retaining walls along the north side that was proposed to minimize impacts to a cut slope and to the Monterey Airport internal frontage road, just west of the second driveway to the shopping center, and a second wall that was needed to minimize right-of-way acquisition area that would impact the parking area located between the two northwest driveways. The horizontal realignment of State Route 68 occurs within the westerly limits and conforms back to existing immediately east of State Route 218/Monterra Road intersection.

- On the State Route 68/State Route 218 west leg, the existing 230-foot westbound State Route 68 auxiliary through lane would be extended to 1,310 feet in length, and would taper in 720 feet (using 60-mile-per-hour design speed) to conform to existing westbound State Route 68 existing roadbed; the existing 980-foot-long left-turn lane would be perpetuated for State Route 68 eastbound access to the Stone Creek Village Shopping Center; the existing 145-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 combination auxiliary/right-turn would be extended to 600 feet and be preceded by a 250-foot-lane widening taper.
- A 1,250-foot-long Retaining Wall Number 1 with a maximum height of 12 feet is proposed to minimize impacts to riparian woodland and the adjacent streambed.
- The State Route 68/State Route 218 east leg would maintain the two eastbound State Route 68 continuous through lanes, would extend the existing 225-foot-long westbound State Route 68 dedicated left turn to 425 feet, would maintain the westbound continuous through lanes, would extend the 6-foot-wide bicycle lane to 450 feet, extend the dedicated right turn to 450 feet, and add an additional 12-foot by 450-foot right-turn lane. This westbound direction widening would require a 4-foot-wide trapezoidal ditch with 4-to-1 (horizontal to vertical) forward and backslope followed by a 2-to-1 cut slope that extends approximately 63 feet in elevation to catch original ground.
- The eastbound State Route 68 roadbed between State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive would be resurfaced and nonstandard shoulder widths widened to the standard 8-foot width. Drainage ditches would be constructed to manage the roadway runoff and run-on from the adjacent contributing hillsides as applicable.
- Standard 8-foot-wide outside shoulders would be constructed throughout except at dedicated right-turn lanes where shoulder widths would be reduced to 4 feet, and/or widened to 10 feet if located along retaining walls in cut slope conditions or if bus stops are present.

- The Monterra Road south leg would be modified by extending the existing 50 feet northbound left-turn lane by 125 feet. This would be accomplished by modifying and paving the planted median.
- The State Route 218 north leg would be modified and widened to the east to accommodate a 235-foot-long dedicated southbound right-turn lane, a 6-foot-wide by 235- foot-long bicycle lane, a southbound through lane, southbound dual left-turn lanes that are 400 feet and greater in length, and two northbound through lanes of which the outside through lane converts to a dedicated right-turn lane at Ryan Ranch Road. Widening State Route 218 north leg to the east would minimize impacts to the regulated floodway on the west side of State Route 218 and would require construction of two retaining walls that vary in height from 4 feet to 30 feet by 225 feet long for Retaining Wall Number 2, and 4 feet to 32 feet high by 353 feet long for Retaining Wall Number 3, respectively along the easterly cut slope.
- Adaptive signal control technology would be the traffic signalization system constructed that adjusts the timing of the red, yellow, and green light cycle times to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve traffic movement through the intersection.
- The roadway improvements would address the clear recovery requirement of 20 feet from edge of traveled way along the eastbound direction and construction of a 4-to-1 embankment slope to maximum extent possible.
- Existing drainage culverts will be extended to daylight to the reconstructed ditches as applicable, and vegetated strips would be designed to treat runoff as applicable.

Proposed Ragsdale Drive/State Route 68 3-legged Signalized Intersection Improvements

- The existing 400-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 auxiliary through lane at the departure leg would be extended by 100 feet followed by a standard 720-foot lane reduction taper.
- The existing 500-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 combination auxiliary through/right-turn lane would be resurfaced and standard shoulder backing and cut and embankment slopes constructed to address clear recovery requirements.
- Standard 8-foot-wide eastbound/westbound State Route 68 shoulders would be constructed throughout the improvements, and 10-foot-wide shoulders proposed adjacent to retaining walls in cut conditions.
- At the westbound State Route 68 approach leg to Ragsdale Drive, the shoulder backing widening work would extend into a hillside and would require a short retaining structure to retain 3 feet and less of cut slope.

The following items are associated with Location 2 intersection modifications:

- Acquisition of permanent right-of-way from nine (9) identified Assessor Parcels, including up to 6.75 acres of permanent right-of-way, 0.65 acre of slope easement, and 0.07 acre of Temporary Construction Easement.
- Just west of State Route 218 one retaining wall that varies in height from 4 feet to 16 feet by 250 feet long is required to minimize impacts to the existing vegetated cut slope.
- Just west of Ragsdale Drive and along westbound State Route 68, a 175-foot-long concrete barrier with foundation system to retain a 3-foot-maximum cut slope is proposed to minimize impact to the adjacent vegetated cut slope.
- Existing southerly drainage ditch located parallel to State Route 68 would be realigned further south and have forward slopes of 4 to1 (horizontal to vertical) and back slopes of 2 to 1. Where no ditches exist, slopes would be constructed that meet clear recovery and underline slope criteria.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb ramps would be installed at all intersection crosswalks. Crosswalks would be restriped.
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

- Approximately 4,499 linear feet of PG&E eastbound electric overhead lines supported by 20 poles need to be relocated to subsurface and approximately 1,446 linear feet of subsurface conduit located along State Route 68, State Route 218 and Ragsdale Drive will need to be potholed and relocated to be out of construction conflict and/or to meet existing utility minimum vertical depths and or location policy.
- Approximately 6,698 linear feet of gas lines ranging in size (2-, 4-, and 6-inch-diameter pipelines) and located predominately adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 edge of pavement would need to be relocated.

- Approximately 2,328 linear feet of AT&T underground telecommunication conduit located along the westbound State Route 68, northbound/southbound State Route 218, and northbound Ragsdale Drive would require evaluation for potential construction conflicts to accommodate the widening work.
- Approximately 2,730 linear feet of subsurface Comcast TV conduit is located along westbound State Route 68 and northbound State Route 218. If in construction conflict or if noncompliant with Department utility policies, these utilities would need to be relocated.
- The City of Monterey has approximately 3,175 linear feet of 8-inch sewer line that runs parallel to westbound State Route 68 and northbound/southbound State Route218, may require relocation for safe access for inspections/maintenance repairs and to minimize highway operation disruptions.
- Private driveways, fences and monument walls would need to be setback and/or relocated to accommodate the State Route 68 widening work.
- Intersection signal and lighting system would be replaced and new electrical services for the proposed electrical work may require utility easements if PG&E facilities are located on privately owned property. Existing electric service enclosures would be used to avoid the need to acquire easements to the fullest extent possible.
- Additional electroliers (streetlights) may be necessary with the widened intersection under this design alternative. New electroliers would have a maximum height of 40 feet, which may require review by the Monterey Regional Airport for design requirements pursuant to avoidance of aviation obstruction.

ALTERNATIVE 2 - LOCATION 3: Signalization and Lane Improvements around York Road/State Route 68 (Post Miles 7.8 to 8.45)

Proposed York Road/State Route 68 3-legged Signalized Intersection Improvements

- The existing 415-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 left-turn lane would be extended by 125 feet.
- Eastbound State Route 68 would be widened to the south for the addition of the 12-foot-wide by 540-foot-long auxiliary through lane at the eastbound State Route 68/York Road approach, which would be preceded by a 250-foot-long standard lane widening taper.
- The eastbound State Route 68 auxiliary through lane would continue for approximately 740 feet past the State Route 68/York Road eastbound departure. A 720-foot-long lane reduction taper would follow to conform to existing eastbound State Route 68.

- Standard 8-foot-wide outside shoulders would be constructed throughout the State Route 68 widening improvements, with the exception of areas near retaining walls in cut conditions where the outside shoulder would be 10 feet wide and 4 feet wide adjacent to exclusive right-turn lanes.
- Westbound State Route 68 on the departure side to York Road would be widened to the north to add a 12-foot-wide by 1,090-foot-long westbound auxiliary through lane just west of York Road and would taper in 720 feet to conform to existing westbound State Route 68.
- At the westbound State Route 68/York Road approach leg, a 12-foot-wide by 600-foot-long auxiliary through lane would be constructed and would be preceded by a 250-foot-long widening lane taper.
- Northbound York Road would be widened to accommodate an 8-foot-wide sidewalk to Blue Larkspur Lane as requested by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Monterey City/County.
- Southbound York Road right-turn lane would be extended by 155 feet.
- Adaptive signal control technology would be the traffic signalization system constructed that adjusts the timing of the red, yellow, and green light cycle times to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve traffic movement through the intersection.
- The roadway improvements would address the clear recovery requirement of 20 feet from edge of traveled way and construction of 4-to-1 embankment slope.
- An 8-foot-wide by 8-foot-high reinforced concrete box would be installed at Post Mile 8.13 on State Route 68 to serve as a wildlife crossing (Number1) under the highway, and wildlife exclusionary fencing would be installed along the edge of the highway to guide wildlife to the undercrossing culvert and deter them from crossing the State Route 68 travel lanes.
- The existing drainage facility under York Road would be extended to accommodate the longer southbound right-turn lane and to accommodate the 8-foot-wide northbound sidewalk.

The following items are associated with Location 3 intersection modifications:

- Acquisition of up to 4.73 acres of permanent right-of-way from six (6) identified Assessor Parcels and about 1.18 acres of temporary construction easements for the intersection modifications.
- A retaining wall (Number 1) would be required immediately east of the York Road/State Route 68 intersection modifications; the wall would vary in height from 4 feet to 26 feet by 620 feet long, followed by another eastbound retaining wall Number 2 that would vary in height from 4 feet to

10 feet by 500 feet long to minimize the impact to the adjacent vegetated cut slope.

- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

- Approximately 2,530 linear feet of eastbound State Route 68 PG&E overhead lines supported by 11 poles would need to be relocated. Approximately 558 feet of underground electrical conduit would need to be potholed to find the horizontal and vertical locations of the lines for determination of potential conflicts with proposed construction areas and/or compliance with utility policy.
- Approximately 2,532 linear feet of gas lines ranging in size (2-, 4-, and 6-inch-diameter pipelines) and located mostly adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 edge of pavement would need to be relocated.
- Approximately 1,035 linear feet of AT&T overhead telecommunication lines supported by 8 poles would need to be relocated subsurface. Approximately 180 feet of telecommunication conduit located along eastbound State Route 68, 150 feet along westbound State Route 68, and 200 feet along southbound York Road would need to be located though potholing horizontally and vertically to confirm construction conflicts and relocation needs.
- Approximately 84 feet of underground Comcast TV conduit in both the eastbound and westbound directions of State Route 68 and 200 feet in the southbound direction of York Road would need potholing to confirm specific locations and to determine relocation if in conflict with construction areas and/or to confirm compliance with Department utility policies.
- A private driveway and private fences would be setback and/or relocated as needed to accommodate the State Route 68 widening work.
- Intersection signal and lighting system would be replaced and new electrical services for the proposed electrical work may require utility

easements if PG&E facilities are located on privately owned property. Existing electric service enclosures would be used to avoid the need to acquire easements, to the fullest extent where possible.

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb ramps would be installed at all intersection crosswalks. Crosswalks would be restriped.

ALTERNATIVE 2 LOCATION 4: Signalization and Lane Improvements around Pasadera Drive-Boots Road/State Route 68 (Post Miles 9.46 to 10.21)

Proposed Pasadera Drive-Boots Road/State Route 68 4-legged Signalized Intersection Improvements

- The existing 330-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 left-turn lane would be extended by 95 feet.
- The existing exclusive eastbound State Route 68 right-turn lane would be converted to a combination 500-foot-long auxiliary through lane/right-turn lane. which would be preceded by a 250-foot-long standard lane widening taper.
- The existing 590-foot-long eastbound State Route 68 auxiliary through lane would be extended by 330 feet, followed by a 720-foot-long (using 60-mile-per-hour design speed) lane reduction taper to conform to existing eastbound State Route 68.
- The westbound left-turn lane would be reduced from 450 feet to 425 feet.
- A 700-foot-long auxiliary through lane separated by a 6-foot-wide bike lane and a 425-foot-long dedicated right-turn lane preceded by a 220-foot widening lane taper on the approach.
- The westbound auxiliary through lane on the departure (west) side of State Route 68 would be extended from 550 feet to 890 feet, followed by a 720-foot-long lane reduction taper.
- Standard 8-foot-wide outside shoulders would be constructed throughout the State Route 68 widening improvements, except for the outside shoulders. which would be 10 feet at retaining wall locations in cut condition and would be 4 feet wide adjacent to exclusive right-turn lanes.
- Wildlife crossing Number 2 is proposed at Post Mile 9.52 and would consist of a 12-foot-wide by 11-foot-high precast reinforced concrete box culvert filled with 1 foot of native soil material. A 150-foot-long by 75-foot-wide northerly drainage pond would be excavated approximately 18 feet below the existing ground elevation and a smaller southerly drainage pond would be excavated for this wildlife crossing. Wildlife exclusionary fence would also be installed along the eastbound and westbound sides of State Route 68 up to Pasadera Drive to deter wildlife from crossing State Route

68 thereby reducing/eliminating collisions with the vehicular traffic and to guide wildlife toward the new culvert wildlife crossing.

- A westbound State Route 68 4- to 6-foot-high by 175-foot-long retaining wall in fill would be constructed just west of Pasadera Drive to reduce impacts to an adjacent wetland and riparian woodland.
- Wildlife crossing Number 3 is proposed at Post Mile 9.68 and would consist of an 8-foot-wide by 8-foot-high precast reinforced concrete box culvert. The northerly inlet of this reinforced concrete box crossing would be approximately 20 feet below the original ground elevation and excavated out to allow for passage of the wildlife.
- Adaptive signal control technology would be the traffic signalization system constructed that adjusts the timing of the red, yellow and green light cycle times to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve traffic movement through the intersection.
- The roadway improvements would address the clear recovery requirement of 20 feet from edge of traveled way and construction of a 4-to-1 ratio embankment slope.

The following items are associated with Location 4 intersection modifications:

- Acquisition of permanent and drainage right-of-way easements from twelve (12) identified Assessor Parcels, for a combined total of up to 3.72 acres and 1.22 acres of drainage easement area for Wildlife Crossing Number 2 drainage pond located on the Pasadera Golf and Country Club property.
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

- Approximately 3,523 linear feet of eastbound State Route 68 PG&E overhead lines supported by 21 poles would need to be relocated. Immediately west of the intersection, an underground electric conduit runs

transverse to State Route 68 and would require potholing to determine horizontal and vertical location, construction conflicts and/or compliance with utility policy.

- Approximately 3,940 linear feet of natural gas distribution lines ranging in size (2-, 4-, and 6-inch-diameter pipelines) and located mostly adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 edge of pavement would need to be relocated.
- Approximately 1,920 linear feet of AT&T overhead telecommunication lines supported by 12 poles in the westbound direction would need to be relocated subsurface. Approximately 2,010 feet of telecommunication conduit located along westbound State Route 68 would need to be located horizontally and vertically to confirm construction conflicts and relocation needs.
- Approximately 740 feet of underground Comcast TV conduit in westbound directions of State Route 68 would need potholing to determine relocation if in construction conflict or to confirm compliance with department utility policies. Approximately 960 feet of overhead TV cable lines supported on 5 poles in the westbound direction would require relocation to subsurface conditions.
- Two private driveways on the east side and private fences would be setback and/or relocated to accommodate the State Route 68 widening work.
- Intersection signal and lighting system would be replaced and new electrical services for the proposed electrical work may require utility easements if PG&E facilities are located on privately owned property. Existing electric service enclosures would be used to avoid the need to acquire easements, to the fullest extent where possible.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb ramps would be installed at all intersection crosswalks. Crosswalks would be restriped.

ALTERNATIVE 2 LOCATION 5: Signalization and Lane Improvements around Laureles Grade/State Route 68 (Post Miles 10.94 to 11.50)

Proposed Laureles Grade/State Route 68 3-legged Signalized Intersection Improvements

- A 1,450-foot-long westbound auxiliary through lane would be added that would then convert to an exclusive right-turn lane into B Road. Signage would direct through traffic to merge left into the westbound continuous through lane.
- The 20-foot-wide striped median would be reduced to 12 feet wide and taper down to no median within 720 feet to the west of Laureles Grade.

- The State Route 68 west leg intersection lane configuration would have a 500-foot-long eastbound auxiliary through lane, a 6-foot-wide by 500-foot-long bike lane and a 500-foot-long dedicated right-turn lane.
- On the State Route 68 east leg, the eastbound auxiliary through lane would continue for 798 feet followed by a 720-foot-long lane reduction taper to conform to existing eastbound State Route 68.
- The westbound dual left-turn lanes would remain at 470 feet, and a 700-foot-long westbound auxiliary through lane would be added, preceded by a 250-foot-long lane widening taper.
- Standard 8-foot-wide outside shoulders would be constructed throughout the State Route 68 widening improvements except for where adjacent to exclusive right-turn lanes; in those locations the outside shoulder would be 4 feet wide.
- The Laureles Grade south leg of the intersection would be modified to extend the 175-foot-long southbound auxiliary through lane to 290 feet followed by a 540-foot-long lane reduction taper. To avoid or minimize impacts to the existing Park and Ride lot, it was determined to provide a 425-foot-long left-turn lane, a 5-foot-wide bike lane and an exclusive right-turn lane, rather than longer left-turn and right-turn lanes as recommended in the original traffic study. Modification to this leg would be accomplished by widening Laureles Grade on the west side (southbound direction) to minimize the impacts to the developed Monterey County Regional Fire District parcel as well as the Park and Ride lot.
- Two Zero Emissions Vehicle charging station systems would be installed at the Park and Ride Lot operated by the County of Monterey on the east side of Laureles Grade. The charging stations would be a Level 2, solar-powered facility, and would provide charging capability for two vehicles to charge simultaneously. The existing lot has a total of 20 parking stalls, one of which is for handicapped parking. The lot is bisected by a residential driveway and the charging station systems would be placed in the portion of the lot south of the driveway. Up to three parking spaces would be removed to install the two charging station systems. The remainder of the southern portion of the lot would be restriped for 8 parking stalls (to current design standards). The southern portion of the lot currently has 13 parking stalls. The charging station systems and restriped stalls would reduce the spaces in the Park and Ride lot by 5 parking spaces, leaving a total of 15 parking stalls, including one handicapped. As proposed, the charging station equipment and lot modifications would be constructed and installed by Caltrans through an encroachment permit from the County of Monterey. The costs for the station would be sponsored by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, and the County would maintain the facilities. No right-of-way acquisitions would be required.

- Wildlife crossing Number 4 is proposed at Post Mile 11.16 and would consist of an 8-foot-wide by 8-foot-high precast Reinforced Concrete Box culvert filled with 2 feet of native soil material. A 1,800-foot-long northerly ditch with forward slopes of a 4-to-1 ratio and back slopes of 2-to-1 ratio and up to 12 feet deep would need to be constructed to contain the roadway runoff and to provide for functionality of the wildlife crossing. Wildlife exclusionary fence would also be installed along the eastbound and westbound sides of State Route 68 to deter wildlife from crossing State Route 68, thereby reducing/eliminating collisions with vehicular traffic.
- A retaining wall along eastbound State Route 68, 6 to 7 feet high by 350 feet long, would be constructed in fill just west of Laureles Grade to reduce impacts to an adjacent wetland and minimize impacts to the slope.
- A retaining wall along eastbound State Route 68, 4 to 14 feet high by 450 feet long, would be constructed in fill just east of Laureles Grade to minimize slope impacts.
- Adaptive signal control technology would be the traffic signalization system constructed that adjusts the timing of the red, yellow, and green light cycle times to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve traffic movement through the intersection.

The following items are associated with Location 5 intersection modifications:

- Acquisition of permanent and drainage right-of-way easements from twelve (12) identified Assessor Parcels for a combined total of up to 7.52 acres of permanent right-of-way.
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

- Approximately 3,460 linear feet of eastbound State Route 68 PG&E overhead lines supported by 18 poles would need to be relocated.

- Approximately 3,460 linear feet of gas lines ranging in size (2-, 4-, and 6-inch-diameter pipelines) and located mostly adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 edge of pavement would need to be relocated.
- Approximately 2,500 linear feet of AT&T overhead telecommunication lines supported by 20 poles in the westbound direction, and 920 feet of lines along southbound Laureles Grade would need to be relocated subsurface.
- Approximately 710 feet of telecommunication conduit located along eastbound and westbound State Route 68 would need to be located through potholing horizontally and vertically to confirm and potential conflicts with construction areas and relocation needs.
- All local roads and driveways connecting to State Route 68 and private fences would be setback and/or relocated to accommodate the State Route 68 widening work.
- Intersection signal and lighting system would be replaced and new electrical services for the proposed electrical work may require utility easements if PG&E facilities are located on privately owned property. Existing electric service enclosures would be used to avoid the need to acquire easements, to the fullest extent where possible.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb ramps would be installed at all intersection crosswalks. Crosswalks would be restriped.

ALTERNATIVE 2 LOCATION 6: Signalization and Lane Improvements from west of Corral De Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive to east of San Benancio Road (Post Miles 12.55 to 13.7)

Proposed Corral De Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive/State Route 68 4-legged Signalized Intersection Improvements

- To best accommodate the curved geometry at this intersection, the following lane configurations are proposed: a 1,070-foot-long westbound auxiliary through lane, followed by a 720-foot-long lane reduction taper, a 460-foot-long left-turn lane, and an 850-foot-long eastbound combination auxiliary through and right-turn lane. The existing dedicated right-turn lane would be removed due to low turning traffic volumes (existing and forecast volumes) and to minimize impacts to the existing adjacent gas station parcel operations. The two driveways immediately west of the Corral De Tierra Road intersection on the south side of State Route 68 would be restricted to right-in/right-out movements for purposes of traffic operations and safety.
- Standard 8-foot-wide outside shoulders would be constructed throughout the intersection, and shoulders would be widened to 10 feet along retaining walls in cut slope conditions.

- Due to the immediate north and south driveways located just east of Corral De Tierra and the need to provide a continuous left-turn lane, the westbound left-turn lane would be extended to 310 feet and not 585 feet as recommended.
- The westbound State Route 68 departure widening would require the construction of Retaining Wall Number 2, a 12-foot-high by 700-foot-long retaining wall in fill condition to limit the impacts to the northerly riparian woodland and the streambed that runs parallel just west of Corral De Tierra Road.
- The eastbound State Route 68 approach widening modifications would require the construction of a Retaining Wall Number 1 to the west of this intersection to limit the impacts to a 60-foot and higher cut slope. The retaining wall would be approximately 640 feet in length and have a varying height of 4 to 12 feet.
- The Corral De Tierra Road south leg of the intersection would be realigned to have a skew angle greater than the existing 65-degree angle connection to State Route 68. The lane assignments would include a 405-foot-long dedicated northbound left-turn lane and a northbound combination through/right-turn lane with a single southbound continuous through lane.
- The Cypress Church Drive north leg of the intersection would be realigned to match the Corral de Tierra Road vehicle travel lane configurations. The lane assignments would be modified to include a southbound combination right/through lane, an exclusive 75-foot-long southbound left-turn lane, and a northbound continuous through lane.
- Wildlife Crossing Number 5 is proposed at Post Mile 13.18 and would include a 7-foot-high by 7-foot-wide precast reinforced concrete box filled with 1 foot of native soil material.
- Retaining Wall Number 3 on the north side and just east of the wildlife crossing Number 5 is proposed to limit impacts to a 30-foot-high cut slope. The wall would be approximately 230 feet long and vary in height from 4 to16 feet. Retaining Wall Number 4 in cut condition is proposed approximately 145 feet east of wall Number 3. Retaining Wall Number 4 would be approximately 255 feet long and vary in height from 4 feet to 16 feet to limit impacts to the heavily vegetated hillside. Retaining Wall Number 5 is proposed in fill material on the southside and just west of San Benancio Road. Retaining Wall Number 5 is proposed to limit impacts to riparian woodland and Toro Creek streambed and would be approximately 100 feet long by 14 feet high.
- Adaptive signal control technology would be the traffic signalization system constructed that adjusts the timing of the red, yellow, and green light cycle times to accommodate changing traffic patterns and improve traffic movement through the intersection.

- The roadway improvements would address the clear recovery requirement of 20 feet from edge of traveled way along the eastbound direction and construction of 4-to-1 ratio embankment slope to maximum extent possible.
- Existing drainage culverts would be extended to daylight to the reconstructed ditches as applicable, and vegetated strips would be designed to treat runoff as applicable.

Proposed San Benancio Road/State Route 68 4-legged Signalized Intersection Improvements

- The State Route 68 west leg of the intersection would include two continuous State Route 68 westbound through lanes, and a 425-foot-long left-turn lane. Two continuous State Route 68 eastbound through lanes would extend from Corral De Tierra Road to San Benancio Road eastbound approach, with a 425-foot-long and 6-foot-wide bike lane and dedicated right-turn lane.
- The State Route 68 east leg consists of a 1,430-foot-long eastbound auxiliary through lane followed by a 720-foot-long lane reduction taper, a continuous eastbound through lane, a 535-foot-long westbound left-turn lane, a continuous westbound through lane, and a 1,155-foot-long westbound combination auxiliary through/right-turn lane preceded by a 250-foot-long lane taper. The auxiliary lane would be extended to widen the bridge for two lanes in each direction of travel.
- The lane configurations on the San Benancio Road south leg of the intersection are proposed to be restriped such that the 250-foot-long northbound combination left/through lane would become an exclusive left-turn lane, and the exclusive right-turn lane would become a northbound combination through/right-turn lane.
- The lane configurations on the San Benancio Road south leg of the intersection are proposed to be restriped such that the 250-foot-long northbound combination left/through lane would become an exclusive left-turn lane, and the exclusive right-turn lane would become a northbound combination through/right-turn lane.
- Standard 8-foot-wide eastbound/westbound shoulders along State Route 68 would be constructed throughout the intersection improvements except for 10-foot-wide shoulders proposed adjacent to retaining walls in cut conditions.
- Retaining Wall Number 6 is proposed immediately to the east of the intersection to limit impacts to the northerly vegetated cut slope that extends 20 feet and higher. The wall would be approximately 250 feet long and vary in height from 4 feet to 10 feet.
- The existing State Route 68 bridge over El Toro Creek would be widened to accommodate two lanes of travel in each direction along with a tapered

striped median that forms the westbound left-turn lane at the State Route 68 east leg. The existing bridge structure has two columns in the streambed. The widening would require the addition of four new columns for a total of six columns.

- Retaining Wall Number 7 is proposed along eastbound 68 just east of the intersection and would connect to the widened State Route 68 Toro Creek bridge. The retaining wall would minimize impacts to the riparian woodland and Toro Creek streambed. The wall would be approximately 460 feet long and vary in height from 4 feet to 12 feet. Retaining Wall Number 8 would limit impacts at the southeasterly end of the bridge to limit impacts to riparian woodland. The wall would be 225 feet long and vary in height from 4 feet to 14 feet.

The following items are also associated with Location 6 intersection modifications:

- Acquisition of permanent right-of-way from twenty (20) identified Assessor Parcels for 0.24 acre of temporary construction easement area.
- Drainage ditches between the Corral De Tierra/State Route 68 intersection to wildlife crossing Number 5 on the northside and southside are proposed to handle roadway runoff. The ditches would have forward and back slopes of 4-to-1 ratio (horizontal to vertical).
- Utility lines in conflict with the proposed highway intersection improvements would be relocated. Existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electric, Comcast Television) would be required to be undergrounded (subsurface) in accordance with Scenic Highway regulations as State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway in the project limits. Existing underground lines including natural gas and water lines in conflict with project improvements would also require relocation. Relocated underground lines would be installed as close to the State Highway right-of-way as feasible. Potholing would be conducted in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project to confirm the specific locations of existing subsurface utilities to confirm relocation needs in conjunction with discussions with the utility owner(s).

The following utility line relocations are anticipated during construction at this intersection based on preliminary design:

- Approximately 6,025 linear feet of PG&E eastbound electric overhead lines supported by 27 poles would be relocated subsurface.
- Approximately 9,308 linear feet of natural gas distribution lines ranging in size (2-, 4-, and 6-inch-diameter pipelines), both abandoned and active, are located predominately adjacent to the eastbound State Route 68 edge of pavement;

all active lines in conflict with project construction areas would need to be relocated.

- Approximately 756 linear feet of AT&T overhead telecommunication lines located in the northbound (westbound direction) supported on five (5) poles would need to be relocated to subsurface conditions.
- Approximately 4,749 feet of underground telecommunication conduit located along the westbound State Route 68, northbound Corral De Tierra Road, and northbound San Benancio Road would require positive location through potholing and evaluation for potential construction conflicts to accommodate the widening work.
- Approximately 3,365 linear feet of Comcast TV cable television overhead lines supported on 19 poles would need to be relocated subsurface.
- Approximately 880 feet of Comcast TV underground conduit located along northbound Corral De Tierra Road and along westbound State Route 68 would require positive location through potholing for determination of any conflicts with project construction areas, or as needed for compliance with department utility policies. If noncompliant, these utilities would require relocation.
- A California Utility sewer line crosses State Route 68 just east of Corral De Tierra Road and would need to be positively located to determine any conflicts with the widening work and for compliance with Department policy.
- Private driveways and fences would be setback and/or relocated to accommodate the State Route 68 widening work.
- Intersection signal and lighting system will be replaced and new electrical services for the proposed electrical work may require utility easements if PG&E facilities are located on privately owned property. Existing electric service enclosures would be used to avoid the need to acquire easements, to the fullest extent where possible.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb ramps would be installed at all intersection crosswalks. Crosswalks would be restriped.

Appendix J Proposed Right-of-Way Acquisitions

Information in this appendix has been amended since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

The following tables provide estimated right-of-way needs for the proposed improvements at the project intersections for the Build Alternatives. Permanent partial property acquisitions and temporary construction easements are estimated based on the preliminary design plans.

Alternative 1 - Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisitions at State Route 68/Josselyn Canyon Road to State Route 68/Olmsted Road

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Permanent Slope Easement in Acres/Square Feet
013-312-004 Northwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Standard Insurance Company	0.42/18,438	None	None
013-312-006 Northeast of Josselyn Canyon Road	Tonkin, H James, Sheryll E	0.28/12,236	None	None
013-271-002 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Monterey Peninsula Church of the Nazarene	0.31/13,504	None	None
101-241-051 Southeast of Josselyn Canyon Road	Monterey Woods Owners Assoc Inc.	0.02/871	None	None
101-241-051 Southeast of Josselyn Canyon Road	Monterey Woods Owners Assoc Inc.	0.02/871	None	0.18/7,841
101-231-013 Southeast of Josselyn Canyon Road	Mast, Michael L, Tammy G	0.11/4,872	None	None
101-231-016 Southeast of Josselyn Canyon Road	Hettler, Danielle Lynn	0.06/2,848	None	None

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Permanent Slope Easement in Acres/Square Feet
013-322-007 North and West of Olmsted Road	Monterey by the Sea Hospitality	0.22/9,563	None	None
013-221-020 Northeast of Olmsted Road	Monterey Peninsula Airport	1.09/47,493	None	None
101-231-005 Southwest of Olmsted Road	City of Monterey and County of Monterey	0.21/9,181	None	None
259-011-064 Southwest of Olmsted Road	Tescher, Christopher TR	0.11/4,597	None	None
259-011-027 Southeast of Olmsted Road	Knight, Christopher S	0.32/13,745	None	None
Totals	11 Parcels	3.17/138,085	None	0.18/7,841

Alternative 2 – Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisitions (State Route 68 and Josselyn Canyon Road to State Route 68 and Olmsted Road)

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Permanent Slope Easement in Acres/Square Feet
013-312-007 Northwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Garden Road Invest LLC	0.05/2,083.0	None	None
013-312-008 Northwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Slama, Jannette, L Keith	0.16/7,036.9	None	None
013-312-009 Northwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Professional Office Enterprises LLC	0.13/5,806.0	None	None
013-312-010 Northwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Hauswirth, Robert A, Sharon A	0.11/4,905.1	None	None

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Permanent Slope Easement in Acres/Square Feet
013-312-015 Northwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Sunrise Square LLC	0.28/12,043.1	None	None
013-312-004 Northwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Standard Insurance Company	0.37/16,096.3	None	None
013-312-006 Northeast of Josselyn Canyon Road	Tonkin, H James, Sheryll E	0.36/15,657.30	None	None
013-351-004 Northeast of Josselyn Canyon Road	City of Monterey	0.28/12,099.3	None	None
101-201-030 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Wedlake, Joseph F, Brainerd, Roberta	0.05/2,221.3	None	None
101-201-004 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Tegerdal, Benny Arne, Rebecca	0.02/840.3	None	None
101-201-017 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Rust, Gary L, Susan T	0.04/1,533.7	None	None
101-201-032 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Miller, Caroline J, Ivan William	0.04/1,598.5	None	None
101-211-034 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Leung, Georgine C, Sewald, John V	0.05/2,177.0	None	None
101-211-009 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Sanborn, Branham J, Erica C	0.03/1,442.3	None	None
101-211-033 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Sanborn Branham J, Erica C	0.02/960.8	None	None

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Permanent Slope Easement in Acres/Square Feet
101-211-017 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	De Lap, William F	0.02/695.7	None	None
101-211-018 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Wood, Rowena J	0.01/617.9	None	None
101-221-011 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Pebble Beach Company	0.00/184.8	None	None
101-221-014 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Nieto, Daryl James	0.05/2,130.8	None	None
101-221-001 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Nieto, Daryl James	0.11/4,721.8	None	None
013-271-002 Southwest of Josselyn Canyon Road	Monterey Peninsula Church of the Nazarene	0.82/3,775.5	None	None
101-241-051 Southeast of Josselyn Canyon Road	Monterey Woods Owners Assoc Inc.	0.08/3,585.7	None	0.06/2,510.6
101-231-013 Southeast of Josselyn Canyon Road	Mast, Michael L, Tammy G	0.16/7,102.1	None	None
101-231-016 Southeast of Josselyn Canyon Road	Hettler, Danielle Lynn	0.19/8,286.9	None	None
101-231-001 Southeast of Josselyn Canyon Road	Beck, Ryan Daniel, Madeline Renee	0.48/21,012.8	None	None
014-322-004 Northwest of Olmsted Road	Shoreline Community Church	0.16/6,738.0	None	None

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Permanent Slope Easement in Acres/Square Feet
013-322-006 Northwest of Olmsted Road	Reade Properties	None	0.03/1,168.47	None
013-322-007 Northwest of Olmsted Road	Monterey by the Sea Hospitality	0.23/10,072.4	0.02/783.40	None
013-221-020 Northeast of Olmsted Road	Monterey Peninsula Airport	1.13/49,382.1	None	None
013-222-008 Northeast of Olmsted Road	Monterey Peninsula Airport District	0.34/14,782.4	None	None
013-221-015 Northeast of Olmsted Road	Monterey Peninsula Airport District	0.25/10,971.1	None	None
101-231-002 Southwest of Olmsted Road	Short, Carlene R and Michael Cardel TRS	0.27/11,688.6	None	None
101-231-007 Southwest of Olmsted Road	MacDonald Deanna L TR	0.02/1,040.6	None	None
101-231-003 Southwest of Olmsted Road	State of California	0.22/9,547.8	None	None
101-231-006 Southwest of Olmsted Road	Vasu, Edward Barry, Donna L	0.03/1,147.9	None	None
101-231-004 Southwest of Olmsted Road	Butts, Hallock A, Rosemary Abbott	0.13/4,500.9	None	None
101-231-005 Southwest of Olmsted Road	City of Monterey and County of Monterey	0.38/16,664.6	None	None
259-011-064 Southwest of Olmsted Road	Tescher Christopher TR	0.06/2,458.1	None	None
259-011-027 Southeast of Olmsted Road	Knight, Christopher S	1.67/72,791.7	None	None
Totals	39 Parcels	8.81/350,446.1	0.05/1,951.9	0.06/2,510.6

Alternative 1 – Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisitions (State Route 68 and State Route 218 to State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive)

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Permanent Slope Easement in Acres/Square Feet
012-601-033 Northwest of State Route 218	Monterey Peninsula Airport District	0.03/1378.9	None	None
012-601-034 Northwest of State Route 218	Monterey Peninsula Airport District	0.05/2480.1	None	None
259-031-003 Northeast of State Route 218	City of Monterey (Ryan Ranch Park)	1.06/46,174	None	1.36/59,242
259-011-082 Northeast of State Route 218	Property Owners Association	0.06/2,563	None	0.25/10,890
259-091-010 South of State Route 68	Paul Hiss	1.50/65,340	0.38/16,553	None
259-031-003 Northwest of Ragsdale Drive	City of Monterey	1.20 /52,272	None	0.58/25,265
259-031-082 Northeast of Ragsdale Drive	Property Owners Association	0.52/22,437	None	None
259-071-008 Northeast of Ragsdale Drive	City of Monterey	0.66/28,750	None	None
259-091-010 Southwest of Ragsdale Drive	Paul Hiss	0.22/9,583	None	None
259-092-073 Southeast of Ragsdale Drive	Monterra Ranch Properties LLC	0.28/12,197	None	None
Totals	10 Parcels	5.58/243,065	0.38/16,553	2.19/95,396

Alternative 2 – Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisitions (State Route 68 and State Route 218 to State Route 68 and Ragsdale Drive)

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Permanent Slope Easement in Acres/Square Feet
012-601-034 Northwest of State Route 218	Monterey Peninsula Airport District	None	0.07/3,052.7	None
259-011-082 Northeast of State Route 218	Multiple Owners (2 Units)	0.69/30,406.6	None	0.10/4,409.6
259-031-003 Northeast of State Route 218	City of Monterey – Ryan Ranch Park	1.39/60,513.2	None	0.55/23,7743.3
259-071-008 Northeast of State Route 218	City of Monterey	0.20/8,806.9	None	None
259-031-082 Northeast of State Route 218	Property Owners Association	0.10/4,271	None	None
259-011-027 South of State Route 68	Knight, Christopher S	0.03/1,307.6	None	None
259-011-071 South of State Route 68	Hiss, Paul W 2001 Trust	0.94/40,079.4	None	None
259-091-010 South of State Route 68	Paul Hiss	0.41/18,027.3 0.07/3,100.1 0.01/627.4 2.64/115,030.1	None	None
259-092-073 South of State Route 68	Monterra Ranch Properties LLC	0.58/25,254.9	None	None
Totals	9 Parcels	7.07/307,424.7	0.07/3,052.7	0.65/28,186.9

Alternative 1 – Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisitions (State Route 68 and York Road)

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet
259-031-062 North and West of York Road	City of Monterey	0.07/3,145.4	None

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet
259-181-008 North and West of York Road	Wilson Road Condominium Association Incorporated	0.35/15,429.6	0.52/22,664
173-071-042 North and East of York Road	County of Monterey	0.44/19,234.5	0.44/19,061.5
259-211-014 South and West of York Road	City of Monterey	0.13/5,669.6	0.21/9,360.7
259-231-027 South and East of York Road	City of Monterey	0.14/6,278.1	0.07/3,238.6
Totals	5 Parcels	1.14/49,757.3	1.24/54,324.9

Alternative 2 – Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisitions (State Route 68 and York Road)

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet
259-031-062 North and West of York Road	City of Monterey	0.70/30,434.4	None
259-181-008 North and West of York Road	Wilson Road Condominium Association Incorporated	0.90/39,023.1	0.55/23,833.0
173-071-042 North and East of York Road	County of Monterey	1.40/60,789.9	0.37/16,169.2
173-122-005 North and East of York Road	H2BMK	0.04/1,548,8	None
259-211-014 South and West of York Road	City of Monterey	0.80/35,009.1	0.19/8,535.6
259-231-027 South and East of York Road	City of Monterey	0.89/38,950.6	0.07/3,160.82
Totals	6 Parcels	4.72/205,755.9	1.18/48,537.7

Alternative 1 – Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisition (State Route 68 and Pasadera Drive/Boots Road)

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Permanent Drainage Easement (Acres/Square Feet)
173-071-056 Northwest of Pasadera Drive	New Cities Land Company Inc.	0.06/2,736.8 0.24/10,600.7	None	0.20/8,714.5 0.70/30,495.4 0.08/3,349.5
173-072-041 Northeast of Pasadera Drive	Pasadera Golf and Country Club	0.38/16,595.3	0.05/2,303.1	None
173-071-051 Northeast of Pasadera Drive	No Information	None	0.01/409.0	None
416-193-013 Southwest of Pasadera Drive	Lee, Lawrence E	None	None	0.08/3,550.2
416-193-015 Southwest of Pasadera Drive	Warren, Walter G & Loretta F	None	None	0.17/7,195.1
416-193-017 Southwest of Pasadera Drive	Mesa Hills West Homeowners Association	None	None	0.02/642.0
173-062-007 Southw West of Pasadera Drive	Wayland, F Warren, Marjorie H	None	None	0.13/5,668.0
173-062-006 Southwest of Pasadera Drive	Hallat, Robert Francis, Carly Renee	0.06/2,626.7	None	0.04/1,708.7
173-062-005 Southwest of Pasadera Drive	Bramers, John, B Janice	0.02/820.8	0.05/2,162.2	None
173-062-004 Southeast of Pasadera Drive	Bramers, John Tark, Jennifer	0.24/10,486.8	None	None
Totals	10 Parcels	1.01/43,867.1	0.11/4,874.3	1.42/61,323.4

Alternative 2 – Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisition (State Route 68 and Pasadera Drive/Boots Road)

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Permanent Drainage Easement in Acres/Square Feet
173-071-056 Northwest of Pasadera Drive	New Cities Land Company Inc.	1.17/50,769.8	0.814/35,480.3
173-072-041 Northeast of Pasadera Drive	Pasadera Golf and Country Club LLC	1.53/66.529.0	None
416-193-013 Southwest of Pasadera Drive	Lee, Lawrence E	0.10/4,242.1	0.06/2,650.4
416-193-015 Southwest of Pasadera Drive	Warren, Walter G and Loretta F	None	0.17/7,226.4
416-193-017 Southwest of Pasadera Drive	Mesa Hills West Homeowners Association	0.00/4.9	0.02/643.4
173-062-007 Southwest of Pasadera Drive	Wayland, F Warren, Marjorie H	0.01/414.7	0.12/5,242.4
173-062-006 Southwest of Pasadera Drive	Hallat, Robert Francis, Carly Renee	0.41/1,764.2	0.04/1,810.5
173-062-005 Southwest of Pasadera Drive	Bramers, John, B Janice	0.04/1,789.6	None
173-062-004 Southeast of Pasadera Drive	Bramers, John Tark, Jennifer	0.04/1,803.3	None
173-062-003 Southeast of Pasadera Drive	Porter,Daniel Stewart, Debra R Sanders	0.21/9,063.5	None
173-062-002 Southeast of Pasadera Drive	Khiev, William Le, Juliette	0.18/7,617.3	None
173-062-010 Southeast of Pasadera Drive	Khiev, William Le, Juliette	0.04/1,643.4	None
Totals	12 Parcels	3.71/145,641	1.22/53,053.5

Alternative 1 – Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisitions (State Route 68 and Laureles Grade) – Hybrid Roundabout

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet
031-131-002 Northwest of Laureles Grade	County of Monterey	1.77/77,044.4	None
173-011-022 Southwest of Laureles Grade	Roman Catholic Bishop of Monterey	0.67/29,016.4	0.08/3,485
173-031-016 Southeast of Laureles Grade	Monterey County Regional Fire Protection	0.03/1,268.0	0.08/3,485
Totals	3 Parcels	2.46/107,157	0.16/6,970

Alternative 2 – Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisitions (State Route 68 and Laureles Grade

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet
173-011-025 Northwest of Laureles Grade	County of Monterey	0.96/41,589.7	None
031-131-002 Northwest of Laureles Grade	County of Monterey	3.31/144,333.1	None
173-011-027 Southwest of Laureles Grade	Monterey County SPCA Inc.	0.29/12,542.4	None
173-011-003 Southwest of Laureles Grade	Monterey County SPCA Inc.	0.09/3,732.4	None
173-011-005 Southwest of Laureles Grade	Roman Catholic Bishop of Monterey	0.04/1,908.5	None
173-011-022 Southwest of Laureles Grade	Roman Catholic Bishop of Monterey	2.20/95,739.6	None
173-031-016 Southeast of Laureles Grade	Monterey County Regional Fire Protection	0.03/1,154.7	0.02/784.0

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet
173-031-018 Southeast of Laureles Grade	Nghiem, Justine	0.23/10,146.6	None
173-031-019 Southeast of Laureles Grade	Alvarez, Alan, Margaret	0.01/436.0	None
173-021-016 Southeast of Laureles Grade	Webb Sarah Elizabeth TR	0.02/808.4	None
173-021-015 Southeast of Laureles Grade	Justin D Farr Trust	0.02/1,025.1	None
173-021-013 South and East of Laureles Grade	Garneri, Domenico A	0.01/455.1	None
173-021-018 Southeast of Laureles Grade	Kubica Cheryl L TR	0.34/14,649.5	None
Totals	13 Parcels	7.52/328,521.0	0.02/784.0

Alternative 1 - Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisitions (State Route 68 and Corral De Tierra Road to State Route 68 and San Benancio Road) - Hybrid Roundabouts

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Slope Easement in Acres/Square Feet
031-011-014 Northwest of Corral de Tierra Road	USA – Fort Ord National Monument	0.67/29,281	0.12/5,305	None
161-251-007 Northeast of San Benancio Road	Beck, Mathew and Kelly	None	0.01/385.4	0.01/435.6
161-251-011 Northeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Cypress Community Church	0.35/15,246	None	None

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Slope Easement in Acres/Square Feet
161-251-016 Northwest of San Benancio Road	Tuttle, Thomas, Nancy	None	0.03/1,114.8	None
161-251-019 Northwest of San Benancio Road	Small, Kelly P	0.04/1,812.0	0.07/3,195.6	None
161-251-018 Northwest of San Benancio Road	Elizabeth Ward Trust	0.23/9,837	None	None
161-251-020 Northeast of San Benancio Road	Sean and Amy Hillesheim	0.01/495.5	0.17/7,268	0.03/1,307
161-251-024 Northeast of San Benancio Road	Alba, Janet Marie	0.11/4,684	0.42/18,335	0.03/1,307
161-641-019 Southwest of Corral de Tierra Road	Church, John P	0.01/250.9	None	None
161-571-002 Southeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Omni Resources LLC	0.16/8,570	None	None
161-571-003 Southeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Omni Enterprises LLC	0.12/5,227	None	None
161-541-001 Southwest of San Benancio Road	Rancho El Torro Home Owner Association	0.13/5,644.5	0.52/22,467	None
161-061-003 Southwest of San Benancio Road	McEldowney, L Hommedieu	0.09/4,084	0.05/2,122.4	None
161-061-015 Southwest of San Benancio Road	Harper Canyon Realty LLC	0.02/703.0	0.07/3,240.6	None

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet	Slope Easement in Acres/Square Feet
161-011-084 Southeast of San Benancio Road	Domain Corporation	0.21/9,170.3	0.27/11,560	None
Totals	15 Parcels (one avoided)	2.14/93,218	1.72/75,359	0.07/3,049

Alternative 2 – Estimated Right-of-Way Acquisitions (State Route 68 and Corral De Tierra Road to State Route 68 and San Benancio Road)

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet
031-011-014 Northwest of Corral de Tierra Road	USA – Fort Ord National Monument	1.97/86,023.7	0.09/3,975.0
161-251-011 Northeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Cypress Community Church	0.36/15,730.3	None
161-251-002 Northeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Antle, Mike V, Catherine R	0.05/2,274.9	None
161-251-015 Northeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Carranza, Charles G, Maricela	0.15/6,607.7	None
161-251-016 Northeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Tuttle, Thomas, Nancy	0.15/6,488.4	None
161-251-019 Northeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Small, Kelly P	0.21/9,057.0	0.04/1,512.7
161-251-018 Northeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Elizabeth Ward Trust	0.41/17,756.7	None
161-251-008 Northeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Julie Dalman &William Dalman RLT	0.02/763.3	None
161-641-014 Southwest of Corral de Tierra Road	Seeman, Ernest L	0.02/793.4	None
161-641-025 Southwest of Corral de Tierra Road	Weaver, Michael Robert	0.02/658.0	None

Assessor Parcel Numbers and General Locations	Parcel Owners	Permanent Acquisition in Acres/Square Feet	Temporary Construction Easement in Acres/Square Feet
161-642-019 Southwest of Corral de Tierra Road	Church, John P	0.0021/92.0	None
161-571-002 Southeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Omni Resources LLC	0.07/3,067.4	None
161-571-003 Southeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Omni Enterprises LLC	0.38/16,151.4	None
161-571-001 Southeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Rancho El Torro Country Club	0.22/9,506.6	None
161-541-002 Southeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Rancho El Torro Home Owner Association	0.08/3,324.8	None
161-541-003 Southeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Rancho El Torro Home Owner Association	0.12/5,165.1	None
161-541-001 Southeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Rancho El Torro Home Owner Association	0.43/18,911.7	0.21/9,102.8
161-061-003 Southeast of Corral de Tierra Road	McEldowney, L Hommedieu	0.29/12,773.3	None
161-061-015 Southeast of Corral de Tierra Road	Harper Canyon Realty LLC	0.06/2,494.3	None
161-011-084 Southeast of San Benancio Road	Domain Corporation	1.74/75,853.8	None
Totals	20 Parcels	6.74/293,493.9	0.24/10,615.4

Appendix K Required Consultation and Concurrence Documentation

This appendix has been modified since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Caltrans has undertaken consultation with public agencies regarding various discretionary approvals required for the project environmental analysis and documentation. As discussed in Chapter 4, early coordination with federal and state resources agencies for permits related to impacts and mitigation for biological resources affected by the project has occurred, and permit application processes and requests for permit approvals will take place during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project when design of the preferred project is completed.

The following concurrence documentation is included in this appendix:

- City of Monterey concurrence on Caltrans' *de minimis* determination of project effects on recreational property protected under Section 4(f) in the City's jurisdiction;
- Bureau of Land Management concurrence on Caltrans' *de minimis* determination of project effects on recreational property protected under Section 4(f) in the Bureau of Land Management's jurisdiction;
- County of Monterey concurrence on Caltrans' *de minimis* determination of project effects on recreational property protected under Section 4(f) in the County's jurisdiction;
- California Department of Parks and Recreation's confirmation regarding Land and Water Conservation Act funding of Laguna Seca Recreational Area property; and
- State Historic Preservation Officer concurrence on Finding of No Adverse Effect with Minor Phasing for the Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project, Monterey County, California, 05-MNT-68, Post Miles 5.2 to 13.7 (EA 05-1J790).

City of Monterey Concurrence on Section 4(f) De Minimis Determination

Docusign Envelope ID: 25A73A61-A301-4D41-8792-211A1CC84CDD

October 29, 2024

Jill W. O'Connor, Associate Environmental Planner
Caltrans District 5
50 Higuera St, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

RE: Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project

Dear Jill,

Thank you for meeting with our city staff regarding the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements.

The City of Monterey, as the public agency with jurisdiction over Ryan Ranch Park, Assessor's Parcel Number 259-031-003, concurs with Caltrans' determination that the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project will result in a Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact, as defined in 23 CFR 774.17, on Ryan Ranch Park and Disc Golf Course adjacent to Route 68 from Post Mile 6.81 to Post Mile 7.08, and as demonstrated in the Section 4(f) analysis document attached.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Nat Rojanasathira
A34CB7F30C5749E...

Nat Rojanasathira
Assistant City Manager

Attachment: 1. Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Appendix A Final Section 4(f) Analysis

Note: Appendix A contains the Final Section 4(f) Analysis.

Bureau of Land Management Concurrence on Section 4(f) De Minimis Determination

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Central Coast Field Office
940 2nd Avenue
Marina, CA 93933
www.blm.gov/office/central-coast-field-office

November 7, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has reviewed APPENDIX A Final Section 4(f) Analysis regarding the Alternative 1 and 2 Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements on the Fort Ord National Monument. The BLM, as the property owner and operator of the Fort Ord National Monument, Assessor's Parcel Number 031-011-014, concurs with Caltrans' determination that the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project will result in a Section 4(f) de minimis impact, as defined in 23 CFR 774.17, on the Fort Ord National Monument at Post Mile 12.95, and as demonstrated in the findings document presented with e-mail communication on November 7, 2024.

Sincerely,

ERIC MORGAN Digitally signed by ERIC MORGAN Date: 2024.11.07 15:58:24 -08'00'

Eric Morgan

Fort Ord National Monument Manager

INTERIOR REGION 10 • CALIFORNIA-GREAT BASIN
CALIFORNIA*, NEVADA*, OREGON*
* PARTIAL

County of Monterey Concurrence on Section 4(f) De Minimis Determination

Docusign Envelope ID: 24453476-C0A4-4A13-B67B-86A8615A4DA0

County of Monterey
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Planning • Building • Housing
Craig Spencer, Director

1441 Schilling Place, 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901
O: 831 755 5025

February 2, 2025

Jill O'Connor, Associate Environmental Planner, Caltrans District 5 (Jill.Oconnor@dot.ca.gov)

Cc: Matt.C.Fowler@dot.ca.gov; Chad.Stoehr@dot.ca.gov; Ryan.Caldera@dot.ca.gov; IshiiR@countyofmonterey.gov; FloresB1@countyofmonterey.gov; SpencerC@countyofmonterey.gov

Subject: Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project Section 4(f) determination for APN 031-131-002-000

The County of Monterey, as the public agency with jurisdiction over Assessor's Parcel Number 031-131-002, concurs with Caltrans' determination that the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project will result in a Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact, as defined in 23 CFR 774.17, on the subject parcel adjacent to Route 68 near the intersection of Laureles Grade Road (Post Mile 11.22), and as demonstrated in the Final Section 4(f) Analysis document presented to the County via e-mail communication from Jill O'Connor, Associate Environmental Planner, Caltrans District 5 on Wednesday January 8, 2025 at approximately 5:13 pm.

Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:
Melanie Beretti
F6C3AC03D78644C...

Signature _____ ***Date*** 2/3/2025 | 8:37 AM PST

Melanie Beretti, AICP, Chief of Planning

CountyofMonterey.Gov

California Department of Parks and Recreation Confirmation of No Land and Water Conservation Act Funded Property Affected



Re: [EXTERNAL] FW: Caltrans Route 68 Corridor Project - Land & Water Conservation Funds Act Question

Reply | Reply All | Forward

PX

Prock, Xochi@Parks <Xochi.Prock@parks.ca.gov>

To: O'Connor, Jill@DOT; Bowlin, Kyle@Parks

Thu 12/19/2024 9:54 AM

Retention Policy: Enforced: All 2 Years (2 years) Expires: 12/19/2026

Follow up. Start by Thursday, December 19, 2024. Due by Thursday, December 19, 2024.
You replied to this message on 12/19/2024 10:07 AM.
If there are problems with how this message is displayed, click here to view it in a web browser.

EXTERNAL EMAIL. Links/attachments may not be safe.

Hello Jill

I hope this message finds you well.

After another round of researching our records, we've confirmed there is no LWCF property affected by your proposed project.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Kind regards,

Xochi A. Prock
NPS Section Manager
(916) 215-2961
Office of Grants and Local Services

State Historic Preservation Officer Concurrence

State of California • Natural Resources Agency — Gavin Newsom, *Governor*

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION — Armando Quintero, *Director*
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95816-7100
Telephone: (916) 445-7000 FAX: (916) 445-7053
calshpo.ohp@parks.ca.gov www.ohp.parks.ca.gov

March 17, 2025

VIA EMAIL

In reply refer to: FHWA_2023_0718_001
CATRA_2023_0718_001

Julia Prince-Buitenhuys, Section 106 Coordinator
California Department of Transportation
Cultural Studies Office, Division of Environmental Analysis
1120 N Street
Sacramento CA 95814

Subject: Finding of No Adverse Effect with Minor Phasing for the Route 68 Corridor Operational Improvements Project, Monterey County, California, 05-MNT-68, Post Miles 5.2 to 13.7 (EA 05-1J790)

Dear Ms. Prince-Buitenhuys:

The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is in receipt of an updated consultation letter dated January 17, 2025, and received on March 10, 2025, from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for the above referenced undertaking. Caltrans, as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is continuing consultation with the SHPO to comply with the 2024 *Programmatic Agreement Among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, the United States Army Corps of Engineers' Sacramento District, San Francisco District, and Los Angeles District, and the California Department of Transportation Regarding Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as it Pertains to the Administration of the Federal-Aid Highway Program in California* (Section 106 PA) and the 2024 *Memorandum of Understanding Between the California Department of Transportation and the State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Compliance with Public Resources Code Section 5024 and Governor's Executive Order W-29-92* (PRC 5024 MOU). Caltrans has determined that a minor phased approach is appropriate for the undertaking pursuant to Stipulation XII.B of the Section 106 PA.

Caltrans is proposing to implement operational improvements and wildlife connectivity improvements along State Route 68 in Monterey County from west of the Josselyn Canyon Road intersection at Post Mile 4.8 to east of the San Benancio intersection at Post Mile 13.7.

Caltrans conducted archaeological investigations and built environment evaluations as part of its identification and consultation efforts and previously consulted with the SHPO regarding the determinations of eligibility made for 16 built environment properties on July 17, 2023. On August 9, 2023, the SHPO concurred that all 16 are not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under any criteria. At that time, Caltrans also consulted with the SHPO on an Archaeological Survey Report and the Extended Phase I and Phase II testing report, which addressed two archaeological historic properties, CA-MNT-3/H (P-27-000139) and CA-MNT-4/267 (P-27-000140 / P-27-000373). The evaluations for CA-MNT-3/H and CA-MNT-4/267 did not evaluate the entirety of the properties, and as such were not concurred on, but the testing was recommended to be considered and used in the assessment of effects process.

Caltrans continued consultation with the SHPO on January 17, 2025, and proposed to phase identification, evaluation, and the application of the Criteria of Adverse Effect pursuant to Stipulation XII.A of the 106 PA. Attached to that letter was a draft project specific Programmatic Agreement and Cultural Resources Management Plan with a Monitoring Plan. On March 10, 2025, Caltrans provided a revised consultation letter to the SHPO that states Caltrans has determined that a minor phased approach to the undertaking is appropriate pursuant to Stipulation XII.B of the Section 106 PA and is no longer seeking a Programmatic Agreement per Stipulation XII.A.

Along with their revised letter, Caltrans provided a Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) that includes Area of Potential Effects (APE), a Consultation Log, a Finding of Effect (FOE) document, an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Action Plan, and Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) for SHPO review.

As a result of their efforts to identify historic properties, Caltrans identified two historic properties within the APE:

- CA-MNT-3/H (P-27-000139), prehistoric habitation site with midden, state owned, NRHP Criterion D, concurred on in 1989
- CA-MNT-4/267 (P-27-000140/P-27-000373), small prehistoric habitation site, state owned, considered eligible per Stipulation VIII.C.3

However, due to access restrictions, Caltrans is unable to complete its identification efforts until a Fish and Wildlife 2081 Incidental Take Permit and a federal take authorization from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service are obtained. Due to this, Caltrans has determined that a minor phased approach to the undertaking is appropriate, pursuant to Stipulation XII.B.

Caltrans is proposing a phased approach for the undertaking in three general phases: preconstruction, construction, and post-construction procedures. Prior to construction, Caltrans will identify locations within the APE where geoarchaeological exploration for buried site deposits can safely and reasonably be performed. Upon receipt of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife permit and any right-of-entry permission from private landowners, Caltrans will execute an Extended Phase I study, as well as a

Phase II study if necessary. If sensitive areas remain that cannot be subjected to investigation, Caltrans will appoint an archaeological and Native American monitor, as appropriate, during the construction phase. Caltrans will establish avoidance, protection, and treatment measures based on the results of tribal consultation, Extended Phase I study, and/or monitoring efforts. Upon completion of these efforts, a draft report detailing the findings of the phased effort will be distributed, and Caltrans will continue consultation with the SHPO and consulting parties on the final finding of effect for the project.

Caltrans has applied the Criteria of Adverse Effect and determined that the undertaking will not adversely affect CA-MNT-3/H and CA-MNT-4/267. Both properties will be protected through the establishment of ESAs during project implementation. Caltrans has determined that a Finding of No Adverse Effect is likely for this project and is seeking SHPO concurrence in accordance with Stipulation X.B.2. After completion of the phased approach described above, Caltrans will continue consultation with the SHPO on the final finding of effect for the undertaking.

Following review of the submittal, **I do not object** to Caltrans' likely finding of No Adverse Effect with the use of phasing in accordance with Stipulations X.B.2 and XII.B of the Section 106 PA.

If you require further information, please contact Robert Fitzgerald, Associate State Archaeologist, at Robert.Fitzgerald@parks.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Julianne Polanco
State Historic Preservation Officer

Appendix L Comment Letters and Responses

Appendix L has been added since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. This appendix contains the comments received from the public during the circulation period for the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and Caltrans' responses to those comments.

Comments have been typed verbatim from the comment letters and emails for readability, with any acronyms, abbreviations, and any original grammatical or typographical errors included.

Note that any references within the comments to specific page numbers correspond to the page numbers in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and text may have shifted to other pages in this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact.

Comments from the public were received via emails and regular mail. Some comments were also forwarded to Caltrans by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, which received comments about the project on the agency webpage. Most comments were sent to Caltrans via email, and several commenters submitted multiple emails with different comments. Each comment submission was numbered with an identification number in the chronological order in which they were received. Therefore, some commenters have multiple identification numbers. Individual comments are numbered with the identification number followed by a comment number, for example, A1-1. The list of commenters and their identification number(s) is provided below, grouped by public agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Public Agencies

Monterey Peninsula Airport District (A1)
Monterey County Regional Fire District (A2)
Monterey County Sheriff's Office (A3)
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (A4)

Organizations

SPCA Monterey County (O1)
Monterey County Farm Bureau (O2)
Big Sur Land Trust (O3)
Pasadera Home Owners Association (O4)
Monterey Salinas Transit (O5)
Monterey Living Hope Church of the Nazarene (O6)

Sierra Club Ventana Chapter (O7)

Individuals

Amanda West Reade (I1)
Judith E. Tschirgi and Steve Hoch (I2)
Ian McPhail (I3)
Jean Rasch (I4)
Caroline Miller (I5)
Dan Limesand (I6)
Ken Kroopf (I7)
Bonnie Daniel (I8, and I19)
David Wittrock (I9)
Lorraine Gorczyca (I10)
Randall Charles (I11)
Glen Grossman (I12)
Lorraine Saulovich (I13)
Betsy Wilson (I14)
Paul Baker (I15)
Michael Weaver (I16)
Dennis Lebow Jr. (I17)
Kathleen Catania (I18 and I133)
Monique Kaldy (I20)
Peter H. Hiller (I21)
Donna Teresa (I22)
Diana Martinetto (I23)
Rick Aaronian (I24)
Eric Sahn (I25)
Elizabeth Turner (I26)
Laura Dost (I27)
Frank Dost (I28)
Beth Benoit (I29)
Colleen Courtney (I30)
John Fitzgerald (I31)
Beab Giger (I32)
Robert N. Lea (I33 and I79)
Claudia Linig (I34)
Robert Seidel (I35)
Grant Hunt (I36)
Hans Haselbach and Lynn Kovach (I37)
Ronald Parker (I38)
Mike English (I39)
Diane Gibeau (I40)
Keith Marshall (I41)
Andrew Hawryluk (I42 and I50)
Karen T. Brown (I43)

Dwight Stump (I44, I58, I59, I60, I61, I66, I68, I69, I70, I71, I72, I73, I74, I80, I81, I82, I83, I84, I91, I92, I93, I94, I95, I96, I97, I98, I99, I100, I101, I105, I106, I108, I110, I141, I145, and I148)
Shelly Anonali-Tinsley (I45)
Beth Mazerik (I46 and I75)
Sally Anne Smith (I47)
Karen Mortensen (I48)
Christina Renteria (I49 and I62)
Jay Cook (I51)
Jerry Wilkinson (I52)
Warren Lyons (I53, I147, and I154)
John and Julie Calzada (I54)
Rick Ricci (I55)
Ellen Evers (I56)
John Kuehl (I57)
Dan Bowman (I63)
Steve Kayser (I64 and I87)
Gail Robbins (I65)
Nora Shen (I67)
Thomas Ford Gowing (I76)
Sheu Nardeux (I77)
Mary and Steve Pendlay (I78)
Fred and Phyllis Meurer (I85 and I138)
Lauren and William Keenan (I86)
Neal Thompson (I88)
Martin Wegenstein (I89)
David Rosenberg (I90)
Greg Galin (I102)
Thomas Lukes (I103 and I125)
Peter De Gregorio (I104)
Anne Hepfl (I107, and I124)
Nina Dunaven (I109)
Don and Myrna Locke (I111)
Lee and Allison Hinkle (I112)
Tony Angelo (I113)
Lori Fowler (I114)
Linda Millerick (I115)
Barney Buck Jones (I116)
Caitlin Cameron (I117)
Alison Becker (I118)
Mike McCullough (I119)
Susan Needleman (I120)
Tom Rowley (I121)
Scott Hennessy (I122)
Kay and Seigfrid Magenheim (I123)
Mike and Rene Locke (I126)

Barry Jones (I127, I128, I129, I130, I132, I135, I142, I155, and I156)
Lucy Ablan (I131)
Aaron Magenheim (I134)
Bob Dunaven (I136)
Nick Locke (I137)
Bart Kowalski (I139)
Rutan & Tucker, LLP (I140)
Concert Golf Partners (James Hippe) (I143)
Mike Novo (I144)
Sheri Hauswirth (I146)
C. Michael Hogan (I149)
Bob and Laurie Cochran (I150)
Stuart Jacobs, MD (I151)
Beth Weinstein (I152)
Bruce Wilbur (I153)
Steve Bean (I157)
Melanie Corliss (I158)
Alissa Malakan (I159)
Rina Kempton (I160)
Frank Darabont (I161)
Keith Slama (I162)
Stephen Tackett (I163)
Rick Verbanec (I164)

Commenter A1: Monterey Peninsula Airport District

Comment A1-1: 1: The Monterey Peninsula Airport District (MPAD) has reviewed the Draft EIR for the Scenic 68 Corridor Improvements Project. After review of the alternatives and the potential environmental impacts, the MPAD's preferred Alternative is Alternative 1 the roundabout in place of existing signalized intersections option.

The MPAD does however provide the following comments:

1. Did you consider coordination with traffic movement onto Olmsted Road to the ultimate Airport entrance that is part of the Airport Master Plan when designing the Olmsted Road Roundabout? Is there any potential to coordinate those two improvements and construct them in coordination with each other?

Response to Comment A1-1: The proposed intersection designs for both Alternatives 1 and 2 are based on 20-year traffic demand. Traffic analysis shows the operations of the State Route 68/Olmsted Road intersection (e.g., queue length) would not interfere with the operations at the Olmsted Road/Garden Road intersection.

As the Olmsted Road roundabout moves to the design phase, coordination with the City of Monterey will be required and opportunities to coordinate the construction efforts of the two projects will be considered.

Comment A1-2: 2. We request that you consider a Hybrid option at the Olmsted location that would provide two lane access to the Airport.

Response to Comment A1-2: The Scenic Route 68 project is not a capacity-increasing project and, per policy, should meet the 20-year design period. A two-lane approach and dedicated right-turn lane to north Olmsted for access to the airport was not warranted on the State Route 68 Corridor Improvement Project Alternative 1. The Airport would be responsible for any intersection improvements determined necessary to accommodate its access needs, such as, for example, increased traffic volumes or increased truck traffic.

Comment A1-3: 3. Please consider adding clear Airport signage to the roundabout hardscape design at the Olmsted Rd. location and working with the Airport on the design information.

Response to Comment A1-3: Appropriate guide signs will be installed on all legs of the intersection in compliance with current standards in the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Caltrans will prepare guidance sign wording as appropriate and will follow standard plan criteria for the sign and its placement. Placement of signage in the central island of the roundabout will be evaluated in the final design phase of the project.

Comment A1-4: 4. Due to the upcoming Airport access improvements related to the Safety Enhancement Program at Monterey Regional Airport and the proposed additional housing infrastructure on both Garden Road, as well as on the southside of Highway 68 between Olmsted and Route 218, please consider moving the improvements at Olmsted to the beginning of the Scenic 68 Corridor Improvements Project.

Response to Comment A1-4: Caltrans in partnership with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County will evaluate the prioritization of funding and construction sequencing that will be of most benefit to the State Route 68 traveling motorist, to the local connecting roads, and to the local communities the corridor project serves.

At this time, the first phase of construction of the roundabouts is planned to include the three easterly roundabout locations at Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road at State Route 68.

Comment A1-5: 5. Will the traffic studies be updated to include the recent Regional Housing Needs Allocations and associated potential traffic impacts, specifically as it relates to the two projects listed in the paragraph above?

Response to Comment A1-5: Refer to response to comment A1-2.

Comment A1-6: 6. We request early communication as it relates to proposed right-of-way acquisition needs along the Airport property boundaries at both the State Highway 68 and Olmsted and State Highway 68 and Route 218 locations as identified in Appendix J of the DEIR.

Response to Comment A1-6: The layout designs provided on the project webpage and referenced in Appendix H currently show estimated preliminary right-of-way needs. Caltrans Design and Right of Way staff are available to discuss the proposed improvements and impacts on private land, and the Caltrans' right-of-way acquisition process during the next phase of the project.

Comment A1-7: 7. Finally, please consider revisiting the wildlife crossing locations and add an additional location in or around the State Highway 68 and Route 218 location.

Response to Comment A1-7: Proposed wildlife connectivity improvements were developed from recommendations provided by a study funded by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County titled 2017 Monterey-Salinas State Route 68 Plan: Wildlife Connectivity Analysis (Pathways for Wildlife). The study included detailed wildlife connectivity analysis for mammals, species-specific highway crossing data for existing connectors and crossings, and recommendations for potential wildlife mobility features and conceptual designs for improved connections in consideration of areas that had potential for infrastructure improvements. Based on the crossing data for areas most used by mammals, the plan identified 10 locations, with the westerly most crossing being located just west of York Road. The locations were confirmed using Caltrans highway maintenance data of wildlife carcass collection and determined the wildlife crossing locations with the highest concentrations to include in the project. In preparing the preliminary designs for the wildlife crossing improvements for the project, Caltrans considered the level of existing development, challenging topography, and drainage patterns and other jurisdictional waters of the U.S. around the State Route 68/State Route 218 intersection.

During the final design phase for this intersection roundabout location, Caltrans will review any updated highway carcass collection data and concentrated locations for consideration of the feasibility of adding a wildlife crossing near the intersection with State Route 218.

Commenter A2: Monterey County Regional Fire District

Comment A2-1: This communication sets forth the public comments of the Monterey County Regional Fire Protection District "District" of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment "DEIR" for the scenic route 68 corridor improvements project. On September 26, 2017 the Board of Directors of the Monterey County Regional Fire Protection District passed and adopted Resolution 2017-22 requesting the Monterey County

State Highway 68 roundabout project be reviewed in accordance with the California environmental quality act in its determination of analyzing emergency response times. Resolution 2017-22 along with additional details and concerns were provided to Caltrans District 5, District Director, Timothy Gubbins in a letter dated November 24, 2017.

The District has reviewed the analysis provided in the DEIR and has two distinct issues that still need to be addressed. The first issue was the critical point in our 2017 comments regarding the issue of increased response time for first responders due to the roundabout features contemplated in Alternative #1. The second issue is the design of the roundabout itself at the Laureles Grade intersection. The current design impacts the District's Laureles Fire Station access to the intersection and encroaches on the property owned by the District.

Response Time Degradation

The District has continued to express concerns about the increased response time due to the reduction of speeds required for our apparatus to navigate multiple roundabouts during an emergency response. Our direct experience has shown that even with the current conditions of Highway 68 during peak traffic periods, our responders see minimal decrease of response time with the use of red lights and sirens and the ability to control the traffic signals at the intersections with our preemptive signal control devices. These devices allow us to change the traffic signal in our favor to allow for traffic at the intersection to move through and pull out of the roadway. It appears that the roundabouts are being installed for morning and afternoon work week peak traffic periods to try and alleviate congestion. Unfortunately, these features will remain in place for all hours of the day, impacting the non-commute hours and weekends. Currently, during non-peak or overnight hours our apparatus can maintain highway speeds when responding through the various intersections by controlling the intersections with our preemptive priority and safe driving procedures. Unfortunately, with the installation of roundabouts we would be required to slow down to a speed of 10-15 mph to navigate the rather aggressive turn to get through each intersection. Once out of the feature, our apparatus will then need to accelerate back to highway speeds only to encounter another roundabout. We do respond in modern fire apparatus, however, these vehicles are large, heavy and do not accelerate like passenger vehicles. We have conducted an internal time trial utilizing a standard roundabout model. It was found that the difference between a signalized intersection and roundabout in an off-peak scenario would add 32 seconds for each feature. Operationally, if the apparatus needs to make a left turn off of Highway 68, that too delays the response by an additional 8 seconds as the apparatus must enter and travel 270 degrees to make the turn. The District believes that the installation of roundabouts will negatively impact emergency response to the incidents along the Highway 68 corridor

which already realize longer response times due to the rural nature of the locations.

Response to Comment A2-1: Emergency Vehicle Response time degradation:

Using the travel time data provided in the comment by the County Fire District Chief, Caltrans calculated travel time delay for a fire engine going through a roundabout, factoring in changes in vehicle speeds in deceleration (slowing down) on approach to the roundabout, traveling through the roundabout, and acceleration out of the roundabout. When comparing the deceleration and acceleration capabilities of a standard fire engine, Caltrans computes that a fire engine would take 18 seconds longer to traverse a roundabout compared to a signalized intersection during an off-peak traffic period, using the same distance of travel for both alternatives on a typical highway corridor with a 55-mile-per-hour speed limit.

Based on this estimate of 18 seconds delay per roundabout, a fire engine starting at the Laureles Grade fire station would experience a total of 118 seconds of delay traveling from the fire station through a roundabout at Laureles Grade through a roundabout at Josselyn Canyon Road in the western portion of the project corridor. In the eastbound direction from the fire station, a fire engine would experience a total of an estimated 36 seconds of delay from Laureles Grade roundabout through a roundabout at San Benancio Road at the east end of the project. Therefore, using Caltrans' estimate of delay by intersection for roundabouts, Caltrans concurs that there would potentially be some delay through the project corridor for emergency vehicles compared to signalized intersections, depending on time of day, traffic flow, weather conditions, and other factors on a given highway. As discussed in Section 2.1.9, there is substantive documentation that traffic collisions on roadways with roundabouts are less severe overall compared with signalized intersections. In addition, mountable center curbs and hybrid design (2- by 1-lane) at several locations as well as other design elements discussed further below in this response will facilitate emergency vehicle travel through multiple roundabouts.

Regarding the second concern about the design of the roundabout at Laureles Grade intersection with State Route 68, the conceptual design for the roundabout at Laureles Grade/State Route 68 intersection has been updated to a hybrid roundabout as discussed in Section 1.6. The updated design will minimize impacts to the fire station to the extent feasible. For further discussion on this matter, refer to the response to comment A2-2.

Comment A2-2: The following comments are provided to request additional mitigations or enhanced language in the provisions of the DEIR.

• Page ix, Summary, Utilities and Emergency Services. The District has provided comments in the next bullet addressing the actual Section 2.1.8 Utilities and Emergency Services language and provisions.

• The following sections have the exact language within the paragraphs of the sections. The District's comments are provided for all sections that include this language.

o Page 146, Section 2.1.8 Utilities and Emergency Services Environmental Consequences paragraphs 2-4.

o Page 390, Section 3.2.17 Transportation, d).

▪ As a result of reductions to current intersection delays and improved travel time reliability through the corridor, improved access for emergency services is anticipated to occur under both Build Alternatives**.** The District struggles to understand how in Alternative 1 there is not a significant impact based solely on the delay of our response times to the Highway 68 corridor and adjacent communities.

▪ Alternative 1 would include a roundabout design that provides sufficient lane width to allow for other vehicles to move aside for emergency vehicles passing through the intersection. Curbs in the roundabout would be designed to be traversable by emergency vehicles**.** Based on the designs currently presented on the project webpage, it does not appear to us that the dimensions of the features allow for the maneuverability for our fire apparatus and other larger vehicles within the roundabout feature.

▪ Alternative 2 would include signal prioritization features that would alter the signal to provide priority access for emergency vehicles through signalized intersections. The District is comfortable with this alternative as this mimics the current design while providing signal control to our responding units and more space at each intersection. Alternative 2 provides options for navigation of both regular highway vehicles and emergency vehicles without physical limiting features being installed.

Response to Comment A2-2: Regarding the comments about discussion in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment report pages 390, Section 3.2.17 (d), Transportation, Alternative 1 and emergency vehicle response time, as discussed in Response to Comment A2-1, Caltrans concurs that there may be some delay for emergency vehicles through roundabouts in the project corridor compared to signalized intersections, depending upon time of day, traffic flow, weather conditions, and other factors on a given highway. The discussion in Section 3.2.17 (d) about emergency response time and delay has been updated.

Regarding the comment that travel time delay for emergency vehicles through roundabouts would be a significant impact, because roundabouts have

proven to receive fewer and less severe types of collisions than signalized intersections, which have a larger number of potential conflict points as discussed in Section 2.1.9, they also have potential for fewer traffic collision-related calls for emergency service responses on State Route 68. A reduction in collisions would also benefit emergency response since it would mean fewer delays caused by collisions to emergency response vehicles traveling through the corridor.

Regarding the concern about the roundabout design at Laureles Grade next to the fire station, the designs for the roundabout at Laureles Grade/State Route 68, and at the two intersections to the east have been updated from single lane to hybrid, which will include a second lane on State Route 68 on two sides of those roundabouts. Therefore, there would be additional space for large emergency vehicles to negotiate through the roundabouts to the east. In consideration of these design elements of roundabouts and their demonstrated reduction of the frequency (rate) and severity of collisions, the potential delay of emergency vehicle travel time through the project corridor would be a less than significant impact. Refer to response to comment A2-1, which discusses design elements of the roundabouts.

The proposed roundabouts for State Route 68 and other roundabouts currently in operation on the State Highway System are designed to accommodate large vehicles (CA Legal and/or STAA). Thousands of large trucks go through the State Route 25/State Route 156 roundabout north of Hollister without issues and at speeds directly influenced by the geometry of the roundabout. The curvilinear geometry of the modern roundabout is designed to deflect the natural path (straight) of vehicles to reduce the speed of all vehicles going through the roundabout. Roundabouts are designed to allow for a 44-foot-long pumper fire truck to circulate through the roundabout and stay within the circulatory roadway without encroachment onto the truck apron. Other design improvements include the strategic placement of depressed/mountable splitter islands for additional emergency access response options and widening of the eastbound and westbound entries and exits to further accommodate the emergency response movements through the Laureles Grade roundabout. Turning paths were developed to ensure that ingress and egress by the fire truck would be possible at the existing access points at Laureles Grade, including for northbound left and right turns to State Route 68. The fire truck turning paths are available upon request.

Alternative 2, expanded signalized intersections, would have greater environmental impacts overall and a much higher potential for serious collisions with more conflict points than roundabouts, and would also cause greater encroachment onto the fire station property, thereby requiring more right-of-way than Alternative 1, as discussed in Section 2.1.6.

Comment A2-3: During the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (project final Design) phase of the project, design of the intersection would be further

refined to best accommodate emergency vehicles. The District feels that these details need to be worked out during this phase of the project as a different design (larger footprint of the feature) may impact other areas (biological, property rights, etc.) that will have to be mitigated or addressed.

▪ The Build Alternatives would not permanently alter planned routes for emergency responses or evacuations. Therefore, no long-term impacts to emergency services are expected from the project. The District has shown that there are significant impacts to emergency response with a degradation of response times and that the roundabouts contemplated in Alternative 1 permanently alter planned routes for emergency responses and evacuations. We do agree that Alternative 2 would have less impact on the emergency response as this alternative does not include any permanent traffic calming features. Section 2.1.8 has a concluding paragraph titled Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures. This paragraph states, since the implementation of the project would not have adverse effects on utilities and emergency services, no avoidance or minimization measures are proposed. The District does not feel that this is an accurate statement. Alternative 1 does have adverse effects on emergency services particularly response time degradation to the Highway 68 corridor and adjacent communities. This needs to be acknowledged and avoidance or mitigation measures should be identified and discussed.

Page 382, Section 3.2.9 Hazardous Materials, f). Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? No Impact—Once completed, the project would improve highway operations within the project limits and thereby improve emergency access and evacuation. The District has shown that there are significant impacts to emergency response with a degradation of response times and that the roundabouts contemplated in Alternative 1 permanently alter planned routes for emergency responses and evacuations. We do agree that Alternative 2 would have less impact on the emergency response as this alternative does not include any permanent traffic calming features.

Response to Comment A2-3: The two alternatives are designed to accommodate emergency vehicles. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) recognize the importance of accommodating emergency vehicles through the corridor; refer to Response to Comment A2-1. The design information developed during the environmental documentation phase is termed preliminary, though a substantial amount of design and adjustments have been undertaken during that phase as well. The concerns of maneuverability in and out of the fire station at Laureles Grade provided by the commenter prompted design improvements to strategically place depressed/mountable splitter islands for additional emergency access response options and widening the eastbound and westbound entries and exits to further accommodate the emergency response movements through the Laureles Grade roundabout.

During the Plans, Specifications and Estimates (PS&E) phase of Caltrans' highway projects, design refinements are often able to reduce impacts to affected natural resources and offsite properties; the Caltrans design team, in coordination with our environmental specialists, makes every feasible effort to further reduce impacts of a project's footprint and associated infrastructure.

Regarding the quoted text about planned routes for emergency access, Caltrans and the project sponsor, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, acknowledge there is an increased delay in emergency response per the Fire District's current highway rate of speed response practices during off-peak hour emergency calls; this delay is balanced by Caltrans' adoption of the Safe System Approach to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on California's roadways by 2050-Vision Zero by 2050. Roundabouts are proven intersection control types with less conflict points compared to signalized intersections, thus resulting in reduction of severe and fatal collisions.

Regarding the comment pertaining to text in the Draft Environmental Document Section 3.2.9 page 382 (f), refer to response to comment A2-1 regarding reduction of emergency response times.

Comment A2-4:

• Page 393, Section 3.2.20 Wildfire, a). Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? Less Than Significant Impact—Once completed, the project would improve highway operations within the project limits and thereby improve emergency access and evacuation. The District has shown that there are significant impacts to emergency response with a degradation of response times and that the roundabouts contemplated in Alternative 1 permanently alter planned routes for emergency responses and evacuations. We do agree that Alternative 2 would have less impact on the emergency response as this alternative does not include any permanent traffic calming features.

• Page 393, Section 3.2.20 Wildfire, c). Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment? No Impact---No additional infrastructure is being installed that would increase fire risk. The District has shown that there are significant impacts to emergency response with a degradation of response times and that the roundabouts contemplated in Alternative 1 permanently alter planned routes for emergency responses and evacuations. We do agree that Alternative 2 would have less impact on the emergency response as this alternative does not include any permanent traffic calming features.

• Page 404, Section 3.2.23 Wildlfire, Environmental Consequences, Alternative 1. Research data on roundabout performance during emergency

evacuations is limited. However, limited research data and assessments of evacuations indicate that roundabouts do not impede emergency evacuation and may facilitate safer evacuation. There is no research supporting the various published opinion statements that roundabouts impede emergency evacuations. Taking into consideration the available research data, the roundabouts would not impede emergency evacuation efforts over signalized intersections. The operation of roundabouts is considered more reliable because roundabouts do not require functioning signal lights, sensors, or electronic timing to function and will continue to operate as designed during a power outage. Studies have shown that modern roundabout design allows for fire engines and other large equipment to travel (at slower speeds) unimpeded through properly sized and engineered roundabouts. Some "training" of the public on how to properly move through a roundabout to make way for emergency vehicles may be necessary. Scenic route 68 is considered a primary evacuation route for the many adjacent communities along the corridor and supports numerous collector and neighborhood streets and roads to either the Monterey Peninsula or the City of Salinas. The District is concerned that Alternative 1 with the nine contemplated roundabouts would not only delay the emergency response for public safety agencies but also compromise the flow of traffic and route flexibility in the event of an emergency evacuation. The same concerns are not present with Alternative 2 or current existing conditions.

• Page 404, Section 3.2.23 Wildfire, Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures, Alternative 1. Design considerations were made to ensure accommodation of large vehicles through the roundabouts, including mountable aprons and curbs in the central island intended for use by large vehicles and wider entry and exit lanes for efficient movement into and out of the roundabout. Based on the designs currently presented on the project webpage, it does not appear to us that the dimensions of the features allow for the maneuverability for our fire apparatus and other larger vehicles within the roundabout feature.

Response to Comment A2-4: Section 3.2.20 Wildfire, page 393 (a): Regarding the comments about the discussion in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment Page 393, Section 3.2.20 Wildfire, item a): The proposed improvements to the project intersections converted to roundabouts would not impair the emergency response plan in place for State Route 68; refer to responses to comments A2-1 and A2-5.

Regarding the comment about page 393, Section 3.2.20 Wildfire (c): The commenter suggests that roundabouts would delay response time and alter planned emergency evacuation/response routes. However, the analysis question in the referenced section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment inquires whether any proposed infrastructure with the project would exacerbate the risk of fire; the proposed project design alternatives and the preferred roundabout alternative

specifically would not add any infrastructural components that would worsen the risk of wildfire to a degree to cause impacts to the environment. Refer to response to comment A2-1 regarding the comment about reduction of emergency response times with roundabouts.

Alternative 2, expanded signalized intersections, would have greater environmental impacts and greater encroachment onto the fire station property, thereby requiring more right-of-way than Alternative 1, as discussed in Section 2.1.6 of the environmental document. In addition, as discussed in Section 2.1.9, there is substantive documentation that traffic collisions on roadways with roundabouts are less frequent and less severe overall compared with signalized intersections. For these reasons, Caltrans selected Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative.

Regarding the comment about Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment Section 3.2.23, page 404, Caltrans Highway Design Manual design policy on roundabout designs and roadway designs requires the identification of design vehicles that need to be considered. Of consideration is the identification of the largest vehicle to pass through the roundabout without using the truck apron. These vehicles would include large vehicles transporting passengers with injuries, physical disabilities, the elderly, and transit vehicles. Other vehicles that fit this criterion are fire engines and single-unit delivery vehicles. The turning path for a 44-foot-long fire truck's vehicle tracking and swept width was used to verify the design at all roundabout entries, exits, and the circulatory roadway. This design parameter for a fire truck ensured that the roundabout was of sufficient width to accommodate such a vehicle without encroachment onto the truck apron. Turning paths were developed to ensure that ingress and egress by the fire truck would be possible at the existing access points at Laureles Grade, including for northbound left and right turns to State Route 68. The truck turning paths are available upon request.

Comment A2-5: Laureles Fire Station

The District's Laureles Fire Station is located at the intersection of Highway 68 and Laureles Grade. This station, originally built in 1990, services the Highway 68 corridor and adjacent communities from the Torero Drive intersection to the Olmstead Road intersection. The station's main access and egress for emergency vehicles is on the west side of the parcel onto Laureles Grade. Staff and visitor access the property from a driveway off of Seca Place. The cut through behind the station is utilized only for servicing the station and District access. In 2008, Cal Trans entered into an agreement with the District to acquire a portion of the fire station parcel to accommodate the Highway 68/Laureles Grade traffic improvement project. This improvement allowed for the second left turn lane off of Highway 68 onto Laureles Grade and defined a right turn lane off of Laureles Grade onto Highway 68. The DEIR contemplates additional land on the same corner that was acquired in 2008 to facilitate the installation of the roundabout. The

District does not support this design or any additional acquisition or easement onto the fire station parcel as the impacts to the daily work paths and functionality of the station would be compromised. The District would be in support of a relocation of the station across Highway 68 into the lower Laguna Seca property to alleviate project impacts potentially repurposing the existing fire station. This cost would be borne by the project.

We have analyzed the contemplated design and have the following concerns regarding emergency vehicle movement gaining access and egress from the station for routine and emergency incidents. Accessing Highway 68 eastbound appears to utilize a semi protected right turn lane that will have to merge into through east bound Highway 68 traffic. This maneuver is similar to current conditions without the traffic signal to allow for entry onto the road. Our apparatus are big and modern but lacks the acceleration of passenger vehicles. Without the signal to stop through traffic, larger vehicles could experience trouble with merging into the east bound lane. This was observed at the new roundabout at Highway 156 and Highway 25. Large trucks were unable to enter the roundabout in the natural flow for traffic as passenger vehicles sped through the entry chicane closing the gap. The roundabout stalled traffic due to the large trucks unable to enter the roadway. Similarly, accessing Highway 68 westbound would have our fire apparatus cross the semi protected right turn lane onto eastbound Highway 68, traverse either a raised island or shared path, squeeze into a narrowed left turn path to then cross the eastbound thru traffic lane, and quickly encounter westbound through traffic which should yield to our travel path. At this point, any realized conflicts would expose the rear of our vehicle to eastbound through traffic. Departing the station to access southbound Laureles Grade would require our apparatus to cross the semi protected right turn eastbound lane, the narrowed left turn westbound lane, a raised island or shared path into a left turn lane to merge into southbound Laureles Grade. These are all very complex movements in a large vehicle lacking the acceleration and maneuverability of a passenger vehicle. Compound the situation with code three lights and sirens during peak traffic congestion and the results could be problematic. Considerations need to take these scenarios into consideration and collaboration with District staff to identify and work through mitigations is requested.

Response to Comment A2-5: The following response is similarly contained in response to comment A2-2. While drivers may have experienced confusion navigating in the first few months after the State Route 25/State Route 156 roundabout opened, recent observations of traffic during peak periods show that thousands of large trucks go through the roundabout without issues and at speeds directly influenced by the geometry of the roundabout. The curvilinear geometry of the modern roundabout is designed to deflect the natural path (straight) of vehicles, which reduces the speed of all vehicles going through the roundabout. During normal operations, all vehicles entering the roundabout must yield to vehicles in the circulating roadway. Emergency vehicles responding to an incident with lights and sirens should be given

priority in an emergency. Per California Vehicle Code Section 21806a), "…the driver of every other vehicle shall yield the right-of-way and shall immediately drive to the right-hand edge or curb of the highway, clear of any intersection, and thereupon shall stop and remain stopped until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed."

Both Build Alternatives maintain the existing access points for the fire station located at Laureles Grade. The final design will maintain the "keep clear" pavement markings to match the existing ingress and egress conditions.

Though preliminary plans shared during the public circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment identified encroachment into the fire station property, they show what would likely be the worst-case scenario. Further refinements of the design during the final design phase of the project will be considered to minimize the encroachment by Alternative 1 (selected by the Caltrans as the preferred alternative) on the fire station property.

During and after construction, under Alternative 1, the fire station landscape area will be impacted by the roundabout embankment slope; however, this is not anticipated to impact the daily work paths and functionality of the station. More property impacts would occur to the fire station parcel under Alternative 2. With either of the Build Alternatives, however, provisions will be included in the construction contract specifications to always require emergency ingress/egress of emergency vehicles.

As discussed in the earlier responses, accommodation of emergency vehicles is required and has been incorporated into the design of both Build Alternatives. While the project does potentially reduce the emergency response time as discussed in response to comment A2-1, it also maintains, accommodates, and improves the safe ingress and egress by emergency vehicles at the Laureles Grade intersection.

Comment A2-6: The following comments are provided to request additional mitigations or enhanced language in the provisions of the DEIR.

• Page 135, Section 2.1.6 Relocations and Real Property Acquisition, Environmental Consequences, Laureles Grade Road. A minor amount (about 2 percent) of the County Fire District property at the southeast corner for Laureles Grade Road at State Route 68 would be required for the roundabout alternative intersection improvements. A temporary construction easement of 0.06 acres would also be necessary at this parcel for the roundabout alternative. All partial permanent acquisitions at Laureles Grade Road under Alternative 1 are not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties, and no structures are located within acquisition areas. The District does not support this design or any additional acquisition or easement onto the fire station parcel as the impacts to the daily work paths and functionality of the

station would be compromised. The District would be in support of a relocation of the station across Highway 68 into the lower Laguna Seca property to alleviate project impacts potentially repurposing the existing fire station. This cost would be borne by the project.

• Page 388, Section 3.2.15 Public Services, CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services. Fire Protection? No Impact---The project would not induce the need for any new or altered fire protection services. If additional land acquisition of the fire station parcel cannot be avoided, the District would be in support of a relocation of the station across Highway 68 into the lower Laguna Seca property to alleviate project impacts potentially repurposing the existing fire station. This cost would be borne by the project.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the DEIR. If there are any questions or clarifications required, I can be reached by email dsargenti@mcrfd.org or phone at 831-455-1828.

Response to Comment A2-6: As addressed in the environmental document, the permanent property encroachment onto the existing fire station property for construction of the preferred alternative roundabout is anticipated to be very small and in areas along the periphery of the site so that it would not noticeably affect or alter daily functions of the fire district and personnel. Caltrans will coordinate with the Fire District in advance of construction at this intersection location to minimize any impacts from temporary construction work to the station's functions and required activities for emergency services. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are not proposing to relocate the fire station to another property as part of the project and have designed the roundabout alternative to impose the least amount of temporary and permanent encroachment onto the fire station property and access driveways as feasible. Refer also to Response to Comment A2-5.

Commenter A3: Monterey County Sheriff's Office, Tina M. Nieto, Sheriff-Coroner

Comment A3-1: I am writing to express my concerns with the CalTrans Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project. In the project description there are nine (9) proposed roundabouts described in alternative one (1). I believe, based on input from the community as well as a letter authored by Chief David J. Sargenti of the Monterey County Regional Fire District alternative two (2) is a better option. Having fixed roundabouts will alleviate commute traffic, however it will increase our response time overall for all hours of the day.

I support alternative two (2) in which there would be improvements to the intersections with adaptive signal control technology, and enhanced lane channelization. This approach would allow our units to maintain the ability to quickly navigate the intersection and realize a faster response time.

Feel free to contact me with any questions, Tina M. Nieto, Monterey County Sheriff-Coroner

Response to Comment A3-1: Refer to response to comments from the County Regional Fire District, A2-1 through A2-6.

Commenter A4: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Comment A4-1: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a DEIR/EA prepared by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as lead agency, for the above-referenced Project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.1

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish and wildlife resources. Likewise, CDFW appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under Fish and Game Code.

Footnote 1: CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code, section 21000 et seq. The “CEQA Guidelines” are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California’s Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State (Fish and Game Code, section 711.7, subdivision (a) and section 1802; California Public Resources Code, section 21070; CEQA Guidelines, section 15386, subdivision (a)). CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (Fish and Game Code section 1802). Similarly, for purposes of CEQA,

CDFW is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments as a Responsible Agency under CEQA (California Public Resources Code, section 21069; CEQA Guidelines, section 15381). CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As proposed, for example, the Project may be subject to CDFW’s lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority (Fish and Game Code section 1600 et seq.).

Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in "take" as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish and Game Code section 2050 et seq.), related authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code will be required.

In these roles, CDFW is responsible for providing, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts (i.e., CEQA), focusing specifically on project activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources. CDFW provides recommendations to identify potential impacts and possible measures to avoid or reduce those impacts.

Bird Protection: CDFW has jurisdiction over actions with potential to result in the disturbance or destruction of active nest sites or the unauthorized take of birds. Fish and Game Code sections that protect birds, their eggs and nests include, sections 3503 (regarding unlawful take, possession or needless destruction of the nest or eggs of any bird), 3503.5 (regarding the take, possession or destruction of any birds-of-prey or their nests or eggs), and 3513 (regarding unlawful take of any migratory nongame bird).

Unlisted Species: Species of plants and animals need not be officially listed as Endangered, Rare, or Threatened (E, R, or T) on any State or Federal list to be considered E, R, or T under CEQA. If a species can be shown to meet the criteria for E, R, or T, as specified in the CEQA Guidelines, section 15380, CDFW recommends it be fully considered in the environmental analysis for the Project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Proponent: Caltrans

Objective: Caltrans proposes to make improvements along State Route 68 within the Cities of Monterey and Del Rey Oaks and the County of Monterey which would include modifying nine intersections and improving wildlife connectivity (Project). The Project proposes to improve intersection operations to reduce vehicle delay throughout the Project corridor; reduce the rate and severity of collisions on State Route 68 within the Project site; enhance wildlife connectivity and reduce the rate of collisions between vehicles and wildlife; and improve bicycle and pedestrian access within the Project corridor. Two build alternatives are under evaluation in this DEIR/EA for potential environmental impacts: Alternative 1 would construct roundabouts in place of the existing signalized intersections, and Alternative 2 would include upgraded signalized intersections with enhanced lane configurations. Both build alternatives include the same wildlife crossing improvements which include replacing existing underground culverts at five locations and providing guidance-fencing along the highway to the culvert entrances. After comparison of the benefits and impacts of the alternatives, Alternative 1, intersection roundabouts, was preliminarily identified by the

Transportation Agency of Monterey County (local project proponent) as the locally preferred alternative.

Location: The Project is in Monterey County on State Route 68 from just west of Josselyn Canyon Road and the Monterey County Regional Airport to just east of San Benancio Road (post mile 4.8 to post mile 13.7).

Timeframe: A Project schedule was not included.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CDFW offers the following comments and recommendations to assist Caltrans in adequately identifying the Project's significant, or potentially significant, direct, and indirect impacts on fish and wildlife (biological) resources. Editorial comments or other suggestions may also be included to improve the document. A Recommended Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program is attached (Attachment 1).

CDFW is concerned regarding potential Project related impacts to the following special- status species: State threatened tricolored blackbird (Agelaius tricolor), State candidate endangered Crotch's bumble bee (Bombus crotchii), and the State species of special concern burrowing owl (Athene cunicularia). CDFW is also concerned about potential project impacts to bats, including the following special status species: pallid bat (Antrozous pallidus), Townsend's big-eared bat (Corynorhinus townsendii), western red bat (Lasiurus blossevillii), and western mastiff bat (Eumops perotis californicus).

I. Environmental Setting and Related Impacts

Would the Project 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 CDFW or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)?

COMMENT 1: Tricolored blackbird (TRBL)

Issue: The DEIR/EA found that TRBL are known to nest in the Project vicinity but concluded that the Project will not impact tricolored blackbird due to lack of suitable nesting habitat in the Project impact area. However, Alternative 2 may result in direct or indirect impacts to a known nesting population. Nesting colonies include heavy growths of cattails, tules, thistles, willows, blackberries, mustard, nettles, salt cedar, giant cane, and wild rose. Flooded lands, grassy fields, and margins of ponds are typical foraging grounds (Grinnel and Miller 1944). Increasingly, TRBL are forming larger colonies that have progressively larger proportions of the species' total population (Kelsey 2008). Nesting can occur synchronously, with all eggs laid within one week (Orians 1961). For these reasons, depending on timing, disturbance to

nesting colonies can cause abandonment, significantly impacting TRBL populations (Beedy et al. 2020).

Recommended Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures for TRBL:

CDFW recommends that construction activities located within 300 feet of the known nesting habitat at the western end of the Laures Grade Road intersection be timed to avoid the normal bird breeding season (February 1 through September 15).

However, if construction must take place during that time, CDFW recommends that a qualified wildlife biologist conduct focused surveys for nesting TRBL no more than 10 days prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities. If an active TRBL nesting colony is found during pre-activity surveys, CDFW recommends implementation of a minimum 300-foot no disturbance buffer around the colony, following CDFW's "Staff Guidance Regarding Avoidance of Impacts to Tricolored Blackbird Breeding Colonies on Agricultural Fields in 2015" (CDFW 2015). CDFW recommends that this buffer remain in place until the breeding season has ended or until a qualified biologist has determined that nesting has ceased, the birds have fledged, and are no longer reliant upon the colony or parental care for survival. If a TRBL nesting colony is detected during surveys, consultation with CDFW is warranted to discuss how to implement the Project and avoid take, or if avoidance is not feasible, to acquire an ITP, pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081 subdivision (b), prior to any ground disturbing activities.

Response to Comment A4-1: (Tricolored blackbird): With the selection of Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative, construction activities will not occur within 300 feet of the known tricolored blackbird nesting habitat at the western end of the Laureles Grade, nor any other known nesting locations. Regardless, if construction activities occur during the nesting season (February 1 to September 15) and within suitable habitat, focused preconstruction surveys for nesting tricolored blackbirds will be conducted. This recommendation is included as Avoidance and Minimization Measure BIO-24 (Measure 68 in the Natural Environment Study) that addresses construction scheduling and vegetation removal outside of nesting bird season. In the unexpected event that a tricolored blackbird nesting colony is detected within 300 feet of construction activities, Caltrans will consult with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the next steps.

Comment A4-2: COMMENT 2: Crotch's Bumble Bee (CBB). Issue: CBB are known to inhabit areas of grasslands and scrub that contain requisite habitat elements for nesting, such as small mammal burrows and bunch/thatched grasses. As identified in the DEIR/EA, the Project site has suitable habitat that could support CBB nesting and foraging. CBB was once common in central and southern California. However, populations of CBB have severely declined, especially within California's Central Valley (Hatfield et al. 2014). Analyses by

the Xerces Society et al. (2018) suggest there have been sharp declines in relative abundance by 98% and persistence by 80% over the last ten years.

Suitable CBB habitat includes areas of grasslands and upland scrub that have requisite habitat elements, such as small mammal burrows. CBB primarily nest in late February through late October underground in abandoned small mammal burrows but may also nest under perennial bunch grasses or thatched annual grasses, under piles of brush, in old bird nests, and in dead trees or hollow logs (Williams et al. 2014; Hatfield et al. 2015). Overwintering sites used by CBB mated queens include soft, disturbed soil (Goulson 2010), or under leaf litter or other debris (Williams et al. 2014). Therefore, ground disturbance and vegetation removal associated with project activities have the potential to significantly impact local CBB populations. As a state candidate species, take of CBB without appropriate incidental take authorization from CDFW would be a violation of Fish and Game Code.

Recommended Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures for CBB:

CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct focused surveys for CBB, and their requisite habitat features following the methodology outlined in the "Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species" (CDFW 2023a), in the appropriate survey season as part of the biological technical studies conducted in support of the DEIR/EA. CBB surveys are also recommended prior to Project activities, as already identified in in the DEIR/EA. Potential nesting sites, which include all small mammal burrows, perennial bunch grasses, thatched annual grasses, brush piles, old bird nests, dead trees, and hollow logs would need to be documented as part of the assessment. If candidate bumble bees will be captured or handled, a 2081(a) Memorandum of Understanding with CDFW would be required. If CBB is observed in the Project site, consultation with CDFW is warranted to determine if the Project can avoid take. If take cannot be avoided, take authorization prior to any ground-disturbing activities may be warranted. Take authorization would occur through issuance of an Incidental Take Permit by CDFW, pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081, subdivision (b).

Response to Comment A4-2: (Crotch's Bumble Bee): As the Draft (and now Final) Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment mentions, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife concurs, the project area contains suitable habitat for Crotch's bumble bee. Therefore, avoidance and minimization measures BIO-79 through BIO-83 pertaining to surveys and avoidance of Crotch's bumble bee will be implemented. In the unexpected event that the Crotch's bumble bee is detected, Caltrans will consult with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the next steps and mitigation measure BIO-84 will be implemented.

Comment A4-3: COMMENT 3: Burrowing Owl (BUOW)

Issue: The DEIR/EA did not include an assessment of potential presence of, or potential impacts on BUOW, although the biological technical study (Natural Environment Study) concluded that the project would not impact BUOW due to lack of observations during field surveys. The Project site is within the known range of BUOW and BUOW have been observed in the vicinity (CDFW 2023b, iNaturalist 2023). BUOW inhabits open grassland or adjacent canal banks, rights-of-ways, and vacant lots containing small mammal burrows, a requisite habitat feature used by BUOW for nesting and cover (Gervais et al. 2008). BUOW rely on burrow habitat year-round for their survival and reproduction. Based on review of aerial imagery, BUOW has the potential to occur within or next to the Project site.

Habitat loss and degradation are considered the greatest threats to BUOW in California (Gervais et al. 2008). Potentially significant direct impacts associated with project activities include burrow collapse, inadvertent entrapment, nest abandonment, reduced reproductive success, reduction in health and vigor of eggs and/or young, and direct mortality of individuals. In addition, and as described in CDFW's "Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation" (California Department of Fish and Game 2012), excluding and/or evicting BUOW from their burrows is considered a potentially significant impact under CEQA. Construction activities near active burrows could result in potentially significant impacts to nesting or overwintering owls.

Recommended Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures for BUOW:

CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist assess if suitable BUOW habitat features are present within or next to the Project site (e.g., burrows) prior to construction. If suitable habitat features are present, CDFW recommends assessing presence/absence of BUOW by having a qualified biologist conduct surveys following the California Burrowing Owl Consortium's "Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines" (CBOC 1993) and CDFW's "Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation" (CDFG 2012). Specifically, CBOC and CDFW's Staff Report suggest three or more surveillance surveys conducted during daylight with each visit occurring at least three weeks apart during the peak breeding season (April 15 to July 15), when BUOW are most detectable. CDFW recommends no-disturbance buffers, as outlined in the "Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation", be implemented prior to and during any ground-disturbing activities. Specifically, CDFW's Staff Report recommends that impacts to occupied burrows be avoided in accordance with the following table unless a qualified biologist approved by CDFW verifies through non-invasive methods that either: 1) the birds have not begun egg laying and incubation; or 2) that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and are capable of independent survival.

Location

Time of Year Level of Disturbance and Recommended Buffers (meters)

	Low	Medium	High
Nesting sites April 1-Aug 15	200	500	500
Nesting sites Aug 16-Oct 15	200	200	500
Nesting sites Oct 16-Mar 31	50	100	500

Response to Comment A4-3: (Burrowing Owl): While the project area contains burrows, it does not support suitable nesting habitat for the burrowing owl, and none were detected during multiple survey efforts at various times of several years. As indicated by iNaturalist and other data sources (California Natural Diversity Database and the birding community), burrowing owls may very occasionally occur in the greater Monterey Bay area as a seasonal migrant in the fall and winter months, but not for nesting/breeding. As noted in Section 2.3.4, avoidance and minimization Measure BIO-24 preconstruction surveys for special-status wildlife will be conducted as well as nesting bird surveys. Also, a biological monitor will be onsite during construction and will notify Caltrans if/when a special-status species (including burrowing owl) is detected, and Caltrans will consult with the appropriate agency(s).

Comment A4-4: COMMENT 4: Bats

Issue: The DEIR/EA provides an evaluation of potential impacts to tree- and cave- roosting bats and proposed several avoidance and minimization measures. The DEIR/EA found that there is potentially suitable habitat for pallid and western red bats in the Project site but did not include Townsend's big-eared bat or western mastiff bat. Townsend’s big-eared bat was described in the Natural Environment Study as not expected to be present due to lack of suitable roosting structures in the Project impact areas. However, Townsend’s big eared bat may roost in a variety of structures that are present within and directly next to the Project site, including concrete culverts, revetments, and buildings. They tend to have different day and night roost sites and may be solitary or roost in small numbers (Pierson 1999).

Within the Central Coast Ranges ecosystem, western mastiff bat may occur from the Bay Area and south through Southern California. Although it tends to roost in rock crevices and rocky outcrops, western mastiff bat has also been found using a variety of human-made structures and trees for day roosts (Ahlborn 2000, Cockrum 1960), which are found within and next to the Project site. Without appropriate avoidance and minimization measures for bats, Project activities may result in potentially significant impacts to roosting or maternal bats, including potential inadvertent entrapment, reduced reproductive success, reduction in health and vigor of eggs and/or young, and direct mortality of individuals.

Recommended Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures for Bats:

While the DEIR/EA (BIO-38) identifies focused surveys for bats at culverts, CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct focused surveys within all potential roosting sites and habitat within 400 feet of the Project site prior to Project activities. Avoidance whenever possible is encouraged via delineation and observance of no disturbance buffers according to activity and species, as recommended in Table 7-1 of "Caltrans Bat Mitigation: A Guide to Developing Feasible and Effective Solutions" (H. T. Harvey & Associates 2021), ranging from 100 feet to 400 feet. If roosting bats are observed on the Project site and buffer areas, CDFW recommends that Caltrans stop work in the buffer area and coordinate with CDFW for site-specific impact minimization recommendations.

Response to Comment A4-4: (Bats): The Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment specifically included western red bat (a tree-roosting species) and pallid bat (known to roost in natural and human-made structures such as culverts, buildings, bridges, etc.) because these species and habitat features/roosting areas for each are found within or adjacent to the project area. No maternal roosts were identified or expected. Other species of bats, such as the western mastiff bat and Townsend's big-eared bat, while not documented, could occur within the project area in some of the habitat features/roosting areas (the culverts are small and unsuitable for those species) mentioned for western red bat and pallid bat. The avoidance and minimization measures for bats in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (BIO-37 through BIO-41, now renumbered in this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact report as BIO-27 through BIO-31) were specifically written to encompass other species of bats in addition to those being specifically mentioned. Therefore, the existing bat avoidance and minimization measures will suffice for avoiding impacts to the western mastiff bat and Townsend's big-eared bat as well as other bat species.

Comment A4-5: COMMENT 5: Habitat Connectivity

Issue: CDFW supports the wildlife crossing improvements proposed for this Project to mitigate for the significant impact that the existing highway is currently imposing on local wildlife movement and the compounding effect that the Project will have on local wildlife populations by increasing the width of the roadway at the Project intersections. Including these wildlife passage improvements in the Project meets the legislature's stated intent in California Assembly Bill 2344 ("Safe Roads").

Recommended Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures for Habitat Connectivity:

CDFW recommends that Caltrans coordinate with CDFW's Region 4 staff on the wildlife crossing and fencing design plans as they are being developed. CDFW also recommends that Caltrans develop and implement a long-term management program to monitor the effectiveness of the structures for at least five years after construction (e.g., Federal Highway Administration 2011; Hardy et al. 2003) and for the long-term maintenance of the integrity of the wildlife crossing structures.

Response to Comment A4-5: (Habitat Connectivity): Caltrans will coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding wildlife crossing and fencing design plans as they are being developed. Caltrans will maintain these assets and establish a long-term management program (approximately 5 years) to monitor the effectiveness of the structures.

Comment A4-6 II. Editorial Comments and/or Suggestions

CDFW requests that the EIR/EA fully identify potential impacts to biological resources, including the above-mentioned species. To adequately assess any potential impacts to biological resources, focused biological surveys should be conducted by qualified wildlife biologists/ botanists during the appropriate survey period(s) for each species to determine whether any special-status species and/or suitable habitat features may be present within the Project site. Properly conducted biological surveys, and the information assembled from them, are essential to identify any mitigation, minimization, and avoidance measures and/or the need for additional or protocol level surveys, and to identify any project-related impacts under CESA and other species of concern. CDFW recommends the EIR/EA address potential impacts to these species and provide measurable mitigation measures that, as needed, will reduce impacts to less than significant levels. Information on survey and monitoring protocols for sensitive species can be found at CDFW's website (https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/SurveyProtocols).

Nesting birds: CDFW encourages that project implementation occur during the bird non-nesting season; however, if ground-disturbing or vegetation-disturbing activities must occur during the breeding season (February 1 through September 15), the Project applicant is responsible for ensuring that implementation of the Project does not result in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or relevant Fish and Game Codes as referenced above.

To evaluate project-related impacts on nesting birds, CDFW recommends that a qualified wildlife biologist conduct pre-activity surveys for active nests no more than 10 days prior to the start of ground or vegetation disturbance to maximize the probability that nests that could potentially be impacted are detected. CDFW also recommends that surveys cover a sufficient area around the Project site to identify nests and determine their status. A sufficient area means any area potentially affected by the Project. In addition to direct impacts (i.e., nest destruction), noise, vibration, and movement of

workers or equipment could also affect nests. Prior to initiation of construction activities, CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a survey to establish a behavioral baseline of all identified nests.

Once construction begins, CDFW recommends having a qualified biologist continuously monitor nests to detect behavioral changes resulting from the Project. If behavioral changes occur, CDFW recommends halting the work causing that change and consulting with CDFW for additional avoidance and minimization measures.

If continuous monitoring of identified nests by a qualified wildlife biologist is not feasible, CDFW recommends a minimum no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet around active nests of non-listed bird species and a 500-foot no-disturbance buffer around active nests of non-listed raptors. These buffers are advised to remain in place until the breeding season has ended or until a qualified biologist has determined that the birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or on-site parental care for survival. Variance from these no-disturbance buffers is possible when there is compelling biological or ecological reason to do so, such as when the construction area would be concealed from a nest site by topography. CDFW recommends that a qualified wildlife biologist counsel and support any variance from these buffers and notify CDFW in advance of implementing a variance.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a database which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations (Public Resources Code, section 21003, subdivision (e)). Accordingly, please report any special-status species and natural communities detected during project surveys to CNDDB. The CNDDB field survey form can be found at the following link: https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB/Submitting-Data. The completed form can be mailed electronically to CNDDB at the following email address: CNDDB@wildlife.ca.gov. The types of information reported to CNDDB can be found at the following link: https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB/Plants-and-Animals.

FILING FEES

If it is determined that the Project has the potential to impact biological resources, an assessment of filing fees will be necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the fee is required for the underlying Project approval to be operative, vested, and final (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 753.5; Fish and Game Code, section 711.4; Public Resources Code, section 21089).

CONCLUSION

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Project to assist Caltrans in identifying and mitigating the project's impacts on biological resources.

If you have any questions, please contact Carrie Swanberg, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor), at the address provided on this letterhead, by telephone at (559) 538-4110, or by electronic mail at carrie.swanberg@wildlife.ca.gov.

Response to Comment A4-6: (Editorial comments and Suggestions): As reflected and mentioned in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, various focused and general biological studies were conducted for this project at various times of the year and over several years. Section 2.3 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment includes measures pertaining to preconstruction surveys for various species, including nesting birds, and the next steps to be taken should a species be detected. Also, biological monitors will be onsite during initial ground-disturbing activities or vegetation removal at a minimum.

Commenter O1: SPCA Monterey County

Comment O1-1: We were included in a CalTrans group email message sent last week regarding the two proposals to improve traffic operations and reduce collisions with wildlife on Hwy 68. We have significant concerns regarding Alternative 2. As indicated in the map included with the message, Alternative 2 will cut into the SPCA's property and extend beyond the location of our well, the SPCA's only source of water. We don't believe municipal water is an option for our property, but would love to learn that this was explored, is being considered and, most important, included in costs related to Alternative 2. Losing our well is obviously catastrophic for our operations and the people and animals who depend on us. We will use every opportunity going forward to highlight this issue.

Response to Comment O1-1: The well location was confirmed with email communications with Scott Delucci on November 29, 2023. After the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was circulated for public review and prior to completion of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact, Caltrans selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project for which final design will be prepared. Final design for the roundabouts in the vicinity of the SPCA property will prioritize minimization of property and off-highway utility impacts, such as SPCA's water well.

Commenter O2: Monterey County Farm Bureau, Norm Groot

Comment O2-1: Monterey County Farm Bureau represents family farmers and ranchers in the interest of protecting and promoting agriculture

throughout our County. Since 1917, Farm Bureau strives to improve the ability of those engaged in production agriculture to provide a reliable supply of food and fiber through responsible stewardship of our local resources.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, we offer the following comments on the proposed project elements for the Highway 68 Scenic Corrido Improvement Project:

While the improvements do not provide for additional capacity, the intent is to improve traffic flow times through this corridor, particularly at peak travel time hours (AM and PM); significant traffic moves westward in the AM, with return traffic flow eastward in the PM. Congestion points are not just limited to areas where the current traffic signals are located; rather, transitions from multiple lanes to single lane traffic in the Toro Park area creates westbound traffic congestion, as does the pinch points at Hwy. 218 traveling eastward. If the proposed roundabouts, replacing traffic signals along the corridor, are to be multiple lanes in both directions (as noted on some of the presentation drawings), the pinch points will remain as traffic attempts to merge into a single lane between the roundabouts. This situation will hinder any improvements in traffic flow times that the roundabouts themselves are proposed to implement.

Response to Comment O2-1: The westbound bottleneck on State Route 68 east of the project limits results from a combination of factors such as signals at San Benancio Road and Corral de Tierra Road, and the bypass traffic turning right onto westbound State Route 68.

Traffic conditions at the proposed State Route 218/State Route 68 roundabout is very different than the two-to-one lane merge for westbound traffic on State Route 68 at Toro Park. The westbound merge on State Route 68 at Toro Park consists of two lanes of traffic going at freeway speeds having to slow to merge into a single lane, which creates a bottleneck and resulting congestion. The proposed roundabout at State Route 218 (Canyon del Rey Boulevard)/State Route 68 has single-lane roads leading into it on all sides (State Route 68, State Route 218 (Canyon del Rey Boulevard) and Monterrra Road so that the capacity of the roadways downstream of the roundabout are the same as the roadways upstream of the roundabout. The lower speeds of traffic traversing the roundabout will help traffic to merge more smoothly as the two lanes exiting the roundabout merge into a single lane.

Comment O2-2: The traffic flow through the Toro Park area (using Portola Drive), as a westward alternate to Hwy. 68 in the AM, must be curtailed, as this causes additional congestion when these vehicles are exiting from Torero Drive onto Hwy. 68. This has been an issue for decades and should be addressed as the part of the overall traffic improvement planning process for the Hwy. 68 corridor.

Response to Comment O2-2: The Toro Park neighborhood is within the jurisdiction of Monterey County, and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County has coordinated with Monterey County Public Works Department with assistance from Caltrans and the Monterey County Regional Fire District to develop and implement traffic-calming (circulation-routing) measures to discourage motorists from using the Toro Park neighborhood internal road system to bypass the westbound queue on State Route 68 during the morning peak period. A pilot program for this purpose was implemented by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County on July 12, 2024 for a period of several months. The objective of the pilot project was to prevent diversion of traffic from westbound State Route 68 onto neighborhood streets via Portola Drive and Torero Drive. The pilot project is separate from this project since the pilot project area is outside of the project limits and not in Caltrans' right-of-way. The pilot project is now concluded, and the partial closure at Torero Drive remains in place and under the management of Monterey County. It will receive ongoing evaluation with possible additional measures and/or modifications in the vicinity.

Comment O2-3: As one of only two corridor pathways between Salinas and the Monterey Peninsula area, Hwy. 68 experiences a considerable amount of truck traffic, including auto transporters accessing the Laguna Seca raceway facility. This critical corridor for commerce trucks will require substantial footprints for any and all roundabouts constructed as replacements for signaled intersections. Given the length of these larger trucks, including the auto transporters, how will two-lane roundabouts be constructed to allow for these vehicles to pass through without crossing into adjacent lanes or into the roundabout hard surface area itself? Observing truck traffic at the roundabout constructed at Hwy. 1 and Hwy. 68 near Carmel, trucks often drift over both lanes of traffic when maneuvering through the roundabout (even when other traffic is present). Better understanding of how truck traffic will be addressed in the sizing and flow of roundabouts is needed.

Response to Comment O2-3: All roundabouts are designed to allow Surface Transportation Assistance Act-sized trucks (a truck-tractor semitrailer combination with a 48-foot semitrailer, a 43-foot kingpin-to-rear axle distance and 8.5-foot body and axle width, and a 23-foot truck tractor wheelbase) to go through without restrictions on the single-lane roundabout designs (sources: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/traffic-operations/documents/trucks/truckmap-d05-a11y.pdf, and https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/traffic-operations/documents/trucks/truck-legend-a11y-.pdf). The multilane roundabout for State Route 218/State Route 68 and the three hybrid roundabouts at the Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra Road and San Benancio Road locations are designed to Case 2, whereby the trucks stay on their lane at entry and exit but may encroach into adjacent lane while circulating. The final design will include refinements to address these movements and the addition of truck blisters, which are flattened splitter island areas, to also accommodate the swept path of oversize/overweight

permit vehicles. Oversize/overweight permit vehicles are larger than the STAA design vehicle.

Comment O2-4: Significant traffic flows east to west in the AM peak period; if a steady stream of vehicles is traveling in this direction, will vehicles entering from arterials have any chance of moving into the traffic flow? Since roundabouts are governed by voluntary yield by drivers only, how will traffic from arterials insert themselves into the constant flow of the east to west traffic? This could lead to more traffic safety issues as impatient drivers attempt to insert themselves into a constant flow of vehicles not specifically yielding for adjacent traffic.

Response to Comment O2-4: First, traffic flow on two-lane conventional highways tends to travel in platoons with a slow-moving lead vehicle. This is especially true where passing opportunities do not exist, where passing is not allowed, and/or where a no-passing lane occurs along the corridor. Between the travel platoons are gaps allowing traffic to enter the traffic stream. Second, speeds in the circular roadway are 20 miles per hour or lower for single-lane roundabouts and 25 miles per hour or lower in multi-lane roundabouts. These low speeds allow for last minute yielding by either the circulating vehicle or the entering vehicle and, if neither yields, there is potential for low-speed sideswipes. Slower speeds allow vehicles to enter the circulatory roadway with smaller gaps. Third, left-turning traffic using the roundabouts would create a break in the eastbound/westbound through traffic on State Route 68, providing opportunities for side street traffic to enter the roundabout.

Comment O2-5: Will additional roundabouts cause issues for emergency response vehicles? Larger fire engine vehicles may find the roundabouts limiting in space and maneuverability. Response times for these larger vehicles should be considered if they are required to slow for each roundabout; for example, a roundabout at Hwy. 218 would slow an eastbound response vehicle, then accelerate to the next roundabout at Ragsdale where it would slow once again, then accelerate once through the roundabout. This seems to present a concern for emergency response vehicles and fire response times, in particular.

Response to Comment O2-5: Refer to response to comment A2-1 regarding emergency vehicle access through roundabouts.

Comment O2-6: With the escalating costs of this project, along with the extended construction times, it may be more judicious with taxpayer funding to coordinate the existing signals to promote better traffic flow times, particularly at the San Benancio and Corral de Tierra intersections. Allowing for consistent traffic flow throughout the corridor should improve travel times, if no additional capacity improvements can be made.

Response to Comment O2-6: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI/Adaptive Traffic Signal Control in place of roundabout intersection improvements and the planned pilot project to implement AI technology as an interim project. Further, AI would not address the fact that signalized intersections have more traffic conflict points than roundabouts, as discussed in Section 2.1.9.

Comment O2-7: The project drawings presented at the Open House events do not indicate that there would be a tie-in of the Laguna Seca raceway facility entrance, currently west of the Laureles Grade intersection. Is this no longer in consideration for either the roundabout or improved intersection?

Response to Comment O2-7: As a result of meetings and discussions with the County and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Caltrans, all parties agreed that a connecting road extending north from State Route 68 at Laureles Grade would be a separate project and need to undergo the established Intergovernmental Review and environmental impact analysis processes.

Comment O2-8: Monterey Regional Airport is undertaking a major construction project to relocate the passenger terminal to an area east of Olmsted Road, with an anticipated roundabout access point at Garden Road and Olmsted Road; how will the proposed roundabout at Hwy. 68 and Olmsted Road anticipate this change in traffic flow for airport terminal access? The project drawings presented at the Open House make no reference to this anticipated facility change.

Response to Comment O2-8: The proposed Olmsted Road/State Route 68 roundabout is not anticipated to interfere with the operation at Olmsted Road/Garden Road intersection because the latter intersection is approximately 475 feet from State Route 68, and therefore outside of the project intersection area. The timing of both projects will determine the necessary conforms to the construction plans by either party.

Comment O2-9: While the agricultural sector is not directly adjacent to the Hwy. 68 corridor area of this project, many of the employees for agriculture use this corridor daily; hospitality employees are regular commuters along this corridor, along with commerce vehicles delivering supplies to hospitality businesses on the Monterey Peninsula. Traffic to the Laguna Seca raceway facility is also a consideration, including the delivery of race vehicles to the track.

We support improvements to the Hwy. 68 corridor if they are carefully considered to improve traffic flow and safety; adding a series of roundabouts may only be a temporary solution as there is no anticipated capacity flow improvements for this corridor. Traffic will increase in the future without any additional routes connecting Salinas to the Monterey Peninsula; the improvement project contemplated for the Hwy. 68 corridor should anticipate additional future requirements. Thanks for your consideration.

Response to Comment O2-9: The intersection improvements are intended to accommodate regional and interregional traffic through the State Route 68 corridor without impeding local access.

The project design period is 20 years after construction and used the AMBAG traffic volumes to forecast the conditions. The current design addresses the developments and traffic volumes that were in the AMBAG regional traffic model and County general plan at the time of the traffic analysis.

Commenter O3: Big Sur Land Trust, Rachel T. Saunders, Director of Conservation

Comment O3-1: Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT) is a non-profit organization with a mission to inspire love of land across generations, conservation of our unique Monterey County landscapes, and access to outdoor experiences for all. We've worked since 1978 to conserve over 45,000 acres of land throughout Monterey County. As an accredited land trust, our work promotes:

• Healthy Lands: Conserving and caring for the magnificent natural landscapes, habitats and waterways of our region to ensure a sustainable future.

Healthy People: Providing opportunities for all who live in and visit Monterey County to experience the healthful benefits associated with access to parks and open spaces, fresh food, clean air and water, and a deep connection to nature.

• Healthy Communities: Engaging in partnerships where conservation and civic participation increase community vitality, economic prosperity and social equity.

BSLT is invested in the future of our region and the community and how it relates to people, wildlife, and the environment. We own Marks Ranch, one of our flagship preserves located along SR 68 next to Toro County Park. We worked extensively with Pathways for Wildlife on wildlife studies at Marks Ranch and adjoining areas and on documenting the importance of maintaining corridors and crossing structures for wildlife movement and public safety. We appreciate Caltrans and TAMC engaging Pathways to look at wildlife connectivity as part of the Highway 68 planning. Additionally, BSLT is in a Purchase and Sale Agreement to acquire land for conservation purposes at the Intersection of SR 68 and SR 218. This land has been identified as a conservation target for its scenic and open space values and as an important habitat linkage for wildlife in the landscape south and north of the intersection of SR 68 and 218 (see Exhibit B attached to this letter). As such, we would like to provide comments on the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvement Project DEIR.

BSLT is writing in overall support of Alternative 1 (Roundabouts) for the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan. The smaller project footprint, as mentioned numerous times throughout the DEIR, would have a lessened impact on the environment, surrounding habitat, and special status species. In addition, the incorporation of wildlife crossing improvements into the plan is a critical addition that will strengthen regional wildlife connectivity and preserve genetic diversity in our local ecosystems.

Response to Comment O3-1: Big Sur Land Trust's support for Alternative 1 Roundabouts is acknowledged. In accordance with Caltrans' project development procedures, after receiving comments on the draft environmental document by the public and reviewing agencies, the Project Development Team selected a preferred alternative to move forward to the final design phase. Alternative 1, Roundabouts, was selected as the preferred alternative after thorough consideration of the overall environmental effects of the project alternatives, the purpose and need elements of the project, cost and other relevant criteria.

Comment O3-2: BSLT also strongly recommends integrating additional wildlife crossing improvements at or near Project Intersection SR 218, an intersection not currently identified as a location for wildlife crossing improvements, which would be both beneficial and practical due to intersection improvements already planned as part of both Alternatives 1 and 2. In the State Route 68 Plan: Wildlife Connectivity Analysis the westernmost camera placed to observe wildlife was located at York Road approximately 1.36 miles east of the Highway 218 intersection. Meanwhile, in late May 2022, BSLT installed a wildlife camera on the property at this intersection that we plan on acquiring and within a week had photographs of deer, coyote and a number of small mammals. A black bear was also photographed on the property in July 2020 by a nearby security camera. This bear may have been the individual that was spotted traveling through the Santa Lucia Preserve and Palo Corona Regional Park, northwards into Jacks Peak and eventually Fort Ord National Monument via the property and the Ryan Ranch disc golf course.

Furthermore, the Map of Roadkill Data on page 64 of the connectivity analysis shows a badger kill west of the camera at York Road. This aligns with the BSLT Monterey Coast – Sierra de Salinas Study Area heat map (a previous BSLT study included in the Wildlife Connectivity Analysis on page 5) which shows high value badger sustainability areas in green abutting either side of Highway 68 right at and east of the intersection of SR 68 and SR 218.

Additional wildlife crossing improvements could include building a box culvert just east of the SR 218 intersection. Adding such an additional wildlife crossing location could greatly aid wildlife moving through this area and potentially decrease flood risk by allowing Canyon Del Rey Creek to flow more freely under this busy highway intersection. Alternatively, a shorter box culvert could be built just west of Ragsdale Road, which would guide wildlife

into the small canyon to the north. Both potential box culvert locations are shown in Exhibit A as an attachment to this letter. Additionally, the California State Coastal Conservancy has committed to funding BSLT's acquisition of land at this intersection partially for its value as part of an existing wildlife corridor, shown in Exhibit B of this letter.

BSLT greatly appreciates all the hard work and research that has gone into this Corridor Improvement Project and hopes the project is able to move forward successfully and improve regional transit while continuing to prioritize and care for the surrounding ecosystems and wildlife.

Response to Comment O3-2: The Wildlife Connectivity Analysis study was funded by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and prepared by Pathways for Wildlife with support from local partners such as the Big Sur Land Trust. The study was focused, in part, on areas that had potential for infrastructure improvements. The level of existing development and challenging topography and drainage patterns at the State Route 68/State Route 218 intersection were considered when determining the locations to study. Further, no concentrated carcass data was collected at this location. As the project moves to the final design phase, another evaluation will be done to determine if a wildlife crossing at this location is warranted and feasible. As the Pathways for Wildlife study details and the comment references, badgers were considered throughout the study area and during the development of the proposed project infrastructure improvements to facilitate badger movement on and off of Fort Ord. Refer also to response to comment A1-7.

Commenter O4: Pasadera HOA Board of Directors

Comment O4-1: Dear Caltrans,
We are writing on behalf of the Pasadera Homeowners Association Board of Directors ("Pasadera Board") to make our views known regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report - Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvement Plan 0518000061. Pasadera is a community of 245 households that relies exclusively on the front entrance at Pasadera Drive for ingress into and egress from the community. The proposed project will substantially impact the operations of our front entrance, interfere with Pasadera property rights, and subject our residents to potentially severe safety issues and inconvenience in entering and leaving Pasadera. Indeed, we know of no other large-scale community along Highway 68 that will be as adversely affected by the proposed changes to the Highway 68 corridor as Pasadera.

The Pasadera Board has specific concerns about the project, with respect to both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2, in the following areas: (1) encroachment on private property rights, (2) safety issues, (3) traffic flow, and (4) noise levels.

Response to Comment O4-1: Refer to responses to comments O4-1a through 1e below.

Comment O4-1a: • As outlined in the attached Comments, our major concerns are:

Encroachment on Pasadera property rights. The Pasadera HOA has invested substantial sums of money in creating an efficient and aesthetically pleasing entrance to Pasadera through Pasadera Dr. If TAMC and Caltrans were to implement either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 as outlined in the EIR, they would destroy our signature monument walls, dig up a sizable portion of Pasadera Dr. owned by the HOA, and appropriate Pasadera property belonging to the HOA and The Club at Pasadera. Speaking for the current board, the Pasadera HOA is opposed to the taking of its private property.

Response to Comment O4-1a: As part of the right-of-way assessment process for state highway projects, Caltrans endeavors to minimize use and impacts to non-state highway properties. Design of the selected preferred alternative for the project will be the refined during the final design phase of the project; during that process, right-of-way estimates for easements or acquisitions, temporary or permanent, may be adjusted from what was presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment document. The commenter's concerns about acquisition of property of the Pasadera residential community is acknowledged and shared with the project team. Your input is important for the decision-making and design processes for the project.

Comment O4-1b: • Roundabout alternative lacks a merger lane. Pasadera residents, golf club members and guests can currently access Highway 68 West with an existing merger lane without safety or traffic flow issues. The proposed plan eliminates this merger lane, making it more difficult and dangerous for drivers from the Pasadera community to gain access to Highway 68 West. Any roundabout that fails to include a merger lane to access Highway 68 is totally unacceptable.

Response to Comment O4-1b: The function of a merge/acceleration lane is to allow motorists to merge with highway traffic at or near the speed of traffic. As discussed in response to comment O2-4, traffic on two-lane conventional highways tends to travel in platoons with a slow-moving lead vehicle, especially where passing opportunities do not exist within the corridor. Between the travel platoons are gaps allowing traffic to enter the traffic stream. In addition, speeds in the roundabout are 20 miles per hour or lower for single-lane roundabouts and 25 miles per hour or lower in multi-lane roundabouts. Slower speeds allow cross-street vehicles to enter the circulatory roadway with smaller gaps. Left-turning traffic using the roundabouts would create a break in the eastbound/westbound through traffic on State Route 68, providing opportunities for side street traffic to enter the roundabout.

At roundabouts, motorists approaching a roundabout must reduce their speeds, look for potential conflicts with vehicles already in the circular roadway and be prepared to stop for pedestrians and bicyclists. Vehicles travel counterclockwise around a raised center island, with entering traffic yielding the right-of-way to circulating traffic. Vehicles within the roundabout move at slow and consistent speeds, between 15 and 20 miles per hour. Slow speeds help vehicles move smoothly into, around, and out of a roundabout. In addition to the expected slower speeds, the traffic volumes into and from Pasadera Drive do not warrant an exclusive bypass/merger lane.

Comment O4-1c: • Reduction of exit lanes in roundabout proposal will cause backup to Pasadera Gatehouse. The reduction from two exit lanes to one exit lane will require traffic leaving Pasadera and turning East to combine with the West-traveling traffic, likely causing backups reaching the Gatehouse. With a steady stream of Highway 68 Westbound traffic, which we fear will not be eager to yield to traffic entering the roundabout, it will be more difficult and dangerous for Pasadera residents to exit the community.

Response to Comment O4-1c: According to the traffic analysis, which forecasted traffic volumes using the regional model for a 20-year horizon, only a single-lane north (Pasadera Drive) leg entry is required due to the efficient operation of roundabouts.

Comment O4-1d: • Signalized intersection option lacks future AI technology benefits. The plan appears to be short-sighted as it doesn't incorporate currently available or future AI technology-based systems designed for traffic management.

Response to Comment O4-1d: Refer to response to comment I44-1, Adaptive AI Signals.

Comment O4-1e: • Alternative 2 creates a four-lane highway. While the alternate option to expand the signalized intersection with two straight through lanes in each direction provides the same entry/exit capabilities to Pasadera as the existing configuration, the additional lanes will create a four-lane highway at the intersection, creating an increased number of vehicles speeding through the intersection. This will exacerbate the risk of collisions and substantially increase highway noise. A reduction of the 55-mph speed limit to 40 mph through the four-lane section would help improve safety considerably and also reduce the increase in noise levels compared to two lanes traveling at 55 mph.

Response to Comment O4-1e: As discussed in Section 1.6, Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative to move forward with to final design. Roundabouts are designed to slow traffic before entering and traversing the roundabout circle, on average designing for maximum entry speeds of 25 to 30 miles per hour, slowing to circulating

speeds of 10 to 20 miles per hour, depending on the design of the roundabout. Speed limits for highway and roadway segments are determined by a speed engineering survey by measuring the operating speeds of passing vehicles and determining the 85th percentile speed. Alternative 2 would have used speed surveys and the 85th percentile speed to set the limit on the highway. Speed limits on roadway segments are reevaluated at least once every five years with the option for a 7- to 10-year extension as outlined in Section 5.3 of the California Manual for Setting Speed Limits.

Comment O4-1f: In conclusion, the Pasadera Board opposes both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. Both alternatives are very expensive and entail numerous adverse effects, including the extensive taking of private property, elevated safety risks, increased emissions and noise pollution, and increased traffic and lifestyle burdens on Highway 68 residents. The downsides far outweigh the limited goal of shaving time off commutes that occur for only a couple hours per day five days a week. We don't question the good faith of the TAMC and Caltrans engineers, but the massive project they devised is an overreaction that will adversely affect our residents. We urge you to listen to the voices of the County residents who will be most affected.

As an alternative approach, the Pasadera Board urges TAMC and Caltrans to implement AI- controlled adaptive signals at Pasadera Dr. We understand they can be installed for a fraction of the cost of the larger project and will produce tangible benefits meeting your goals without unduly burdening Pasadera residents. A trial project makes eminent sense.

Response to Comment O4-1f: The project must balance local and regional access while improving operations and safety of the corridor. While the traffic analysis examined the peak period operations, the corridor would benefit from the same operational and safety benefits off-period with the project improvements as well.

Caltrans District 5 Traffic Operations was provided conceptual approval for the pilot use of AI controllers to implement Adaptive Signal Control Technology, and further discussions took place regarding potential funding for procurement of the firmware to support Adaptive Signal Control Technology. Discussions and approval shifted to review of existing traffic data, existing infrastructure, and firmware compatibility to support the pilot project. Regular meetings between the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and District 5 Traffic Operations took place for implementation of Adaptive Signal Control Technology at signalized intersections within the State Route 68 project corridor. Implementation at these intersections provides the ability to best implement the technology, make adequate observations and adjustments and learn lessons from an engineering and traffic operations perspective for installation at additional intersections along the corridor. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are currently

moving forward with the pilot project to procure, install, and use Adaptive Signal Control Technology on the project corridor as an interim solution.

Adaptive Traffic Signal Control can include the use of technology such as AI (Artificial Intelligence). The use of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control was evaluated in the traffic study for the project, and it was concluded that it would also require the construction of auxiliary through lanes to accommodate traffic volumes under the 20-year design horizon traffic conditions. This design was reflected in Alternative 2 of the project. Though a pilot project is proposed to install AI signals for the short term, it would not meet the traffic operational needs for the 20-year design horizon (2045).

Attachment Comments:

Comment O4-2: <u>Alternative 1: Roundabouts</u>
1. A major concern is the lack of a merger lane. Currently Pasadera residents, golf club members and guests can safely and easily access Highway 68 West with a merger lane with no safety or traffic flow issues. The plan eliminates this merger lane, making it more difficult and dangerous for drivers from the Pasadera community to gain access to Highway 68 West. We understand from TAMC that placement of roundabouts on Highway 68 will make it far more difficult for traffic on side streets to access the highway. As flow increases on the highway, the side streets pay, to paraphrase one of the planners. In recognition of that reality, the planners devised merger lanes at York and Ryan Ranch. But not at Pasadera Dr. Without a merge lane, any plans for a roundabout at Pasadera Dr. are deficient from the start.

Response to Comment O4-2: Refer to response to comment O4-1b.

Comment O4-3: 2. The reduction from two exit lanes to one exit lane from Pasadera will require traffic wishing to leave Pasadera and turn East, to combine with the West traveling traffic and thus cause more backup to the Gatehouse. Consequently, exiting from Pasadera for Eastbound traffic will be more difficult and dangerous due to the stream of Westbound Highway 68 traffic not yielding to traffic entering the roundabout.

Response to Comment O4-3: The gatehouse is approximately 500 feet from the Pasadera Drive/State Route 68 intersection. The 500-foot space allows storage of 20 vehicles, assuming 25 feet per vehicle storage. The estimated 95th percentile queue is 125 feet or 5 vehicles for Alternative 2 and less than 50 feet or 2 vehicles for Alternative 1. The longest 95th percentile queue would occupy only about one-quarter of the distance between State Route 68 and the gatehouse. Motorists approaching a roundabout must reduce their speeds, look for potential conflicts with vehicles already in the circular roadway and be prepared to stop for pedestrians and bicyclists. Vehicles travel counterclockwise around a raised center island, with entering traffic yielding the right-of-way to circulating traffic. Vehicles within the roundabout

maintain slow and consistent speeds, between 15 and 20 miles per hour, by the deflection of traffic around the center island and the relatively tight radius of the roundabout. Slow speeds help vehicles move smoothly into, around, and out of a roundabout.

Comment O4-4: 3. For years, Pasadera residents have had the experience of observing Westbound traffic coming from Salinas as they attempt to merge into traffic-with all of the rudeness and near collisions that occur far too often. We think TAMC/Caltrans engineers are being unrealistic in assuming that during rush hour Westbound drivers will be courteous and create space for exiting Pasadera drivers. The plans provide no measures for forcing the creation of openings to enter the roundabout if that courtesy fails to materialize. Pasadera drivers should not have to pay for illusions about how courteous rush hour drivers will be.

Response to Comment O4-4: Refer to response to comment O4-1b. Traffic on conventional two-lane highways with limited passing opportunities such as State Route 68 tends to flow in platoons, with a slower vehicle in the lead. Speeds in the roundabout are designed for 20 miles per hour or lower for single-lane roundabouts and 25 miles per hour or lower in multi-lane roundabouts. The slower speeds allow cross-street vehicles to enter the roundabout in the gaps in the traffic platoons. Refer also to response to comment O2-4.

Comment O4-5: 4. Alternative 1 would require Caltrans to acquire land from the HOA and The Club of Pasadera abutting Highway 68, including land on Pasadera Drive which is owned by the HOA. Pasadera Drive is privately owned, not a public street. Through this acquisition of property, the HOA would lose its well-known monument walls marking the entrance to the Pasadera Community and the associated landscaping. The appropriation of acreage abutting Highway 68 at Pasadera Dr. would result in the loss of mature landscaping, plants, and heritage oak trees, landscaping that adds immeasurably to the aesthetic appeal of the Pasadera entrance.

Indeed,the Pasadera entrance is one of the most scenic features of the stretch of Highway 68 affected by the proposed project, and closely aligns with the "Scenic" designation of the highway. That landscaping will be replaced with asphalt, concrete, and retaining walls. And the proposed plans do not even require TAMC and Caltrans to landscape the roundabout. The loss of this aesthetic feature is directly contrary to the public goal of maintaining the beauty of Highway 68. Further, the government agencies cannot assume the Pasadera HOA will voluntarily cede its property, raising the prospect of protracted eminent domain litigation. The Draft EIR fails to adequately disclose, much less consider, any of these impacts and the complications they raise.

Response to Comment O4-5: In Section 2.1.6, Table 2.1.6.12, the Alternative 1 roundabout at the Pasadera Drive-Boots Road intersection with State Route 68 would impact one parcel within The Club At Pasadera golf course property, APN 173-072-041, for an estimated 0.6 percent of the 59-acre parcel, which would not result in a significant encroachment such that dwellings or business buildings would require relocation. The estimates of property acquisition in Section 2.1.6 and Appendix J are based on the conceptual designs for the Build Alternatives. Based on the current conceptual design for the roundabout, the monument entrance walls and some of the associated landscaping would be impacted by the roundabout components. During the next phase of the project, property impacts necessitating acquisition areas would be addressed in a Right of Way appraisal report prepared by Caltrans; for any acquisitions, property owners would receive just compensation through a process of negotiation.

Section 2.1.10 addresses the visual impacts of vegetation removal and landscape alteration for the project as a whole. Avoidance and minimization measure VIS-9 prescribes that, if feasible, roundabout center islands shall be landscaped, and hardscape features will receive aesthetic treatments, with input from the County of Monterey and local communities. Mitigation measure VIS-15 requires replacement planting and new planting to the greatest extent feasible, including some large container plants as well as maintaining the planting until it is established. Planting design will pay particular attention to scale and plant palette when designing around entrances such as the Pasadera entrance to be consistent with what is currently in place as well as residents' expectations.

Comment O4-6: 5. Noise levels generated by vehicles slowing to navigate the roundabout and then accelerating on exit, especially large vehicles, will increase considerably. This will be significantly noticeable to residents, not only during the peak periods but during the rest of the day. Similarly, the increase in emission levels generated by the slow down/accelerate cycle will have an adverse effect on the environment and residents.

Response to Comment O4-6: Compared to signalized intersections, roundabouts can reduce the number and duration of full stops (see the Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycles Section 2.1.9). By reducing the number of acceleration/deceleration cycles and time spent idling, roundabouts can decrease noise and air quality impacts. Even during times of heavy traffic volumes, vehicles continue to advance slowly in moving queues rather than coming to a full stop.

The proposed roundabouts will be placed with minimal change from the existing intersection configurations, leading to no substantial change in distance between the sensitive receptors and noise sources. Based on noise modeling, the residences near the Pasadera Drive-Boots Road intersection are expected to experience a noise level change between -1 and 1 decibel in

the year 2045 compared to existing conditions. In typical environments, changes in noise of 1 to 2 decibels are generally not perceptible. Further, the noise level at the residence is predicted to be below the Noise Abatement Criteria and therefore does not require further noise abatement analysis.

Regarding the comment about increasing emission levels generated by vehicles slowing down then accelerating through roundabouts, this is also addressed in response to comment I106-2, as follows: Alternative 1, Roundabouts, would not increase greenhouse gas emissions overall. At signalized intersections, a large percentage of the vehicles would come to a dead stop (red phase during the higher volume periods), idle, then accelerate to full speed from 0 miles per hour. At roundabouts, accelerating after slowing to 15 to 20 miles per hour through the roundabout, in most instances not requiring a stop, generally causes less emissions than accelerating from a full stop.

While there are numerous studies that can be found on emission generation at various intersection designs, one study conducted by the Federal Highway Administration Office of Safety as part of a seven-part series of studies on roundabouts is particularly relevant to this topic. The study, “Accelerating Roundabouts in the U.S.: Volume III of VII, “Assessment of the Environmental Characteristics of Roundabouts” Publication SA-15-071, September 2015, developed a method of estimating pollutant emissions generated at roundabouts and comparing them to emissions at signalized intersections. The study models considered various factors, including driver behavior such as acceleration/deceleration, vehicle characteristics, e.g., engine size and age, traffic conditions, weather conditions, and infrastructure design. The study found that emissions rates at roundabouts tended to be lower than those at signalized intersections in general for oversaturated traffic periods.

Comment O4-7: 6. The significant encroachment of the roundabout on Pasadera land, coupled with the reduction of two exit lanes to one exit lane, will cause backups approaching and leaving the Pasadera Gatehouse (due to shorter distance from Highway to Gatehouse).If these backups become a major issue, the HOA would have to consider repositioning the Gatehouse.

Response to Comment O4-7: As noted in response to comment O4-5, the Alternative 1 roundabout at Pasadera Drive-Boots Road intersection with State Route 68 would impact one parcel within The Club At Pasadera golf course property, APN 173-072-041, for an estimated 0.6 percent of the 59-acre parcel, which would not result in a significant encroachment such that dwellings or business buildings would require relocation.

The estimates of property acquisition in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment are based on conceptual design for both of the Build Alternatives. Concern regarding potential traffic queueing to exit onto State Route 68 is acknowledged. Roundabout designs are intended to

slow traffic on approach to and through the circle but not necessarily require traffic to stop, depending on the amount of traffic in the roundabout.

Comment O4-8: Alternative 2: Signal Controlled Intersection

1. This option requires somewhat less acquisition of Pasadera land, but nonetheless will entail the destruction of our signature monument walls and the excavation of Pasadera Dr,

Response to Comment O4-8: As discussed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, Section 2.1.6, Table 2.1.6.13, Alternative 2 improvements would require an estimated 2.5 (two and one-half) percent acquisition of the over 59-acre parcel at The Club At Pasadera, whereas the roundabout alternative would require just over one-half of 1 percent of the same parcel, for the conceptual designs. During the next phase of the project, final design plans will be refined for the selected preferred alternative, and the amount of property acquisition and areas for temporary construction easements will be confirmed or refined according to final design.

Comment O4-9: 2. While the alternate option to expand the signalized intersection with two straight through lanes in each direction provides the same entry/exit capabilities to Pasadera as the existing configuration, the additional lanes will create a four-lane highway at the intersection, creating an increased number of vehicles speeding through the intersection. Two lanes of speeding traffic will increase the risk of collisions and add significant noise pollution to the Pasadera community. People did not move to Pasadera to live next to a four-lane highway. A four-lane highway will significantly change the nature of Highway 68 and the reasons it has been designated a Scenic Highway. A reduction of the 55-mph speed limit to 40 mph through the four-lane section would help improve safety considerably and also reduce the increase in noise levels compared to two lanes traveling at 55 mph.

Response to Comment O4-9: Refer to response to comment O4-1e.

Comment O4-10: Al Controlled Traffic Signals

1. Alternative 2 appears to be short-sighted as it does not incorporate any currently available or future Artificial Intelligence technology-based systems designed for traffic management. There are proven Al controlled traffic management solutions which could provide similar or better improvements to the traffic management, flows and safety along the entire corridor, compared to either Alternative 1 or 2. These improvements could be implemented at a much lower cost and environmental impact, using much of the existing control equipment and no additional carriageway construction/landscaping.

2. Estimates for this solution are known to be in the order of $500,000 versus the estimates in the EIR of $210,000,000 and $270,000,000 for Alternate 1 and 2 respectively. This solution could be installed within 6 -12 months, rather

than waiting for a 2028 construction start date for the current project construction.

3. The Pasadera Board has been advised that TAMC/Caltrans have recently been discussing a possible trial of such a system with MioVison. The Pasadera Board requests that TAMC/Caltrans commit to a trial of the AI Controlled Signal solution in the next few months so that a more informed decision can be made with the benefit of detailed and accurate traffic flow data before TAMC/Caltrans pursue Alternatives 1 and 2 further.

Response to Comment O4-10: Refer to response to comment I44-1, AI Signal Control.

Comment O4-11: Scenic Highway, Community Expectations and Traffic Flow

1. For decades, Highway 68 has been designated a California Scenic Highway, an honor that Monterey County actively sought in order to preserve the natural beauty and environmental needs of the Highway 68 corridor. The designation of Highway 68 as a Scenic Highway creates an expectation among those County residents living along the highway that County and State government will preserve its beauty, rural nature, and restrained traffic flow. Highway 68 residents will bear the brunt of TAMC's/Caltrans massive project, with loss of property, years of construction disturbance, and impaired ability to enter and leave their homes. The interests of Highway 68 residents, including Pasadera residents, should not be sacrificed to appease commuters.

2. Pasadera is one of the largest residential communities along Highway 68, with more than 245 family homes occupied, 15 more planned or under construction, and an additional 12 apartments within the site that are also occupied. Our Gatehouse has recorded between 184,000 and 214,000 resident related vehicles entering Pasadera from Highway 68 per year over the past four years. An additional 65,000 - 81,000 Golf Club related vehicles were recorded for the same period. The Draft EIR does not appear to take into account the growth within the Pasadera community and Golf Club, nor the significant increase in traffic due to the increased number of events that Laguna Seca Racetrack is holding. Since the last traffic flow study, , the number of homes has increased, country club membership has grown from 200 to 500+ memberships, and there has been exponential growth of large club events, all of which has increased the number of cars utilizing this intersection.

Response to Comment O4-11: 1. State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway as discussed in Chapter 1 and Section 2.1.10 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. The proposed improvements to traffic flow operations through reduced delay as well as reducing the rate and severity of collisions along the project corridor is part of an evolution of highway functionality improvement efforts studied over decades for the highway corridor. Most recently, the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway

Plan evaluated existing and future travel patterns between the Salinas Valley and the Monterey Peninsula along State Route 68. As discussed in Section 1.1, ongoing concerns for residents and commuters using State Route 68 have been and continue to be congestion, safety, and reliability of the route.

2. Existing approved developments have been accounted for in the traffic analysis. The traffic forecast analyses for the project used the Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and information from the 2018 AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan incorporates planning data from the jurisdictions within the region for both existing developments (and the recorded master plan build out of those) and planned (foreseen) new development.

Commenter O5: Monterey-Salinas Transit

Comment O5-1: Monterey-Salinas Transit District (MST) provides public transportation throughout Monterey County and operates an extensive bus network in the neighboring cities of the State Route 68 Corridor (City of Salinas and Greater Monterey Peninsula). MST has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (DEIR/EA) for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project and would like to make the following comments for your consideration.

MST does not operate public routes that serve the entire State Route 68 Corridor due to its existing congestion and stop-and-go traffic conditions, which negatively affect MST's on-time performance and reliability. MST's Line 7 operates along approximately 2.6 miles of State Route 68 (Olmsted Road to York Road) and provides hourly connections from the Monterey Transit Plaza to Ryan Ranch Business Park. Once the State Route 68 Corridor improvements are completed, MST will consider increasing transit service for this route, pending ridership demand and on-time performance.

Response to Comment O5-1: The comment concurs with Section 2.1.5 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, which describes there being only one bus route on a portion of State Route 68 in the westerly portion of the project limits. The comment further clarifies that the entire highway corridor is not served for transit due to traffic congestion negatively affecting transit performance and on-time reliability. As noted in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (page 118), the proposed project would not alter existing transit operations or have considerable effects on existing public transit plans or operations along the corridor. The document further states that public transit operations have the potential to improve after the proposed intersection improvements are completed. The comment is consistent with the analysis in the environmental document.

Comment O5-2: Inactive bus stop poles are also installed along State Route 68. If at any time the developer needs to remove the existing bus stop poles

along Route 68, please contact MST staff to ensure the proper conditions are placed during the removal and reinstallation of bus stops. Please refer to MST's Designing for Transit Guidelines (2020) to ensure that bus stop facilities and intersection control systems are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and MST's operational guidelines.

Response to Comment O5-2: Should any of the existing poles at inactive bus stops be required to be removed as part of project construction, Caltrans will coordinate with the Monterey-Salinas Transit District for implementation of proper removal and reinstallation of the poles.

Comment O5-3: MST supports Caltrans's efforts to improve the safety and bicycle/ pedestrian access along State Route 68. As the Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project moves forward, we ask that Caltrans continue to collaborate with MST. If you have any questions about the above comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at epatel@mst.org or 831-264-9288. Sincerely, Emma Patel, Planning Manager

Response to Comment O5-3: Caltrans thanks the Monterey-Salinas Transit District for its support of the proposed State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project and will continue to coordinate with the Monterey-Salinas Transit District as necessary as the project progresses.

Commenter O6: Living Hope Church of the Nazarene, Daryl Hawkins

Comment O6-1: Thank you for reaching out to our Church regarding the Roundabouts being planned at the Church intersection at Highway 68 and Josselyn Canyon Road in Monterey. We have met several times at our Church Facility with Doug Bilse TE, and have appreciated his guidance and interest in how this may affect our Church parking.

I grew up in Monterey, and have been a member of this Church for 68 years, and studied architecture at Cal Poly, SLO, and have been an architect here in Monterey as a Partner with JHW Architects since returning to Monterey after College In 1970. Four years later our Church was relocated to this site after building the first building and we have been located here since. This was my first Church design as an architect, and I have since been the architect for a total of 50 Church projects, including Cypress Community Church in 1981, which was also affected by previous designs of the proposed Highway 68. These other Churches I have worked on were in the Central Coast of California area as well as the San Francisco Bay area. I was also the architect for the later additions to our Church as well as now in charge of the maintenance and upkeep of our Church facility.

We are definitely in support of the roundabout, as I remember well at least two of our Church members were injured in accidents at this intersection as

they tried to enter Highway 68 from the Church before there were signals at this intersection.

I believe a brief history is appropriate. Our Church in Monterey was started by our Northern California District Church of the Nazarene in 1947 in Pacific Grove in a rented facility. We soon relocated to Seaside about 1951 and built our first Church on La Salle Street. Our purpose for that was to minister to the many Fort Ord military families who lived in Seaside as well as Fort

Ord even before it was incorporated as the City of Seaside in 1954. As we started to grow and needed more room for our facilities and parking, Seaside Urban Renewal was started. They purchased all the homes surrounding our Church and tore them down to build the current Cutino Park, which blocked us from expanding, and we had to relocate. By that time most of our people were living in Monterey, Pacific Grove and Marina so we were looking for about 2 acres of property in Monterey. After looking through several different local Realtors for a year we could find nothing.

Then the Lord stepped in, and a neighbor of one of our members suggested we go talk to Mrs. Davis. Her husband had bought our future property of 5 acres and had the 2 lower acres near Highway 68 cleared and leveled, with the soil going to Cal Trans for fill for the construction of the new interchange at Highway 1 and Highway 68 in about 1964. He was then going to build a gas station on his newly leveled property. However the City of Monterey said no, it was all zoned R-1 single family residential in the immediate area as well as this property, and they would not allow a gas station to be located there. So the leveled site of 2 acres sat unused for many years and her husband later passed away and his wife continued to live in their house just above our future property. When we approached her, her husband had been dead for five years, and she had not even considered selling this property. But when we approached her, she was delighted to sell it to us as a Church property and we quickly came to an agreement to purchase it from her.

We then were able to quickly sell our existing small Church in Seaside to the Boys and Girls Club where they met in our former Church facilities for about 10 years before they were able to build their own current facility.

As a longtime member of the Church and now an architect recently back in Monterey after graduating from Cal Poly SLO in 1970 in Architecture, I got to volunteer my time to develop our Church design and future Masterplan and were able to obtain a City of Monterey Use Permit which included our current sanctuary seating 120 and plans for a future Sanctuary seating 300. I then turned to developing the Construction Drawings and obtain a Building Permit, and we then started working on building, first the Fellowship Hall ourselves. As a Church we had three Contractors in the Church and willing hands to help on Saturdays. We moved into the Fellowship Hall in 1974 where we worshiped there for two years as we turned to building the current Sanctuary

seating 120. This was completed in 1976 and we moved into the Sanctuary for Worship.

Our first problem after we moved in and started to grow was not having enough parking! The City of Monterey Zoning calls for one parking space for every five seats in the main Sanctuary. I later found that for most evangelical Churches like ours, it needs to be one space for three seats. But based on the Monterey parking requirements we initially built the site with 31 parking spaces. Within about 6 years we needed more parking and started work for approvals and raising money to build another 21 parking spaces out towards the corner with Josselyn Canyon Rd. Unlike most Churches, we have no street parking available on Josselyn Canyon Road or Highway 68.

Then in 1983 we had in succession three young pastors who lead us in a significant growth of our Church attendance and we were soon starting to have double services each Sunday morning to accommodate all our people, we were soon running at 150 to 200 attendees. This also necessitated the need for more parking and Sunday School Classroom space, which we were then able to afford and proceeded with adding two additional buildings and additional parking of 21 new parking spaces for a total of 73 parking spaces on site. We found that even this was tight at times, so we were able to add another 11 spaces in the far rear corner along Highway 68 for a total of 84parking spaces. This area was originally the playground for when we operated our own We Care Preschool for about 20 years. We since moved this play equipment to the upper area beside the Kid's Club Building.

Besides our own Living Hope Church of the Nazarene use on Sunday mornings, Saturday Mornings and Wednesday nights, we also have the separate Tree of Life Church renting our Church on Saturday evenings, our separate new Spanish Church of the Nazarene using several buildings on Thursday or Friday evenings and their main Worship Service on Sunday from 6 to 8 p.m. We have the Monterey Christian Coop Home School group of about 60 children on site Monday and Wednesday mornings. We also support the I-Help Ministry to the Homeless Women on the third Sunday of the month where we feed them a dinner and they sleep in our Fellowship Hall overnight. We also host two adjacent Homeowners Groups two or three times a year in our Sanctuary. So our facilities are used almost every day. And many of our groups use the parking lot for games and basketball, and other recreation activities on our central lawn area.

Although our Church is not in attendance where we were before the Covid restrictions, we do plan to grow back to where we use to be. That is our Mission, to reach people with the love of Christ to bring help and hope to their lives. Any loss of parking is significant to our different Churches and groups using this facility both now and for the future.

Response to Comment O6-1: Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County appreciate the information provided by the commenter about the history of the Living Hope Church of the Nazarene and the ongoing communications about the proposed improvements to the project intersections on State Route 68 since the scoping phase of the project. The Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment concluded that the conceptual designs of both Build Alternatives would require removal of at least one-third of the existing parking spaces on the church property with Alternative 1 and over half of the spaces with Alternative 2.

Since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, Caltrans selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative. Caltrans is committed to working toward reduction of necessary property acquisitions from adjacent properties. To that end, Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County will continue to coordinate with the Living Hope Church representatives during the final design phase wherein the roundabout design at the Josselyn Canyon Road/State Route 68 intersection will be refined with the objective of minimizing or avoiding to the extent feasible any major impacts to the uses and operations of the church facilities.

Comment O6-2: Any loss of parking will create significant restrictions on the future use of our property. Again, there are no reasonable options for alternative parking in the area.

I also met with the City of Monterey on Friday December 15 to discuss what these changes will mean to the Church with Kimberly Cole, Community Development Director, and the Senior Planner and City Engineer to see how this will affect our several Approved Use Permits that approved the current number of parking spaces these Use Permits allowed for with the City of Monterey. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Response to Comment O6-2: As noted in response to O6-1, Caltrans will continue to refine the designs of the roundabouts in the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project and will endeavor to reduce to the degree feasible any property impacts to the Living Hope Church, understanding that there are no practical options for replacement parking in the vicinity of the church property. Revised plans will undergo additional internal environmental review and analysis that will consider potential effects of shifting/modifying the roundabout design.

Commenter O7: Sierra Club Ventana Chapter, Scott B. Waltz

Comment O7-1: The SR 68 DEIR is inadequate with respect to the evaluation of wildlife connectivity in certain areas, includling insufficient data to evaluate the impact on wildlife movement at the west end of the project footprint. The wildlife data are biased toward locations where cameras are

more easily placed. The mitigations are biased against special status species like American badger, and in favor of common species like mule deer.

The methodology for the 2017 Monterey-Salinas SR 68: Wildlife Connectivity Analysis (link) included camera capture data; however, the westernmost camera placed to observe wildlife was at York Rd., a significant distance (~1.36 miles) from the 218/68 intersection at the western end of the project. The need for data in this stretch is particularly important as it aligns with the regional open space wildlife corridor that stretches from the Santa Lucia Mountain north, over Jack's Peak, and down through Big Sur Land Trust's recently acquired HIss property, which directly abuts the 68/218 intersection. This regional corridor continues north all the way to the National Monument. See figure 1 below.

Map image:
http://www.fortag.org/frogpond/OtherMaps/DRO_Parcels_70k_230308.png

Response to Comment O7-1: The 2017 Wildlife Connectivity Analysis prepared by Pathways for Wildlife was funded by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and focused, in part, on areas that had potential for infrastructure improvements. The level of existing development and challenging topography and drainage patterns at the State Route 68/State Route 218 intersection were considered when determining camera locations during the study and locations for connectivity elements improvements.

Comment O7-2: The 2017 Wildlife Connectivity Analysis also applied data from other earlier sources that identified animal-vehicle collisions. This data summarized on the Map of Roadkill Data p. 64 identifies an American Badger kill between Ragsdale Road and York Rd. This site is well beyond the westernmost camera location for the 2017 study. Furthermore, this location aligns with the BSLT Monterey Coast - Sierra de Salinas Study Area heat map (p. 5) which shows high value badger sustainability areas (in green) abutting each side. This suggests that badgers, as well as other Species of Special Interest, are travelling the regional north-south corridor described above and the current draft EIR did not sufficiently evaluate such movement. Furher, the mitigations fail to acknowledge and account for this species of special status.

Response to Comment O7-2: The American badger is discussed in the Draft (and Final) Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and the Natural Environment Study. This species may move through the area but is not likely to den within the Area of Potential Impact due to poor habitat conditions and higher quality habitat outside of the Biological Study Area. Badgers may be impacted by reduced habitat connectivity as a result of the roadway intersections transitioning to roundabouts and high traffic volume, making the road more difficult to cross successfully. However, the improved crossing structures proposed in this project are designed for badgers (see data collected and

summarized for badgers in the 2017 Wildlife Connectivity Analysis) as well as other wildlife to improve connectivity and safety to the traveling public.

Comment O7-3: By way of options for supporting wildlife connectivity along the western end of the SR 68 project, building a box culvert just west of Ragsdale Rd. would be a reasonable way to support wildlife crossing in that area. A further opportunity would be a much longer box culvert just east of the 218/68 intersection itself.

Response to Comment O7-3: Refer to responses to comments A1-7 and O3-2 regarding adding more wildlife crossings to the project.

Commenter I1: Amanda Reade

Comment I1-1: As someone who has a double commute in the morning to take my child to All Saints Day school, and a painstaking way back from Carmel any time between 3-5 pm, this is a critical need.

However, our vote weighs heavily on additional lanes and adaptive signaling, we've been saying this for years. Roundabouts will only be clogged, congested and a frustrating waste of money as US residents are utterly confused by them. While the one in Pebble may have helped flow, it's a nightmare trying to ensure I'm not slammed into every single time. No one wants to deal with 9 of those.

I haven't spoken to one person in favor of roundabouts other than those presenting it, so please focus on the second option that is more intuitive and has been a great success in other cities.

Response to Comment I1-1: Your opposition to roundabouts and preference for adaptive signals and additional lanes is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. After circulation of the draft environmental document for public review, Caltrans selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative as discussed in Section 1.6.

A traffic safety analysis was conducted as part of the traffic study for the project. As discussed in Section 2.1.9, studies of roundabouts compared with signalized intersections conclude that roundabouts have substantially fewer potential vehicle conflict points than signalized intersections, and as a result, serious collisions and fatalities are much lower with roundabouts.

Driver education and testing are key requirements to obtaining a driver's license. Rules of the road on how to navigate through a roundabout is included in the California Driver's Handbook (https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/handbook/california-driver-handbook). Roundabouts are becoming a common intersection control option throughout the State of California. It will be important for drivers to become accustomed

to traveling through a roundabout regardless of this project. Navigating a roundabout requires drivers to yield the right-of-way to circulating vehicles and accept gaps in the circulating traffic stream. The following guidelines should be exercised when traveling through a roundabout:

1. Slow down.

2. If there's more than one lane, use the left lane to turn left, the right lane to turn right, and all lanes to go through, unless directed otherwise by signs and pavement markings.

3. Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists.

4. Yield at the entry to circulating traffic.

5. Stay in your lane within the roundabout and use your right-turn signal to indicate your intention to exit.

6. Always assume trucks need all available space, do not attempt to pass them.

7. Clear the roundabout to allow emergency vehicles to pass.

Commenter I2: Judith E. Tschirgi and Steve Hoch

Comment I2-1: My husband and I live in Carmel Valley and often travel over Laureles Grade to Highway 68. We are in total support of the "roundabout" alternative. Roundabouts are a proven traffic calming and traffic flow solution. As witnessed by the amazing roundabout at Highway 68 and the Pebble Beach exit, a roundabout can almost completely solve chronic traffic snarling situations without significantly decreasing transit time during low traffic times. An investment in solving the Highway 68 traffic congestion would be a big boon to everyone on the Peninsula and Salinas Valley. We hope this is the alternative chosen to help create a safer, saner, traffic situation on Highway 68.

Response to Comment I2-1: Your support for the roundabouts alternative (selected as the preferred alternative) is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I3: Ian McPhail

Comment I3-1: Il suggest that you take as a model the photo of a proposed roundabout and under it a description of the locality, in The Carmel Pine Cone, bottom left page 1 of Vol 109 No 450, and use the model tto create the other roundabouts, so that each reader can judge for him/her self to pick the rroundabouts in order of need. The 9 photos could be shown on one page. If many readers report ttheir suggestions, the result would be useful to Caltrans.

Response to Comment I3-1: Figures showing the proposed roundabout conceptual designs for each of the nine project intersections were provided with the draft environmental document on the Caltrans webpage for the

project (also referenced in Appendix H). Thank you for the suggestion to obtain public input regarding the order of need for the roundabouts. Caltrans and the project sponsor, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), have determined that the three easterly intersections will be constructed as roundabouts in the first phase of the project in order of priority for relief of traffic delay during peak travel periods. The latter also was informed by input from the public during the scoping phase and the preliminary design phase during which the draft environmental document was circulated for public comment.

Commenter I4: Jean Rasch

Comment I4-1: Please invest in the roundabouts, with the culvert crossings for animals. Forget the old model of timing the lights. Dump the lights and move us on.

Response to Comment I4-1: Your support for the roundabouts alternative (selected as the preferred alternative) is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I5: Caroline Miller

Comment I5-1: I live within the area affected by the project, and my property abuts Hwy 68 so is likely to be claimed as part of the construction. I am not able to appear in person at the on-site public hearing, but do want my views known.

Firstly, I reject Option 1, building roundabouts. I detest them, and don't know anyone who thinks they are easy to use. As busy as Hwy 68 is, without breaks in traffic to allow cross streets and driveways a chance to pull out safely, frustration and accidents will only increase. Roundabouts may ease flow for those already on the road, but there are a lot of side roads that would be negatively impacted.

The existing road is too limited for the amount of traffic it bears. The solution is to widen the roadway to two lanes between Hwy 1 and Salinas, and to synchronize the traffic lights to maximize throughput, while stopping traffic strategically to allow breaks so side traffic can enter. This is especially important to allow use of driveways that open onto Hwy 68. As I read the plans, Option 2 is more likely to match this solution.

Response to Comment I5-1: Your opposition to roundabouts is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

The project purpose includes improving operations and safety in the corridor. The project will not negatively impact driveway access between the roundabouts. The roundabouts may improve safe driveway access if the

residents are willing to avoid making left turns in or out of the driveways and instead make right-in and right-out turns at the driveways.

As discussed in Sections 1.7.1 and 1.7.2, a full four-lane widening of State Route 68 and bypass route realignment alternatives were evaluated but eliminated from further consideration because they are inconsistent with California's multiple Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders for reduction of vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gases. They are also not consistent with the current project's purpose, which is, in part, to reduce the rate and severity of collisions on the highway. These alternatives are also much costlier than the current proposed improvements and would have greater environmental impacts. Alternative 2, expanded signalized intersections, would add short sections of travel and turn lanes for limited distances on either side of the existing intersections; it would not widen the highway to four travel lanes between Salinas and State Route 1.

Comment I5-2: Additionally, I am concerned about the noise level. Increased traffic has already created a steady hum of road noise, often becoming a roar as race traffic from Laguna Seca lets out. Combined with bigger airplanes servicing the Regional Airport and the PG&E removal of trees that used to buffer lights and noise from Hwy 68 and Garden Road areas, the quality of life along the highway corridor has been negatively impacted during the past few years. Further widening and removal of more trees will only make it worse. I don't see enough attention paid in the proposed plans to noise and light pollution abatement. While I do think Hwy 68 will benefit from lane additions, it is imperative to control highway noise too.

Response to Comment I5-2: The noise analysis prepared for the project evaluated land uses sensitive to noise along the project corridor, including residential areas. The study concluded that no significant noise level impacts would result from Alternative 1, the roundabouts, and that Alternative 2, which would widen the highway at the project intersections for additional turn lanes and auxiliary through lanes, would potentially impact noise levels at the Living Hope Church at the Josselyn Canyon Road/State Route 68 intersection. Compared to signalized intersections, roundabouts can reduce the number and duration of full stops without red phases. Therefore, roundabouts can decrease noise impacts by reducing the number of acceleration/deceleration cycles and time spent idling.

Regarding the comment about light pollution not being addressed, the Aesthetics analysis (Section 2.1.10, page 195 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment) assessed the potential for increased lighting along the project section of the highway. Project lighting for the preferred alternative (roundabouts) would add one additional overhead electrolier at each of the project intersections and replace existing incandescent with LED lamps, the same level of lighting. Avoidance/ minimization measure VIS-14 requires that project lighting fixtures shall be

appropriately shielded, cut-off types to be directed downward, consistent with County and Caltrans lighting standards and guidelines.

Regarding removal of trees, as addressed in Section 2.3.1, Natural Communities, both Build Alternatives would require removal of a substantial number of trees of varying sizes and associated vegetation at the project intersections. Alternative 2, which would require larger impact areas at the expanded intersections, would require notably more trees to be removed than Alternative 1.

Comment I5-3: Lastly, I am claiming my right to fair compensation for any and all property claimed by imminent domain during the project. I own to the roadway. It is private property, not county or city land, and I am not willing to donate it. Thank you for your consideration.

Response to Comment I5-3: As specified in Section 2.1.6, Measure RRPA-1 states in part, “For those properties where acquisition cannot be avoided, all acquisition activities would be conducted in accordance with the regulatory requirements of the Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. The parcel owners would be fully informed of their rights, and objective and fair property appraisals would be conducted. Offers would be prepared based on appraised fair market values.”

Commenter I6: Dan Limesand

Comment I6-1: Hi. Thank you for your continued work on this project and for holding the first of three hearings on the EIR, which I just attended today at the Raceway. I was pleased to see Phase 1 entailed selecting the three most troublesome intersections -- San Benancio, Corral de Tierra, and Laureles Grade. I came prepared to advocate for doing these three first, so it was great seeing they had already been prioritized. I'll be brief, after learning today that roundabouts are both less costly and reduce accidents and injuries, it's a no brainer for me to recommend roundabouts for all eleven intersections, despite hearing that sometimes (not always) roundabouts do not always reduce traffic throughput as well as some Alternative 2 proposed solutions. Bottom line, a solution (roundabouts) that is always better in terms of lower costs and human suffering and property loss should always be chosen over options with less cost and human suffering reductions. Great work and look forward to seeing construction starting in 2027 and completed in 2030!

Response to Comment I6-1: Your support for the roundabouts alternative (selected as the preferred alternative) and the inclusion of the eastern three intersections in the first phase of construction is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I7: Ken Kroopf

Comment I7-1: Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Report: We live in Pasadera. We would like to see the bypass coming out onto Highway 68 retained as that has allowed us a safe and easy merge onto 68.

Response to Comment I7-1: The function of a merge/acceleration lane is to allow motorists to merge with highway traffic at or near the speed of traffic. Highway traffic has the right-of-way, and motorists who are attempting to merge with highway traffic must take the necessary precautions to yield to avoid an accident.

At roundabouts, motorists approaching a roundabout must reduce their speeds, look for potential conflicts with vehicles already in the circular roadway and be prepared to stop for pedestrians and bicyclists. Vehicles travel counterclockwise around a raised center island, with entering traffic yielding the right-of-way to circulating traffic. Converting the signalized intersection at Pasadera-Boots Road to a roundabout facilitates traffic from Pasadera Road and Boots Road to enter State Route 68 within the roundabout, which has slow and consistent speeds between 15 to 20 miles per hour. This eliminates the need for a merge/acceleration lane. Refer also to response to comment O4-1b.

Comment I7-2: We do not see the need for sidewalks around the roundabout, as pedestrians do not generally walk on 68. Seems like a waste of money.

Response to Comment I7-2: The sidewalks/pedestrian pathways are to be included in all roundabout designs and currently serve as an alternate path for use by bicyclists that are not inclined to travel through the roundabout.

Comment I7-3: The center island in the roundabout should be landscaped.

Response to Comment I7-3: Your input on preference for landscaping the center islands of the roundabouts is appreciated and was shared with the project team.

Caltrans District 5 Maintenance has specified hardscape for the central island for various reasons, including costs and to minimize worker exposure. The Aesthetics analysis in the environmental document (Section 2.1.10) prescribes landscaping of the center islands as part of the avoidance and minimization measures for roundabout features to the degree feasible. The Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase of the project will include refined design elements of the preferred alternative (roundabouts), including consideration of landscaping and other elements such as irrigation and worker safety for ongoing maintenance.

Commenter I8: Bonnie Daniel

Comment I8-1: I dread the round about ideas for 68. The construction will be a nightmare. I am thinking of selling my house and moving from the area because of this. I do not know why making 68 four lane with 2 on each side. The costs would be reduced and speedier. Please consider this option.

Response to Comment I8-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative and preference for widening of State Route 68 to four lanes is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Temporary and permanent impacts to properties adjacent to the highway to enable construction of the roundabouts will be further refined in the next phase of the project when the design is finalized. As stated in Table 1.5 in Chapter 1, a Transportation Management Plan will be implemented to manage traffic flow during construction. The plan will include specific procedures for movement of vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians through the intersections work areas, such as detour routes, lane closures, and reversable lanes as applicable for each location. A public information program about the anticipated construction schedule, durations, and procedures will also be provided.

As discussed in Section 1.7.1, a full four-lane widening of State Route 68 was previously evaluated as part of the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan but was eliminated from further consideration as it would be inconsistent with California's multiple Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders for reduction of vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gases. In addition, it would not be consistent with one of the current project's purposes, which is to reduce the severity of collisions on the highway; it would also be much costlier than the current proposed improvements and would have greater environmental impacts.

Commenter I9: David Wittrock

It is noted that Comment I9-1 is not about the proposed project but rather about the existing roundabout at State Route 1 and State Route 68 outside of the project limits. A response is provided below for the record.

Comment I9-1: Dear Mr. Fowler, I write to you only in hope that, if you cannot chase this down, can pass it on to one who can deal with it. On Highway 68 at the intersection with Hwy 1 there is a roundabout that has enormously eased traffic. I'm pleased, except for one thing. Driving east on 68 entering the roundabout, the road divides into two lanes to provide a lane that goes around the roundabout and back to Carmel Professional Center. The problem is there is only about 30' before it squeezes back into one lane. Most take the second lane as a passing lane that disappears and forces

accommodation by the driver in the original lane. Signage is confusing, road markings are confusing. It could be corrected in a number of ways, but if someone from DoT could look at it, I think it would be equitably repaired.

Response to Comment I9-1: This concern has been forwarded to the Caltrans District 5 Traffic Safety division for evaluation of concerns associated with signage and taper lengths described. If any issues are found, corrective measures will be studied and implemented as necessary.

Commenter I10: Lorraine Gorczyca

Comment I10-1: It would be best to purchase land needed to widen 68 to 4 lanes all the way as proposed in early 1970's - and continue 4 lanes from toro park on highway 68.

Response to Comment I10-1: As discussed in Section 1.7.1, a full four-lane widening of State Route 68 was previously evaluated as part of the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan improvement options, but eliminated from further consideration because the addition of lanes is inconsistent with the State of California's initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by deprioritizing widening/capacity-increasing projects. Multiple Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders for reduction of vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gases to combat climate change were implemented. In addition, widening to four lanes would add more potential conflict points at the highway intersections as discussed in the Traffic analysis in Section 2.1.9, which would not be consistent with one of the project's purposes of reducing the rate and severity of collisions on the route.

Commenter I11: Randall Charles

Comment I11-1: We spend 4-6 months a year in Australia and roundabouts are everywhere in communities similar to the Monterey Peninsula. Roundabouts are terrific, and I highly support these rather than the alternatives mentioned. There are common courtesy rules for the use of turn signals when entering a roundabout that are used by all. These keep traffic flowing. Lend my voice to support for roundabouts.

Response to Comment I11-1: Your support for the roundabouts alternative (selected as the preferred alternative) is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I12: Glen Grossman

Comment I12-1: I think the culverts for animals to cross the highway is a great idea. There is no need for round a bouts or circles. Certainly a waste of money.

Response to Comment I12-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts and support of the wildlife crossings is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I13: Lorraine Saulovich

Comment I13-1: I've been a resident of Toro Park since 1991. We live next to the Toro Park School on Montera Drive. Over the years the traffic on highway 68 has significantly affected our interior street. Actually, it has affected all the streets East of the school.

As you are well aware, the traffic traveling West between 7:00am to 8:30am is horrendous! When the highway backs up from 2 lanes to 1 it causes a lot of congestion. Motorists, then exit at Portola, drive on Portola and our side streets to "get ahead" of the traffic. They then exit at Torero causing the traffic on 68 to stop and let cars back onto 68. Also, traffic is coming off Reservation Road and driving to Portola to stay off the congested highway.

At the intersection of Portola and the off ramp of 68 it's a dangerous situation for drivers and children walking to school. Drivers get off 68 and make U-turns back onto the highway. I saw a driver at 7:50 am screaming in her car at a driver coming off Portola onto Portola who she thought was cutting her off. A child was in the dirt area to the cars right walking to school.

On our street, Montera Drive, it's like a race track of cars speeding down our street to get ahead of the traffic. Many families and children alone are walking to school and crossing streets.

I honestly don't know what it will take for our traffic situation to be solved! I feel like it's fallen on deaf ears. Especially when I went to the meeting at Laguna Seca and nothing but the round-a-bouts were proposed. I spoke with a TAMC personnel who stated that anything to do with the highway coming into 68's one lane and or Torero had been scrapped in 2017!!

The project "may" help traffic at the proposed intersections....but it won't help the 2 lanes into one or the Torero stop and go traffic.

This project won't even start for 5 more years!! Our situation will only continually get worse over these next years with absolutely no resolve for us in our development!

I would like a relook at our traffic and real solutions to our traffic problems! Not just calling the Highway Patrol to give out tickets. What are some solutions? We've been asking for years!!

Response to Comment I13-1: Your concerns about the cut-through traffic off of State Route 68 through the Toro Park neighborhood is appreciated and acknowledged and have been shared with the project team.

The Toro Park neighborhood is within the jurisdiction of Monterey County, and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) has coordinated with Monterey County Public Works Department with assistance from Caltrans and the Monterey County Regional Fire District to develop and implement traffic-calming (circulation-routing) measures to discourage motorists from using the Toro Park neighborhood internal road system to bypass the westbound queue on State Route 68 during the morning peak period. A pilot program for this purpose was implemented by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County on July 12, 2024 for a period of several months. The objective of the pilot project was to prevent diversion of traffic from westbound State Route 68 onto neighborhood streets via Portola Drive and Torero Drive. The pilot project is separate from the subject Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project since the pilot project area is outside of the proposed State Route 68 Corridor project limits and not in Caltrans' right-of-way. The pilot project is now concluded, and the partial closure at Torero Drive remains in place and under the management of Monterey County. It will receive ongoing evaluation with possible additional measures and/or modifications in the vicinity.

Commenter I14: Betsy Wilson

Comment I14-1: Thank you for working on this project. I live in Monterey and am submitting a comment for consideration. I would strongly recommend roundabouts in lieu of signals. The highway 68 and highway 1 roundabout has been a great improvement over the old signalized intersection and the long term maintenance cost for roundabouts is surely much lower than signals. Please consider the long term cost to the taxpayers when making the decision.

Response to Comment I14-1: Your support for the roundabouts alternative (selected as the preferred alternative) is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I15: Paul Baker

Comment I15-1: It is great to hear that you are planning the work to replace traffic signals on SR68 between Monterey and Salinas with roundabouts and that you plan to add wildlife crossing corridors.

We are very appreciative of the work you did earlier to replace the SR68/HWY 1 interchange with a roundabout complex - that area used to be very backed up and always unpleasant, now it is a dream. If you can improve SR68 on the way to Salinas in the same way that will be great.

Response to Comment I15-1: Your support for the roundabouts alternative (selected as the preferred alternative) is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Comment I15-2: On the project website you show a proposal with landscaped roundabouts and another proposal with hardscape roundabouts. The landscaped roundabouts are much prettier and fit in better with the natural surroundings. Also, anything that can be done to reduce the heat islands produced by massive amounts of paving would be welcome, so please count me as preferring the landscaped option.

I'm sorry I am not able to attend the Dec 6 public hearing, but please accept this email as my input to the project.

Response to Comment I15-2: Your preference for landscaping the roundabout center islands is appreciated and shared with the project team. As discussed in the Visual/Aesthetics section (2.1.10), Measure VIS-9, Roundabout Aesthetic Treatment, includes the potential for landscaping of the center islands if feasible. The final design phase of the project will evaluate all elements affecting the feasibility of landscaping the center islands.

Commenter I16: Michael Weaver

Comment I16-1: The Weavers own approximately 11 acres in Corral de Tierra, cross street SR68, adjoining SR68.It was zoned 1-acre minimum building site and was designated visually scenic. In the latter 1980's, early 1990 the Weavers processed an application for a minor subdivision with Monterey County, but only for two additional building sites, one apiece for my brother and myself.

We agreed to let the County representatives select the building sites. First off was no development anywhere adjacent to scenic Highway 68. We agreed to "downzone" the property from one-acre minimum to a B-6 zoning designation, meaning no further development. Three lots total, in perpetuity.

We also agreed to a permanent, recorded, non-access strip of property along the frontage with Highway 68. No access. We willingly agreed to designate a good bit of the property to permanent Visual Scenic Easement. We do graze a horse and a burro on a portion of the property. We also maintain the Oak trees and use Stihl Weed Eaters to trim defensible space surrounding the three homes. Any landscaping is drought tolerant and fire resistant.

I am writing because of the family concern regarding the alignment of the two preferred alternatives proposed in the new DEIR for SR68. Please advise us that our property next to Highway 68 will remain as untouched and as visually scenic as we have kept it since 1950.

Response to Comment I16-1: As noted in Section 2.1.6 and Appendix J, the preliminary design for the roundabout alternative (Alternative 1) at State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road would not require acquisition of any portion of the property from the parcel owned by the commenter that directly abuts State Route 68.

Commenter I17: Dennis Lebow Jr.

Comment I17-1: This project absolutely needs to address and resolve the illegal and unsafe use of Portola Drive to bypass congested portions of hwy 68. There has been an increase in vehicle and pedestrian accidents along Portola Drive and especially near the El Toro elementary school where the congestion is intensified by parents and buses delivering children to school in the mornings.

Response to Comment I17-1: Your concerns about the cut-through traffic off of State Route 68 through the Toro Park neighborhood is appreciated and acknowledged and was shared with the project team.

The Toro Park neighborhood is within the jurisdiction of Monterey County, and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) has coordinated with Monterey County Public Works Department with assistance from Caltrans and the Monterey County Regional Fire District to develop and implement traffic-calming (circulation-routing) measures to discourage motorists from using the Toro Park neighborhood internal road system to bypass the westbound queue on State Route 68 during the morning peak period. A pilot program for this purpose was implemented by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County on July 12, 2024 for a period of several months. The objective of the pilot project was to prevent diversion of traffic from westbound State Route 68 onto neighborhood streets via Portola Drive and Torero Drive. The pilot project is separate from the subject Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project since the pilot project area is outside of the proposed State Route 68 Corridor project limits and not in Caltrans' right-of-way. The pilot project is now concluded, and the partial closure at Torero Drive remains in place and under the management of Monterey County. This will receive ongoing evaluation with possible additional measures and/or modifications in the vicinity.

Commenter I18: Kathleen Catania

Comment I18-1: I am very concerned about the tentative plans for Highway 68. I believe the roundabouts will help somewhat, but will also cause more problems.

I believe there are other alternatives that would enhance the flow of traffic, especially with the increased expectation for the future. A four-lane highway with left hand turns at major intersections would be the preferable choice.

Response to Comment I18-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts and preference for widening of State Route 68 to four lanes and left-turn lanes at major intersections are acknowledged and were shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Section 1.7.1 addresses the four-lane widening alternative, which would require a much larger physical footprint for the additional highway lanes and would result in greater impacts on environmental resources and adjacent public and private property. Furthermore, a four-lane widening would have a much higher cost than the two Build Alternatives considered for the proposed project improvements, including the preferred alternative, Alternative 1. Previous cost estimates for the four-lane full corridor widening were about $200 million, a value that would be much higher in today's dollars.

The four-lane widening alternative is also not included in the list of financially constrained projects in the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018), or the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's Regional Transportation Plan. In addition, the State of California has adopted goals and policies for reduction of greenhouse gases and traffic-related air pollution, which capacity-increasing transportation projects can cause. A road widening conflicts with these objectives, which would also create a deterrence for potential funding of a project that would induce auto travel along a highway corridor. For these reasons, the full corridor widening concept was removed from further consideration.

Comment I18-2: I also do not understand why alternative methods to travel to Salinas are not being considered. The Watkins Gate Road from General Jim Moore can be opened and goes all the way to River Road. That would be a second alternative to travel to Salinas and thus help the congestion on 68. Also extending General, Jim Moore through to Reservation Rd., (which should have been done when the road was initially built) would be another alternative way for traffic to pass to Salinas.

I do not understand why these alternative possibilities are not also being considered. By having alternate methods to travel from Monterey to Salinas it would definitely decrease the load that Highway 68 currently has.

Please reconsider your plan, as I am very opposed to the nine roundabouts on 68 leaving the road still a two Lane road to Salinas. And, only the second road to get traffic moving between Monterey and Salinas.

Response to Comment I18-2: Refer to response to comment I18-1. Constructing new connecting segments from existing roads on the former Fort Ord military base property would be under the purview of the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which manages the property, now a National Monument. There are no plans to extend the existing roads through the National Monument to provide alternative routes to State Route 68; such expansion would impact sensitive species habitats and impact the natural

resources and recreational values of the Monument property, which was dedicated for those purposes.

In addition, new roadway alignments and/or extension of existing roadways that are not a part of the State Highway System would be under the jurisdiction of other government agencies, such as the County of Monterey and/or local cities. Those agencies would be responsible for review and approval of any expansions of the local roadway system in conjunction with adopted circulation plans and policies.

Commenter I19: Bonnie Daniel

Comment I19-1: I am so very against the amount of round abouts. I am going to have to move so I will not have to go thru the construction. The traffic and congestion will be horrendous. I do not want to be part of this outrageous plan.

Response to Comment I19-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Table 1.5 in Chapter 1 of the environmental document states that a Transportation Management Plan will be prepared and implemented for management of traffic flow during construction at the project intersections; intersection improvements will be constructed in phases, with several intersections per phase rather that all nine intersections at once. The plan will include specific procedures to enable movement of vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians through the intersection work areas, such as reversable lanes, temporary lane closures, detour routes, and public information methods.

Commenter I20: Monique Kaldy

Comment I20-1: I am writing to OPPOSE PLAN 1, Construction of Roundabouts on Highway 68 between Josselyn Canyon Rd. and San Benancio.

This proposal makes absolutely no sense. This is California State Highway 68, not an arterial street within a City. If the signalized intersections are causing traffic delay, imagine what will happen when there is a crash in a single lane roundabout. That scenario would result in a complete traffic sig-alert, with no movement. Further, the clogged roundabout would stop emergency vehicles from access. I SUPPORT PLAN 2, which includes updated technology and access lanes to improve traffic flow.

Response to Comment I20-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts and support of expanded signalized intersections is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

The expectation is that any collisions on the public roadways will cause delays to the traveling public, no matter whether roundabouts or signals are in use. However, roundabouts are designed to reduce the speeds of the vehicles that travel through the intersection, resulting in the reduction of the number and severity of injury and fatal collisions. The lower speed property-damage-only collisions that are typical of roundabouts are less likely to result in disabled vehicles, therefore allowing drivers to move their vehicles out of the roundabout. If the vehicle is operable after a collision, guidance in the California Driver's Handbook directs the driver to move the "…vehicle out of traffic if no one is hurt. Then call 911." Roundabouts, therefore, are expected to reduce the occurrence of severe traffic collisions and the need for emergency response. Fewer traffic collisions would enhance travel time reliability on State Route 68.

Comment I20-2: On a wild card note, has there been consideration of a true highway with over-passes, on-ramps, and off-ramps for cross traffic? An alternative would be use of parallel access roads, but that would require much more eminent domain work. Your consideration is appreciated.

Response to Comment I20-2: State Route 68 will remain a two-lane conventional highway within the project limits for the foreseeable future. Refer to response to comment I18-1 and Section 1.7.1 for an explanation of why the highway is not proposed for expansion.

Commenter I21: Peter H. Hiller

Comment I21-1: Both my wife and I support all proposed highway improvements for Ca. State Route 68. Work to be started as soon as possible.

Response to Comment I21-2: Your support for the project is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I22: Donna Teresa

Comment I22-1: I would like to make a comment on the road project for Hwy 68. I am grateful that there will be underground passes for the wildlife. Long overdue. I would like to make the comment that the fencing on both sides of 68 are in need of repair to prevent animal crossings. The wildlife go through these unrepaired fences and are killed because they go through these "holes" in the fences throughout 68 and sadly run over by passing vehicles who travel over the speed limit daily. Where is the responsibility for all these fences to be repaired? The owners of these properties should be repairing these fences. These fences have remained unrepaired for many years.

Response to Comment I22-1: Your support for the underground culvert improvements to aid wildlife crossing the highway is appreciated and was shared with the project team.

There are five pipe or box-type culvert improvements proposed within the 9 miles of the project limits, and four of these would have directional fencing installed along the edge of the highway to guide mammals to the culvert opening. Regarding responsibility of repairing holes in existing fencing along the highway, State Route 68 is currently operating as a conventional highway and therefore is not required to have fencing. Existing fencing along the route is privately owned, and therefore the landowner has the responsibility for repairs and maintenance of the private fences, in accordance with applicable local agency ordinances.

Comment I22-2: I also hope there will be more than one underground passing to accommodate the animals that live all along 68.

Response to Comment I22-2: As noted in response to comment I22-2, the project includes five improvement underground culvert crossings with two existing bridge crossing locations being evaluated for wildlife fencing considerations. See Table 1.4 in Chapter 1 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact.

Comment I22-3: I would also like to please make the comment that in widening lanes and constructing these new paths, please do your best not to disturb the animal habitats close to the road, trees, plants, etc. Many creatures live in these areas as well.

Thank you for hearing my comments, I respectfully say them for the animals who have no voice and I truly hope you will consider them in your plans and construction.

Response to Comment I22-3: The project designs for the preferred alternative (roundabouts) at the project intersections will be further refined during the final design phase of the project (Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase) with prioritization toward minimizing permanent and temporary impacts to biological resources.

Commenter I23: Diana Martinetto

Comment I23-1: I am very enthusiastic that roundabouts are proposed for the Hwy 68 corridor due to the success of the one completed off Hwy 1 at the 366A interchange.

The increasing traffic over the past decade on the Monterey- Salinas Hwy 68 is creating backlogs and delays resulting in erratic driving by some. I've witnessed the amazing improvements to traffic flow and appearance of the 366A interchange and look forward to the same improvements in flow, safer driving and appearance being made at the intersection to Pasadera with the addition of a roundabout.

As a resident of Pasadera and a frequent driver of the Hwy 68 corridor, I enthusiastically endorse the additions to roundabouts.

Response to Comment I23-1: Your support for the roundabouts alternative (selected as the preferred alternative) is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I24: Rick Aaronian

Comment I24-1: Dear Sirs / Madams. As a resident of the Pasadera Community, my wife and I (along with friends and guests) strongly oppose the changes being proposed for several reasons. First; I believe that any roundabouts are dangerous to navigate in a safe manner.

Response to Comment I24-1: Studies have shown that roundabouts are safer when compared to traditional intersections. In general, roundabouts can reduce more than 90 percent of fatalities in collisions, 76 percent of injuries, and 35 percent in overall crashes at intersections based on data from the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety in collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration (Section 2.1.9, Roundabout Traffic Safety discussion).

The operational performance of roundabouts is based on the premise that drivers must yield the right-of-way to circulating vehicles and accept gaps in the circulating traffic stream. The operational performance is therefore directly influenced by traffic patterns and gap acceptance characteristics along with roundabout geometry.

Studies of roundabout use over time have shown that the majority of accidents that occur in the roundabout in the early stages of its use are primarily of a minor “fender bender” nature; once drivers become accustomed to yielding the right-of-way when other vehicles are in the roundabout, the number of accidents taper off. Studies referenced can be found at: https://www.iihs.org/topics/bibliography/ref/2180 and https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0001457523004773.

As discussed in Section 2.1.9, traditional signalized intersections have a much greater number of potential conflict points than roundabouts.

Comment I24-2: Second; access to the Pasadera community from a west to east direction will enhance the likelihood of injury or accident.

Response to Comment I24-2: The comment is somewhat unclear as there is currently access to Pasadera community for westbound traffic on State Route 68 via the left turn at the signalized intersection at Pasadera-Boots Road. The proposed roundabout would provide westbound access via the exit lane from the roundabout directly onto Pasadera Drive. Roundabouts have fewer vehicle conflict points than traditional intersections, as discussed in Section 2.1.9.

Comment I24-3: Third; loss of the westward " merge lane " will also increase the likelihood of injury.

Response to Comment I24-3: The traffic volume turning movements from State Route 68 onto Pasadera and vice versa were too low to warrant an exclusive bypass/merger lane. Also, the addition of these lanes would result in additional encroachment onto the private land of concern. Converting the signalized intersection to a roundabout facilitates traffic from Pasadera Drive and Boots Road to enter onto the highway within the roundabout, which has slow and consistent traffic speeds, eliminating the need for a merge/acceleration lane from the cross streets. Roundabouts have been found to reduce the number of conflict points and reduce the number and severity of collisions within this type of intersection control. Refer also to response to comment I7-1.

Comment I24-4: Fourthly; I have not heard of any alternative designs for this project - are any other ideas being considered? (ie. leaving all traffic light inter-sections intact and building only 4-5 roundabouts? A possible " hybrid " plan).

Response to Comment I24-4: Two Build Alternatives were considered for the project corridor and analyzed in the draft environmental document: Alternative 1 would convert the existing signalized intersections to roundabouts and Alternative 2 would expand the signalized intersections by adding auxiliary lanes and turn lanes and would implement Adaptive Signal Control technology at the intersections to adapt traffic signal timing and phasing to traffic conditions. Caltrans selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative after studying the environmental impacts of both Build Alternatives.

Construction of roundabouts will occur in phases, so for short periods of time the corridor will have a combination of roundabouts and signals. Having a mix of roundabouts and signalized intersections is not ideal due to inconsistencies in traffic flow, safety, and operational efficiency. Alternating control methods could disrupt traffic patterns, confuse drivers, and reduce safety benefits by introducing varying intersection designs. Also, coordinating roundabouts with signalized intersections poses challenges to ensuring smooth traffic progression. Finally, a hybrid system would increase maintenance complexity and costs, making it less practical and less aligned with the project’s goals of safety, efficiency, and sustainability.

Comment I24-5: Fifth; Are the plans for the improvements to Hwy 68 going to help with traffic congestion; if not, I do not, in any way shape or form, condone the spending of $200M of taxpayer funds.

Response to Comment I24-5: The traffic analysis for the project (see Section 2.1.9) evaluated the amount of traffic delay during peak periods of travel on State Route 68 that would result from changing the intersections to

roundabouts or expanded signalized intersections. The traffic analysis concluded that converting the intersections to roundabouts is projected to reduce delay by 28 percent by the year 2045 compared to no improvements.

Comment I24-6: Sixth; Loss of the traffic light at the Pasadera intersection may make the community a " less desirable " due to the difficulty in navigating the inter-section. Should this occur, and home values decrease, are Cal Trans and Monterey County going to be held financially liable for the Home values being reduced?

Please consider my comments when deciding the ultimate fate for your Hwy 68 improvement project.

Response to Comment I24-6: Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County do not anticipate that replacing signalized intersections with roundabouts at the project intersections with State Route 68, including the signalized intersection of Pasadera Drive-Boots Road at State Route 68, would cause declines in property values because of access restrictions to and from the highway. Roundabouts enable entry and exit movements from cross-street traffic via gaps in the traffic circling through the roundabout, which are traveling at low speeds (20 to 25 miles per hour depending on the roundabout design). For motorists who have not used roundabouts previously, there is a short period of adjustment to get accustomed to entering a flow of traffic and navigating the roundabout. However, there is a substantial body of evidence through studies of roundabouts that demonstrates the safety benefits of roundabouts over traditional signalized intersections. Roundabouts experience less frequent and less severe types of collisions than signalized intersections. See also response to comment O2-4, responses to the O4 series of comments, and response to comment I44-4.

Commenter I25: Eric Sahn

Comment I25-1: I am a homeowner in the Pasadera community. I reviewed the material on your website but I did not see any reference to speed limits on Highway 68 in the area around Pasadera and in general between Monterrey and Salinas. How would the speed limits change with either construction option?

If I am traveling east on 68 and enter the roundabout to go into Pasadera I would have the right of way once I am in the traffic circle and cars going west on 68 would have to slow down and stop to allow me to proceed ahead of them. So, what will the speed limit be to make this all safe?

Response to Comment I25-1: The current posted speed limit along State Route 68 within the project limits is 55 miles per hour, and that will remain after project completion. However, roundabouts are purposely designed with a tight radius to reduce the speed of vehicles going through the intersection. The roundabout designs used the guidance in the National Cooperative

Highway Research Program Report 672, whereby the maximum entering design speeds based on a theoretical fastest path of 20 to 25 miles per hour and 25 to 30 miles per hour recommended for single-lane and multi-lane roundabouts, respectively, were used. The calculated design speeds within the circular roadway for either single-lane or multi-lane roundabouts range from 15 to 20 miles per hour.

Under Alternative 1, appropriate signage would be placed ahead of the roundabout to alert drivers about the reduced speed ahead, including the use of flashing beacons to further warn the driver of changing speed conditions. For Alternative 2, there would be no change to the posted speed limit signage.

The roundabouts are designed to allow for lower entry speeds for the fastest path a passenger vehicle can take as it enters; the circulating speeds are based on the inscribed circle diameter and vary from 15 to 20 miles per hour as noted above. Making an entry onto Pasadera Drive from State Route 68 and an exit from Pasadera Drive onto the highway there should be an expected lower speed than those described above. Also, the lower speeds allow for drivers to yield as needed.

Comment I25-2: Does the speed limit change along 68 between the areas of the roundabouts and once you approach the roundabouts?

Response to Comment I25-2: The current posted speed limit along State Route 68 between the intersections within the project limits is 55 miles per hour, and that will remain after project completion. Vehicle speeds upon approach to a roundabout reduce because of the geometry and deflection at the entrance to the roundabout; speed limit signs at the roundabouts are therefore not required or recommended.

Comment I25-3: Similarly, if I am leaving Pasadera and I want to go west to Monterey, I have to wait until it is all clear to proceed on to 68. There will be no light and no merging lane. Why would there not be a merging lane maintained here given the current existing traffic leaving Pasadera to allow for a more safe way on to 68.

Response to Comment I25-3: The function of a merge/acceleration lane is to allow motorist to merge with highway traffic at or near the speed of traffic. Highway traffic has the right-of-way, and motorists who are attempting to merge with highway traffic must take the necessary precautions to yield to avoid an accident.

Motorists approaching a roundabout must reduce their speeds, look for potential conflicts with vehicles already in the circular roadway and be prepared to stop for pedestrians and bicyclists. Vehicles travel counterclockwise around a raised center island, with entering traffic yielding the right-of-way to circulating traffic. Converting the signalized intersection at Pasadera Drive-Boots Road to a

roundabout facilitates traffic from Pasadera Drive and Boots Road to enter State Route 68 within the roundabout, which has slow and consistent speeds from 15 to 20 miles per hour. This eliminates the need for a merge/acceleration lane. Refer also to response to comment O4-1b.

Comment I25-4: And, given the traffic leaving Pasadera going east on 68, once a car goes forward into the circle, would those cars have a right of way against cars already on 68 traveling east? Those cars would have to slow down and allow the Pasadera cars to proceed ahead of them? Would that cause a back-up on 68 for cars traveling east?

Response to Comment I25-4: The roundabouts are designed to lower speeds of approaching vehicles and provide more time for entering drivers to judge, adjust speed for, and enter a gap in circulating traffic. Vehicles travel counterclockwise around a raised center island, with entering traffic yielding the right-of-way to circulating traffic. Queues may develop during peak periods, but the queue is expected to have continuous flow unlike at signalized intersections, where vehicles must idle at a red signal. The queues typically will clear up and experience reduced overall delays in a roundabout, unlike at signalized intersections.

It will be up to the driver to find the gap; once in the gap, the cars traveling behind would slow down or yield to the entering cars speed. Queuing will occur, but the benefit of the roundabout is that all connecting roads would experience continuous flow movement.

Commenter I26: Elizabeth Turner

Comment I26-1 (primarily addresses the Monterey County Planners and Supervisors): I am writing regarding the proposed zoning change and proposed development for the property to the south of highway 68 at the intersection of highway 68 and Olmsted Rd.

I live in the area and it recently came to my attention that the land would be changed from resource conservation land to high density residential development. As far as I can tell through conversations with many residents who live near the property, none of the residents, all of whom are certainly highly impacted and therefore stakeholders for this zoning change and proposed development, have been notified of these proposals by any Monterey county planners or other officials. As a group, we have had to do our own research to figure out what is being planned behind our backs. I am shocked that voters and taxpayers of Monterey County are being treated in such a disrespectful manner. A slide presentation from your consultants, Harris & Associates, lists "Community Engagement" as a preliminary step in the planning process. Was this step overlooked or are we being intentionally kept in the dark? Furthermore, a Monterey County Planning Map lists the parcels in question as "positive" and "no comment." I guarantee you that is

completely untrue as the community members I have spoken to have many comments and all of them are negative towards the proposed project. This has the appearance of a failure of public oversight and of your responsibility to be transparent with the public.

This site is highly inappropriate for the type of development you are proposing. County Maps show it as a "highly sensitive" viewshed area of the Highway 68 scenic corridor. Many of us who built houses in the area had to go to great lengths to demonstrate to the planning department that our structures could not be seen from Highway 68. Do these rules no longer apply? Is Highway 68 no longer a scenic corridor? Somebody should tell Caltrans as their proposed highway 68 project assumes that the highway is indeed still a scenic corridor.

Speaking of CalTrans, there is also no way that the intersection of Highway 68 and Olmsted Rd, even after any of the Caltrans improvements can handle the traffic impact of vehicles associated with over 1300 units. State guidelines suggest that, for affordable housing overlays, urban infill should be a priority location. The obvious reason for this is that it reduces traffic impact, reduces impact on climate change and provides an efficient way for residents to get to work and to obtain necessities.

In closing, I will add that there are many nearby Monterey County neighborhoods that would be affected by the proposed development. In addition, people who commute along highway 68 and those who use Monterey Airport will also be affected by the huge increase in the number of vehicles on Highway 68. I'm sure that other residents of rural areas along the highway (Toro, San Benancio, Corral De Tierra, etc...) will be dismayed to find out that, if farm or ranch land became available near them, that the peaceful and scenic nature of their environment can turn into high density housing and that these plans can be made without their concerns being considered.

Response to Comment I26-1: The comment is referring to a purported zone change to allow high-density residential development on property on the south side of State Route 68 near Olmsted Road; development proposals adjacent to the state highway are not affiliated with, or a part of, the proposed intersection improvements on State Route 68, but would be the purview of the land use agency in which the property is located. Therefore, comments and questions regarding development proposals should be addressed to the applicable jurisdictional land use agency, such as the County of Monterey Housing and Community Development Department.

Traffic impacts on a transportation system created by local developments are required to be mitigated by the developer in coordination with the road or highway jurisdictional agency(ies). The State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project is funded in part by taxpayers through a local tax measure established

for specific highway operational improvements as well as other state funding sources (refer to information in Section 1.1) and cannot be used to mitigate impacts created by local development.

Commenter I27: Laura Dost

Comment I27-3: I strongly urge you to move all the utility poles + lines along this corridor to underground at the same time as this huge project. Now is the time to accomplish both!

Response to Comment I27-3: As discussed in Chapter 1, utility poles and lines in conflict with the intersection improvements will be relocated. For the impacted segments of overhead utilities, it is expected that the utility owner will follow the Public Utilities Commission's undergrounding policies within Scenic Corridor requirements.

Commenter I28: Frank Dost

Comment I28-2: Would like to see the power and telephone lines to be placed underground.

Response to Comment I28-2: As discussed in Chapter 1, utility poles and lines in conflict with the intersection improvements will be relocated. For the impacted segments of overhead utilities, the utility owner will need to follow the California Public Utilities Commission's undergrounding policies within Scenic Corridor requirements.

Comment I28-3: Please minimize the construction timeline to be as short in duration as possible.

Response to Comment I28-3: As stated in Table 1.5 in Chapter 1, a Transportation Management Plan will be implemented to manage traffic flow during construction. The plan will include specific procedures for movement of vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians through the intersections work areas, such as detour routes, lane closures, and reversable lanes as applicable for each location. A public information program about the anticipated construction schedule, durations, and procedures will also be provided.

A critical path method for the construction timeline will be developed for each intersection and will include evaluations by the construction representatives to ensure that the construction working days are adequate for the proposed improvements. Any opportunity to shorten the construction time, while still meeting the performance standards, measures and permit conditions, will be explored to minimize construction impacts to traveling motorists.

Commenter I29: Beth Benoit

Comment I29-1: I am fully in favor of landscaped roundabouts.

Response to Comment I29-1: Your support for the project and the roundabouts alternative (selected as the preferred alternative) with landscaping is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. The final design phase of the project will evaluate all elements affecting the feasibility of landscaping the center islands.

Commenter I30: Colleen Courtney

Comment I30-1: I am supportive of roundabouts! Thanks for working on improving traffic flow + congestion with traffic improvements proven to work.

Response to Comment I30-1: Your support for the project and the roundabouts alternative (selected as the preferred alternative) is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I31: John Fitzgerald

Comment I31-1: Looking forward to the overall project (hope roundabouts work as well as the "new" one at HillGate / Hwy 68 interchange near Pebble Beach, BUT: 1) doesn't address A.M. back up from Portola Dr/Torero Dr (4 to 2 transition). Big issue for us when public uses Portola Drive to by-pass that bottleneck (despite the useless signage).

Response to Comment I31-1: Your support for the project and the roundabout (preferred alternative) is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Refer to response to comment O2-2 regarding a pilot program implemented by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County to address neighborhood pass-through traffic in the Portola/Toro Park neighborhood.

Comment I31-2: 2) State/County should have punched a parkway (4-lane) through Ft. Ord from ~ Davis Rd ~ Broadw3ay/Gen. Jim Moore Blvd. back in the 90's when the Base was decommissioned! Was that ever considered? Problems/push back from Fish + Game; EPA etc ??

Response to Comment I31-2: Refer to response to comment I18-2 and Section 1.7.2. Constructing new connecting segments from existing roads on the former Fort Ord military base property would be under the purview of the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which manages the property, now a National Monument. There are no plans to extend the existing roads through the National Monument to provide alternative routes to State Route 68. As discussed in Section 1.7.2, new road extensions would impact sensitive species habitats and resources.

Commenter I32: Beab Giger

Comment I32-1: Landscaped Round abouts much preferred. Roundabouts much pefered.

Response to Comment I32-1: Your support for the project and the roundabouts alternative (the selected preferred alternative) with landscaping is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I33: Robert N. Lea

Comment I33-1: My concern is there is essentially no signage indicating wildlife utilize the area along Hwy 68. There are no signs between Monterey and Salinas and one sign between Salinas and Monterey (basically at Toro Cafe on north side of road). Signage would create a greater awareness. I would think 3 signs in each direction would be a minimal number. No signs, little awareness.

Response to Comment I33-1: Caltrans District 5 strategically places such signs in collaboration with Fish and Wildlife authorities to pinpoint locations where deer and other large wildlife are statistically more likely to cross state highways. This selection process aims to balance safety measures without overburdening drivers with excessive signage, in accordance with the federally and state mandated guidelines outlined in the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The concern for oversaturation of signage is paramount, as it could potentially lead to desensitization and diminish the effectiveness of warning signs. Therefore, typically one sign is used at the beginning of each segment in each direction. After an evaluation of the current signage, it was determined that the eastbound direction sign was more than likely knocked down. The District 5 sign coordinator was notified about the missing eastbound sign, and the sign was reinstalled in July 2024.

Commenter I34: Claudia Linig

Comment I34-1: I support roundabouts.

Response to Comment I34-1: Your support for the project roundabouts alternative (the selected preferred alternative) is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I35: Robert Seidel

Comment I35-1: First choice – Ft Ord Bypass.

Response to Comment I35-1: Your preference for the Fort Ord Bypass alignment for State Route 68 is acknowledged and was shared with the

project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Chapter 1 addresses the alternatives to the proposed State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project that were previously considered but eliminated for various reasons. The Fort Ord Bypass route alignment was determined to cause substantial impacts on sensitive environmental resources, as well as require acquisition of a portion of the federally managed Fort Ord National Monument and cause a significant investment of public funds. For the purpose and need of the proposed project, improvements to the existing intersections can be achieved without constructing a new highway alignment onto public and private lands to bypass the existing Corral de Tierra/State Route 68 intersection.

Comment I35-2: We need an additional lane on both sides if you install the roundabout.

Response to Comment I35-2: Although the Traffic Operational Analysis Report and the Traffic Operational Analysis Report Addendum study showed that single-lane roundabouts at eight of the nine project intersections would adequately accommodate the forecast traffic volumes for the 20-year project horizon-design period, subsequent to the public review period for the draft environmental document, Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County considered additional ways to enhance the operational performance of the Alternative 1 (preferred alternative) roundabouts. Conversion of the three easternmost roundabouts from single lane to hybrid was analyzed, and it was found that it would further reduce travel delay within the project limits for the projected 20-year design horizon. Therefore, Alternative 1 has been refined to include the three hybrid roundabouts. The remaining six roundabout designs are unchanged from the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Commenter I36: Grant Hunt

Comment I36-1: I have recently become aware of a proposed high density housing project being fast-tracked by the County of Monterey that is suggested to be built at the corner of Olmsted Road and Highway 68, at the mouth of the entrance to the Monterey Regional Airport. This project calls for the establishment of 1,324 high density housing units on a small parcel of land running adjacent to Highway 68. It is estimated that there could be roughly 3,500 daily vehicle ingress and egresses into the proposed traffic circle in the SR68 Corridor Project. Has Monterey County informed you of this potential dramatic traffic increase? One could easily assume that this would greatly impact your planning.

Additionally, it has been said that the County will acquire the privately owned Via Malpaso Road through eminent domain procedures to provide access to this housing project. That will shift vehicle traffic currently using Via Malpaso to the existing traffic lights at Olmsted and SR68 to switch to the intersection

of Canyon Del Rey and Highway 68; further burdening that traffic flow. Has Monterey County informed you of this potential traffic increase?

Highway 68 is already overburdened with traffic. This proposed housing project will add the population of three additional Cities of Del Rey Oaks with only one means of ingress and egress to and from Highway 68. The population of Del Rey Oaks already impacts the intersection of Canyon Del Rey and Highway 68. Imagine tripling that traffic!

I would kindly request acknowledgment of the receipt of this email. I would also kindly request answers regarding your communications with either the County Planners of Monterey County or other officials notifying you of these potential dramatic changes to current traffic patterns.

Response to Comment I36-1: The 20-year traffic forecast used for the Traffic Operations Analysis Report was based on the Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018), which incorporates transportation planning information for the region. The referenced development was not included in the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and therefore, not included in Caltrans' project traffic studies.

Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County routinely coordinate with the County of Monterey on development review as it may affect the state highway and local road network. It is Caltrans' understanding that to date the County has not received an application for development of a large residential project of over 1,000 units near Olmsted Road and State Route 68. A smaller development application for 100 residential units adjacent to that intersection was received by the County in October 2024. County land use designations for the property south of State Route 68 around Olmsted Road includes an Affordable Housing Overlay District (2010 County General Plan), which would allow higher density development with affordable residential uses as addressed in Section 2.1.1.

It is important to note that the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project is an operational improvement project that does not add capacity within the limits of the project corridor. All planned developments are required to mitigate their induced traffic impacts, both project-specific and cumulative as needed, to either maintain acceptable level of service and/or reduce vehicle miles traveled on both the state highway system and local road network. It is incumbent on Monterey County as the CEQA lead agency for land use to ensure that the conditions of approval for the development include any necessary mitigation. Questions pertaining to aspects of potential development proposals within the County jurisdiction should be addressed to Monterey County Housing and Community Development Department.

Commenter I37: Hans Haselbach and Lynn Kovach

Comment I37-2: Entrance to Laguna Seca and SPCA – We are dissapointed that neither solution includes a safer left turn when leaving L.S or SPCA across the road. A center left turn lane for merging at this location would benefit cars turning left @ this area.

Response to Comment I37-2: The intersections of the Laguna Seca driveway and the SPCA driveway at State Route 68 are outside of the limits of the Alternative 1 roundabout at the Laureles Grade/State Route 68 location. The addition of a north leg of the Laureles Grade intersection with State Route 68 to enable left turns onto the highway from Laguna Seca would be a separate project that would require Intergovernmental Review and environmental impact analysis processes. Refer also to responses to comments O2-7 and I47-1 regarding this topic.

Commenter I38: Ronald Parker

Comment I38-1: Please stop the installation of the 9 roundabouts on Hwy 68 and install AI signal controllers instead!

Response to Comment I38-1: Your opposition to the roundabout alternative is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process. Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative as discussed in Section 1.6 of this document. See also response to comment I44-1, which addresses a suggested AI signal-control alternative to roundabouts for the project intersections, and a planned pilot project to implement AI signal control.

Commenter I39: Mike English

Comment I39-1: Is there any reason AI is not being evaluated for this project. Mr. Stump makes a powerful argument.

Response to Comment I39-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1, AI signals pilot project, and an interim pilot project being proposed.

Commenter I40: Diane Gibeau

Comment I40-1: Please consider what much of the public is requesting. Many of us do not want to spend this ridiculous amount of money. Why won't you consider the alternative and use AI which would cost so much less ? There will still be major traffic on the road and having 9 roundabouts will not change the outcome

Response to Comment I40-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1, AI signals pilot project. As addressed in Section 2.1.9, roundabouts through the

project corridor are forecast to improve traffic throughput and reduce delay by about 28 percent in 2045 compared to the No-Build Alternative.

Commenter I41: Keith Marshall

Comment I41-1: I have read regarding AI controlled signaling and find myself very in favor of this approach for several reasons.

#1. It is a cost-effective method even if only as a trial at $500,000 in lieu of 100 million dollars or more for the roundabouts. Even if cost for the AI signaling system increases in price (which many public works projects do) it makes a great deal of sense to explore the benefits instead of charging forward to the tune of hundreds of millions for the dubious roundabouts.

2. With the budget of Calif short fall in the billions, and also at the federal level, a $500,000 AI signaling project makes absolute sense.

3. 100 + millions for the roundabout is a cost we simply cannot afford, although Highway 68 is congested, repairs at $100 million + is out of the question.

4. Highway projects always exceed in cost and time; this project will be no different, it will impact traffic for several years and adversely affect the driving community. The results will be controversial at best and there will always be the question, why did we not try the AI signaling system?

5. Although roundabouts in small communities worked fairly well, I am not in favor of roundabouts in these highly trafficked areas and high speed areas.

6. I am extremely favorable regarding the use of AI signaling systems, and strongly support the implementation of AI signaling.

7. If the roundabouts go forward, there will always be a dark cloud on those that made that decision knowing that our bank account cannot afford it. Many people do not support the roundabouts but many do support AI signaling.

8. AI signaling should not only be investigated but utilized to set a new and higher standard for highway traffic flow for now and the future.

Response to Comment I41-1: Your opposition to the cost of roundabout improvements is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. The analysis in the traffic study for the project (Traffic Operations Analysis Report) regarding Adaptive Traffic Signal Control (which can include AI) found that modifying the signals at intersections would not reduce delay for the 20-year horizon conditions without construction of auxiliary through lanes as included in Alternative 2. The most recent benefit-cost ratios for the project were shown to be less for the AI signals with auxiliary through lanes (Alternative 2) than for roundabouts (Alternative 1), meaning that Alternative 1 has a greater cost

benefit than Alternative 2. Alternative 2 does not provide the safety benefits of reduced rate and severity of collisions that Alternative 1 would provide.

Therefore, the AI signal pilot project is not a substitute alternative that would meet the project's purpose and need for the 20-year planning horizon for improvement of traffic operations along the State Route 68 corridor. Refer also to response to comment I44-1 regarding a proposed AI signal control pilot project.

Commenter I42: Andrew Hawryluk

Comment I42-1: I am writing to you in regard to your plan to install a round-about at the intersection of Highway 68 and Olmstead Road in Monterey. We all agree that reducing traffic congestion is our common goal. However, I wanted to make sure that you are aware of the Monterey County recommendation to install 1324 new housing units at this intersection. I believe that the roundabout at Olmstead road was analyzed with existing traffic patterns (and possibly some future expansion) but the development under consideration is not a small increase. This is in addition to at least two additional apartment building complexes that have been approved along Garden Road (near the airport). It should also be noted that the Monterey Airport itself has plans to expand which will also increase traffic.

I would appreciate it if you could acknowledge that this proposed development (and increase in traffic) is consistent with CalTrans plan to install a roundabout at the intersection.

Response to Comment I42-1: The 20-year traffic forecast used for the Traffic Operations Analysis Report was based on the Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018), which incorporates transportation planning information for the region. The referenced project was not included in the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and was therefore not accounted for in the project traffic studies. Refer to responses to comments A1-2 and I36-1. It is important to note that this is an operational improvements project and not one that adds capacity. That said, traffic impacts from all planned development are required to mitigate both project-specific and cumulative impacts as needed to either maintain acceptable level of service and/or reduce vehicle miles traveled on both the state highway system and local road network. It is incumbent on Monterey County as the CEQA lead agency for land use to ensure that the conditions of approval for the development include any necessary mitigation.

Comment I42-2: I would also like to know if CalTrans plans to increase the number of lanes of traffic (from one lane in each direction to 2 lanes in each direction) and if so, over what distance and where?

Response to Comment I42-2: As noted in response to comment I42-1, the project is not capacity increasing for the State Route 68 highway corridor overall. The proposed roundabout intersection improvements alternative (which was selected as the preferred alternative after the completion of the public comment period on the draft environmental document) would add short segments of a second lane in the eastbound and westbound directions on State Route 68 around the intersection circle at four of the roundabout locations to enhance traffic flow during peak periods; refer also to Chapter 1 of this final environmental document for discussion of the hybrid roundabout designs at the three easternmost intersections. The segments of the highway between the nine project intersections would not be continuously widened to four lanes because the purpose of the project is not to add highway capacity but rather to reduce travel delay through the corridor during periods of congestion.

Commenter I43: Karen T. Brown

Comment I43-1: I am writing you to express my concern about a proposed 1325 unit affordable housing development at the corner of Highway 68 and Olmsted Road. I have only recently become aware of this plan and I object to it. I have reviewed the TAMC environmental impact report and note that the report anticipates an increase in traffic accidents and delays, and the roundabout plan is to help mitigate these. However, I don't see noted any information on the impact of the proposed development, presumably because you were unaware of it, (we only found out about it by asking test well diggers and surveyors who appeared to work on the site.) The project projects 2.5 card per household, which would put an unbearable strain on the already congested highway. I would appreciate hearing back from you on how this impacts these much needed improvements to our Highway 68, and how I can stay informed on the process. Thank you for your time.

Response to Comment I43-1: Refer to response to comment I36-1 regarding a purported planned high-density affordable housing project near the intersection of State Route 68/Olmsted Road.

Commenter I44: Dwight Stump

The following letter dated December 4, 2023 was addressed and submitted to the Transportation Agency for Monterey County Board by Mr. Dwight Stump and forwarded to Caltrans by Transportation Agency for Monterey County staff. The letter contains multiple images in addition to the text of the letter replicated below. The complete letter with images is included in Volume 3 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact, which is available upon request.

Comment I44-1: As our elected representatives, I believe that it falls on you to thoroughly and objectively, evaluate all relative information before making decisions that impact the community that you represent and uses taxpayer

funds. Since 2017, you have been given extensive information from Caltrans and TAMC staff about how roundabouts can make improvements to the congestion that occurs on Hwy 68 but that information has omitted many of the negatives that would result from installing 9 roundabouts in 8 miles. However, the biggest omission in all the information that you have received is about the new technology of traffic signals being controlled by Artificial Intelligence (AI). While this technology is newer than roundabouts, that have been around since 1870, it has been implemented in many areas since 2012 with great results and at a very significant less cost.

I am not sure why this AI technology has not been considered as an option, since it was easy for me, as a curious taxpayer, to Google the information and even connect with one of the major companies installing the systems. I urge you to read and evaluate this information that I have collected over months of investigation.

Overview

It seems the focus of this Hwy 68 project is to address perceived safety issues with signalized intersections and the challenges of traffic congestion during the roughly 2 hours of AM peak commute and the 2 hours of PM peak commute. As a resident of Corral de Tierra, I travel this 8-mile stretch of Hwy 68 frequently and do not see a congestion problem during the other 20 hours per day. I am not opposed to roundabouts in isolated, specific applications like the hybrid designed one at Pebble Beach/Holman Hwy, but feel that 9 roundabouts in 8 miles on a busy highway is not a good application of them and it has never been done before in CA or anywhere in the USA. During my research, I was in frequent communication with Doug Bilse, the TAMC Project Manager and Carla Yu, the Caltrans Project Manager to ask questions, challenge claims made by them and submit my research to be sure it was accurate and applicable. I will present in the following sections some alternatives, challenge some claims, and provide roundabout information that has been omitted by TAMC and Caltrans.

A Smarter Alternative

A much better alternative to roundabouts is Artificial Intelligence (AI) controlled signals where signal operation is based on real time situations that change during the day as they do on Hwy 68. It would allow maximum flow during the peak hours and then adjust to conditions during the non-peak hours just like having a traffic cop at each intersection to make the best decision in real time. The technology can be applied to the existing intersections and signals and can even communicate with autonomous vehicles in the future. This technology has been applied to actual installations since 2012 in places like Pittsburgh, PA with great results that are reported to be 25% less travel times and 40% less wait times plus 20% less pollution. Using this AI based signal control system the Canadian City of Peterborough

did a pilot project to compare traditional signal timing systems with adaptive signal systems. The project resulted in close to $1 Million in reduced user costs, reduced vehicle emissions by 20% and decreased vehicle delay by 41.3%. This case study can be accessed and downloaded online.

The system was developed at the Carnegie Mellon University and was even funded by the US Dept of Transportation Congestion Management Technology Deployment. With such great results (much better than any alleged roundabout claims) you would think that Caltrans and TAMC would have investigated the technology and asked for demos and bids from the commercial companies, but NO, to my knowledge they have not even considered it. Not only would it work better to relieve congestion and be installed immediately but it would do so at a much less cost. It is estimated to cost about $270,000 total to install the AI software in all 9 of the intersections. Compare that to the $227 Million for the 9 roundabouts which you know will cost more over the many years that it will take to build them. AI software would also not require an Environmental Impact Report and can be upgraded as new technology becomes available in the future.

The recently released Draft Environmental Impact Report from Caltrans even stated the “Traffic delay at the corridor intersections is caused, in part, by the inefficiency of the existing intersection controls” so you would think that the logical next step would be to see what technology would make them more efficient! Instead, AI Signal Controls have not even been considered.

Here are some articles describing in detail the AI Signal Control Technology:

UTC Spotlight Article-Surtrac for the People: Upgrading the Surtrac Pittsburgh Deployment to Incorporate Pedestrian Friendly Extensions and Remote Monitoring Advances (transportation.gov)

This AI traffic system in Pittsburgh has reduced travel time by 25% | Smart Cities Dive

Surtrac Allows Traffic To Move at the Speed of Technology - News - Carnegie Mellon University (cmu.edu)

Case study: Reducing Congestion & Optimizing Signal Timing | Miovision

AI in Traffic Management - Artificial Intelligence + (aiplusinfo.com)

New AI traffic signal system reduces waiting time by 47 per cent Siemens reveals at Gulf Traffic | Intertraffic

NoTraffic Platform Overview - Autonomous Traffic Management - YouTube

Smart traffic lights revolutionize (sae.org)

[TAMC Project Fact Sheet]

Caltrans and TAMC have been promoting the 9 roundabouts on an 8-mile stretch of highway 68 since 2017 at a projected cost of $227 Million. They are also offering a second alternative of widening the nine intersections and doing adaptive signal controls but are not really promoting that option even though that option yields the same congestion reduction of 5 minutes as the roundabouts. I am not totally clear why TAMC is currently choosing the nine roundabouts as the preferred alternative, other than the state and federal funds may be tied to safety projects.

TAMC's promotion of roundabouts has also made "Project Benefits" claims on their "Project Fact Sheet" that are either totally false or misleading.

[image of TAMC fact sheets]

NoTraffic Platform Overview - Autonomous Traffic Management - YouTube

Smart traffic lights revolutionize (sae.org)

Emergency Response Times

Response to Comment I44-1: Caltrans included analysis of Adaptive Signal Control Technology in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report as part of Alternative 2. Adaptive Traffic Signal Control can include the use of technology such as AI (Artificial Intelligence). The traffic study concluded that Adaptive Traffic Signal Control would also require the construction of auxiliary through lanes to accommodate traffic volumes in the 20-year design horizon traffic conditions.

However, Caltrans District 5 Traffic Operations was provided conceptual approval for the pilot use of AI controllers to implement Adaptive Traffic Signal Control, and therefore Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are currently moving forward with the pilot project to procure, install, and use Adaptive Traffic Signal Control on the project corridor as an interim solution.

Though a pilot project is proposed to install AI signals for the short term, it would not meet the traffic needs for the 20-year design horizon nor would it provide the same operational and safety benefits that roundabouts would provide as shown in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report. Refer also to responses to comments O4-1f and I44-8.

Regarding the comment that nine roundabouts in 8 miles has never been done before in California or anywhere in the U.S., there are several highway corridors in the U.S. where multiple roundabouts have been constructed in close proximity along the corridor; one example is in Wickenburg, Arizona on Highway 93, which has seven roundabouts within 5 miles. Other examples include Loveland, Colorado with six roundabouts in 4 miles on Boyd Lake

Road/North County Road 9 from Mountain Lion Drive to 71st Street/East County Road 30, and Breckenridge, Colorado with seven roundabouts in 10 miles on Highway 9 from 4 O'Clock Road to I-70.

Sources:

https://roundabout.kittelson.com/Home/Map
https://www.mtjengineering.com/projects/project-corridors/

Comment I44-2: The most blatant false claim is that the roundabouts will "reduce emergency response times" when logic and the Monterey County Fire Chief verified that the nine roundabouts will actually increase emergency response time. Imagine how long it takes for a 40,000+ pound fire truck to slow down from 55 mph to 15 mph, go through a single lane roundabout (assuming it is not clogged with vehicles) and get back up to speed at 55 mph and then do that 9 times over 8 miles. Compare that to the current way of proceeding though the spacious intersections at 55 mph, or a little under, because they can use the existing the Opticom system to turn the lights green in the direction they are going.

In a letter from Monterey County Regional Fire District to Caltrans in 2017 , it was stated……. "Because the bulk of SR 68 lies within the boundaries of the MCRFD, we have an intense interest in ensuring that public safety response times are not adversely affected by whatever decision is reached. Currently, when responding to emergencies or transporting critically injured patients, our personnel and equipment are able to travel SR 68 in either direction, even when traffic levels reach peak congestion, at speed nearing the lawful limit because motorists readily pull to the side of the road and allow us to pass. MCRDF personnel provide ambulance service to the bulk of Carmel Valley and critically injured patients are frequently transported by ambulance along Highway 68. Once these roundabouts are in place, our paramedics will be required to negotiate as many as 9 roundabouts while transporting critically injured patients to the County's trauma Center in Salinas. And our agency will not be the only one affected."

A similar proposal by Caltrans in 2017 on Highway 126 in Ventura County was rejected by the local communities because the four proposed roundabouts in 8 miles would significantly increase emergency response time based on input from the local fire and police. Here are some articles from that proposal that was eventually withdrawn by Caltrans.

HWY 126 Roundabout Project Discontinued | The Fillmore Gazette

Fillmore council votes to oppose Hwy 126 roundabouts (vcstar.com)

Response to Comment I44-2: Caltrans acknowledges that emergency vehicles will need to slow down to navigate each roundabout, which could increase response times. It should be noted that, based on field

observations, emergency vehicles have been known to slow to pass through signalized intersections to ensure that vehicles on cross streets yield. Regarding emergency vehicle response times, refer to response to Fire District comment A2-1.

Regarding the Highway 126 project, the project referenced in the comment is located in Los Angeles, District 7. District 7 representatives would be the effective resource for further information on that project. Each project has unique circumstances that factor into decisions on funding the design and construction phases of each project. These factors can involve funding constraints, site-specific conditions, regional priorities, and other issues. The decision to fund the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project and to select the preferred alternative was based on the information analyzed for this project location and conditions and the specific purpose and need of the project.

Comment I44-3: Vehicle Emissions

Another statement in the TAMC fact sheet that is false is the claim of "Decreases Greenhouse Gas" with the nine roundabouts. First, consider TAMC's own alleged claim that the roundabouts will decrease the peak commute transit time by only five minutes (shown on TAMC's own PowerPoint slide below) during those roughly 4 hours of peak commute each weekday. That reduction of only 5 minutes of idling emissions needs to be compared to the other 20 hours each day of non-peak commute time in forcing each vehicle to decelerate to 15 miles an hour and then accelerate back up to 55 mph, 9 times over 8 miles. Studies by Christopher Frey in the Department of Civil Engineering at North Carolina State University showed that vehicles emit 5 to 10 times more emissions during acceleration compared to idling. The study stated "Average emission during acceleration was found to be 5 times more than idling emission for HC and CO2 and 10 times more for NO and CO". So do the math. Compare 5 minutes less of idling emissions from a few thousand cars during rush hour to acceleration emissions that are 5-10 times worse than idling from 25,000+ vehicles, 20 hours per day.

On-Road Measurement of Vehicle Tailpipe Emissions Using a Portable Instrument (tandfonline.com)

[IMAGE: SLIDE "WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR MY EVENING COMMUTE?"

Response to Comment I44-3: Caltrans' analysis in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report and the Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum shows that constructing roundabouts at specified locations within the project corridor will reduce delay during peak hours when compared to the No-Build Alternative.

Roundabouts are an effective tool for improving traffic flow and minimizing delays. Unlike traditional signalized intersections, roundabouts eliminate the need for vehicles to idle at red lights. By facilitating continuous traffic movement, they substantially reduce unnecessary stops, starts, and idle time, which are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions.

Studies have shown that converting a signalized intersection to a roundabout can lead to a significant decrease in fuel consumption and associated emissions, including carbon dioxide (CO2), a primary greenhouse gas. In some cases, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions have been estimated at up to 30 percent, depending on traffic volumes and patterns. In addition, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, which is an independent, nonprofit scientific and educational organization, cites two studies that show roundabouts reduce vehicle emissions compared to signalized intersections.

The project purpose and need also include safety improvements. The safety benefit for the Expanded Signalized Intersection option (Alternative 2) was not able to be determined. Roundabouts contribute to broader environmental goals by enhancing operational efficiency and promoting safer, calmer traffic conditions. These factors align with our agency's mission to create a more sustainable and resilient transportation network while addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

References:

https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Impacts_of_Roundabouts_on_Passenger_Vehicle_Use_and_Greenhouse_Gas_Emissions_Policy_Brief_0.pdf

https://www.dot.ny.gov/main/roundabouts/files/Emissions_Reduction.pdf

Comment I44-4: Wildlife Crossings

Other misleading benefit claims on the TAMC Fact Sheet makes it seem that the proposed wildlife crossings and a new entrance for Laguna Seca are tied to the roundabouts when they can be done totally separate from the roundabouts and could be added to the existing intersections and roadway. This was verified by both Caltrans and TAMC.

Response to Comment I44-4: Yes, wildlife crossings could be installed separately from the whole project. However, the wildlife crossings are only one portion of the project purpose and would not meet the entirety of the project purpose and need derived from public input and documented in the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan. The rest of the purpose and need pertains to improving intersection traffic operations to reduce vehicle delay as well as reducing the rate and severity of collisions in the project corridor.

Comment I44-5: Collisions

The claim the roundabouts will “reduce collision rates” is also questionable since the only collisions that they prevent are T-bone type collisions at intersections and there is really no history of that at the 9 intersections. Most (about 70 %) collisions on that stretch of 68 are due to rear end impacts which could actually increase since the roundabouts will cause all vehicles to slow down to 15-20 mph, 9 times on a 24/7 basis and frequently stop to yield to side traffic, thus creating more chances for rear end collisions. Currently, vehicles on average may stop at 2-3 of the 9 signals during non-peak commutes and even then, the signals can be seen from a distance.

In spite of what is being promoted by Caltrans, that 8-mile stretch of 68 has a good traffic safety record according to data obtained directly from Caltrans by a public records request. (shown below) The collision rate has been below the state average since 2017 and the TAMC collision map from 2012- 2018 does not show fatalities or severe injury collisions in any of the 9 intersections. Unfamiliarity with the roundabouts historically cause more collisions, especially with numerous out of town people using that highway annually.

Collision Data Map - Transportation Agency for Monterey County (tamcmonterey.org)

[IMAGE: TRAFFIC ACCIDENT SURVEILLANCE AND ANALYSIS SYSTEM (TASAS) CRASH DATA ANALYSIS FORM TABLE 4.1.A, TASAS Table B Collision Rates (1/1/2013-12/31/2022

Response to Comment I44-5: There is a substantial body of research and data that demonstrates the safety benefits of roundabouts over traditional signalized intersections. Studies have consistently shown that roundabouts significantly reduce the frequency and severity of crashes. For example, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) reports that converting traditional intersections to roundabouts can lead to a 62 to 67 percent reduction in overall collisions and an 85 to 87 percent decrease in injury-related crashes. This is largely due to the design of roundabouts, which reduces the number of conflict points where vehicles can collide—from 32 at a traditional intersection to just 8 in a roundabout.

Also, roundabouts are effective in preventing a variety of collision types, not just broadside collisions. Their circular design and lower vehicle speeds help mitigate rear-end collisions, sideswipes, and even pedestrian-related crashes. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) highlights that roundabouts promote lower speeds and traffic calming, which contribute to their ability to reduce crash severity and improve overall safety. These findings are supported by numerous case studies and observational research, which consistently demonstrate the safety advantages of roundabouts in both urban and rural settings.

References:

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/00067/000675.pdf

https://highways.dot.gov/safety/intersection-safety/intersection-types/roundabouts

https://www.roadvision.ai/blog/the-role-of-roundabouts-in-reducing-traffic-accidents-in-the-usa

https://dlord.engr.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/234/2021/12/trb_01-0562CDFINcor.pdf

http://conf.tac-atc.ca/english/annualconference/tac2012/docs/session12/yin.pdf

Comment I44-6: Traffic Flow

The claim of roundabouts “improving traffic flow” really needs to be quantified and by TAMC’s own admission, the best improvement of the peak commute period is projected to be only be a 5 minute improvement (13.8%) as shown in the TAMC slide posted earlier. As you can see, this is actually the same as their claim for the Adaptive Signal Control in Alternative 2. Neither of these takes into account the increase in commute time the 9 roundabouts will cause during the 20 hours of daily non-peak travel which currently takes only about 12-14 minutes. Visualize how much longer it will take to travel the same distance with needing to slow down to 15 mph, 9 times both day and night. And we all know how one inexperienced driver can impact everyone behind them when they do not proceed efficiently.

Those that travel that section of Hwy 68 during peak commute know that it is simply too many vehicles trying to get through a restricted space and that you can be frequently sitting at a green light, unable to proceed. You can also easily see exactly where the congestion occurs at any given time by using Google Maps (as shown below) and check the travel time along that 8 mile stretch to see where the most congestion is occurring. If you believe it is the fault of the signal operation, then install AI controlled signal software to make them smarter and react to real time situations. Drivers also need to consider that entering the proposed roundabouts on Hwy 68 from the side streets during peak commute hours will be very difficult with needing to legally yield to a continuous flow of vehicles on the main line and unable to find a gap in that traffic.

[IMAGE: SLIDE “MISERY INDEX Delay and Buffer Time” Eastbound PM Sunday through Saturday chart]

Response to Comment I44-6: Traffic studies have shown reduced delay, volume-to-capacity ratio, and 95th percentile queue for roundabouts with one or two approach lanes versus signalized intersections for both low-volume and high-volume time periods.

Sources:

https://www.umdsmartgrowth.org/Files/__OLD_SITE__/pdf/TrafficFlowRoundaboutsIntersections_Mishra_3-9-09.pdf

https://opentransportationjournal.com/VOLUME/14/PAGE/120/FULLTEXT/

The study cited in Chapter 5 of Evaluating the Performance of Corridors with Roundabouts (2014) by the National Academies of Sciences showed that for a corridor with large intersection spacing and higher speeds, which is similar to the project corridor, virtually no travel time difference was observed between roundabout and signalized intersections.

Source: https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/22348/chapter/7

Traffic Operations analyzed the Adaptive Traffic Signal Control (AI camera) alternative in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report and determined that the adaptive system alone was not expected to meet the demand for the 20-year design horizon without the construction of auxiliary through lanes at each intersection, which would require substantial right-of-way acquisition. Also, Alternative 2, which has the Adaptive Traffic Signal Control system and auxiliary through lanes, was found to have a lower benefit-cost ratio compared to the roundabout alternative for the 20-year design horizon.

Caltrans District 5 Traffic Operations was provided conceptual approval for the pilot use of AI controllers to implement Adaptive Traffic Signal Control, and further discussions took place with regard to potential funding for procurement of the firmware to support Adaptive Traffic Signal Control. Discussions and approval shifted to review of existing traffic data, existing infrastructure, and firmware compatibility to support the pilot project. Regular meetings between the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and District 5 Traffic Operations took place for implementation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control at signalized intersections within the State Route 68 project corridor. Implementation at these intersections provides the ability to best implement, make adequate observations and adjustments and learn lessons from an engineering and traffic operations perspective for installation at additional intersections along the corridor. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are currently moving forward with the pilot project to procure, install, and use Adaptive Traffic Signal Control on the project corridor as an interim solution. The pilot project is currently scheduled to run for 5 years.

Regarding the perceived difficulty of vehicles on side streets finding a gap to enter the roundabout, while it is true that vehicles within the roundabout have the right-of-way, roundabouts typically create consistent gaps in traffic for vehicles from arterial roads to merge.

Comment I44-7: Roundabout Capacity

All roundabouts have a capacity limit and when that is reached, the flow essentially stops. When that happens, traffic signals are typically installed to regulate access to the roundabout as they did in Portland Oregon. 8 of the 9 proposed roundabouts are single lane and thus have a capacity of 1800 vehicles per hour according to the US Department of Transportation Operational Guide, page 87. “Circulating flow should not exceed 1800 veh/hr at any point in a single-lane roundabout and that roundabouts should operate at no more than 85% of their estimated capacity.” Caltrans has not really addressed this fact for current and future peak commute numbers. In calculating the flow, trucks count as 1 ½ and semi trucks as 2 vehicles. As roundabouts start to reach capacity, the gaps between vehicles get smaller and smaller, making it more difficult to enter, especially for the timid or inexperienced driver, which results in the backup of traffic trying to enter the roundabout. Once constructed, roundabouts cannot modify their operation, like adaptive signal controls can, since they are a physical structure.

Roundabout Negatives

It is obvious that TAMC and Caltrans have only listed what they believe to be the positives of roundabouts and have not listed any of the recognized negatives of them. I can only assume that they do not want the public to know their limitations so they continue to believe that roundabouts are perfect and fix everything. Some people believe that the roundabout at Pebble Beach/Holman Hwy has improved the traffic flow so putting 9 more of them on Hwy 68 would solve the congestion there. The roundabout at Pebble Beach is a hybrid design with a significant amount, if not the majority, of the traffic bypassing the 2-lane roundabout without even entering it. This is not the same as the 8 single lane roundabouts and 1 double lane roundabout being proposed for the 8 miles on 68 where all of the traffic must enter the roundabout on the main line. As was mentioned earlier, there are no examples anywhere of a successful reduction of peak commute congestion by putting 9, single lane roundabouts in an 8-mile stretch of a busy highway. It is a bit ironic that Caltrans proposed the 4 roundabouts on Hwy 126 in Ventura County to “slow the traffic down” and now they are proposing adding 9 roundabouts to Hwy 68 to “make the traffic flow faster.”

Those of us who live along this stretch understand that the AM peak commute congestion is mainly cause by Westbound 68 merging from 2 lanes to 1 lane just after Portola Rd and not primarily due to the signal lights along 68. Putting roundabouts in will not improve things. This was even recognized in the August 2013 TOAR (Traffic Operations Analysis Report) that Caltrans produced that stated on page 5 “the AM Peak Hour performance of the proposed Alternative 1 (Roundabouts) is marginally better than the No-Build” which means they admit that spending millions will not significantly improve the current AM peak commute.

[IMAGE: CIRCULATORY FLOW (veh/h) CHART, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION Ejxh 4-3 Approach capacity of a single-lane roundabout.]

[IMAGE: MAP OF HIGHWAY 68 WITH TRAVEL TIME FOR 10.5 MILE DISTANCE]

There are a number of limitations or negatives for roundabouts according to Mike Spack, a nationally recognized expert on roundabouts, a Professional Transportation Operations Engineer and past president of the North Central Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers. He described them in a recent Webinar “Are Roundabouts a Silver Bullet to Traffic Issues?”

*Roundabouts cannot be customized like signals or upgraded after being built

*Roundabouts are not as efficient as signals for emergency response vehicles.

*Roundabouts are not recommended for situations where the traffic in not balanced in flow as when the majority of traffic is flowing along one main line.

*Roundabouts cannot give priority to the mainline traffic like signals can.

*When roundabouts get to gridlock as capacity is reached, it takes significant time to undo it.

*Minor traffic from the left can take over the mainline movement in a roundabout.

*Traffic is slow going into and coming out of roundabouts.

*Roundabouts are a problem for sight impaired pedestrians.”

It is clear that a number of these negative conditions are present in this stretch of Hwy 68, yet TAMC and Caltrans just ignore them and hide them from the public. Why?

Response to Comment I44-7 (Roundabout Capacity): Caltrans recognizes that roundabouts, like all traffic control devices, have capacity limits. The proposed designs for State Route 68 roundabouts are based on extensive traffic analysis, which accounts for current and projected traffic volumes, including adjustments for heavy vehicles such as trucks and semi-trucks. Caltrans also considered industry best practices, such as the guidance provided in the U.S. Department of Transportation’s operational manuals, when designing roundabouts to operate efficiently and safely. Caltrans’ goal is to ensure that these designs accommodate the needs of all users, including during peak commute hours. As part of the planning process, capacity analyses have been conducted to assess the long-term performance of the proposed roundabouts. Traffic modeling and simulations indicate that these designs will improve traffic flow and reduce delays under projected conditions.

It is true that roundabouts, like many traffic solutions, have both benefits and limitations. Caltrans strives to provide a balanced perspective to the public by discussing both the advantages and challenges of proposed designs. Each location is being carefully considered to ensure the proposed roundabouts are appropriately tailored to the unique traffic patterns and conditions of the area. Also, roundabouts are chosen for their safety benefits, as they reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions compared to signalized intersections.

We acknowledge your concern regarding congestion on westbound State Route 68. Although the traffic analysis conducted for the project concluded that single-lane roundabouts at eight of the nine project intersections would be adequate for existing and future forecasted traffic for the 20-year planning horizon, the project team looked for ways to further enhance traffic operations. As a result, the design for roundabouts at San Benancio Road, Corral De Tierra Road, and Laureles Grade have been updated from single-lane to hybrid roundabouts, which will provide increased throughput capacity to address congestion concerns on westbound State Route 68 within the project corridor.

Emergency vehicle access, pedestrian safety, and traffic balance are critical factors in the design process. Roundabouts are designed to accommodate emergency vehicles and include features that prioritize the safety of all road users, including pedestrians with visual impairments by providing increased visibility of pedestrians to motorists and lower traffic speeds. Moreover, while adaptive signal controls offer flexibility, they do not provide the same safety enhancements as roundabouts.

Comment I44-8: Proposed Alternative 2

This alternative is not really being promoted by TAMC or Caltrans and is most likely a choice that is just put out to the public to make them feel like there is another option being considered besides roundabouts. The good part of this alternative is inclusion of adaptive signal controls but the bad part is widening each of the 9 intersections from 1 lane to 2 just as you approach the signal and them reducing the 2 lanes to 1 again a short distance after the signal. That will allow the aggressive driver to speed ahead of other vehicles in the other lane and then get ahead of them on the other side of the light. This adds more potential points of conflict and thus collisions at each intersection. It would be similar to the current westbound lane at the SR 218 intersection were the 2 lanes merge together to 1 just before Tarpy’s. We all know how dangerous and confusing that is, as to who really has the right of way. The widening of each intersection is also requiring major excavation and expense as detailed in the just released Environmental Impact Report.

The signal upgrade in Alternative 2 sounds similar to AI based signal controllers but is not clearly identified. Also, it is not currently being offered as a separate option from the intersection widening part of Alternative 2 and no

explanation by TAMC or Caltrans has been given as to why it cannot be implemented separately. There are also no details on the separate cost of this part but it would be significantly less than the widening construction costs.

This is how the signal system changes are described on a TAMC PowerPoint Slide and on page 33 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report:

Traffic signal system equipment would be replaced with upgraded adaptive signal control technology that would adjust the timing of the red, yellow, and green light cycle times to accommodate variations in traffic patterns and improve movement through the intersection. All currently signalized intersections would be upgraded with traffic sensors/traffic detection, traffic signal controllers, and fiber optic or wireless communication systems at the intersections. These communication devices would allow each signalized intersection to be adaptive and allow them to react to changing traffic conditions, monitor traffic conditions at each intersection in real time, and continuously distribute green time equitably for all traffic movements.

Response to Comment I44-8 (Alternative 2): Caltrans has given a thorough evaluation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control technology. Adaptive Traffic Signal Control is the process of continual optimization of traffic signal timings along a contiguous set of signalized intersections. The concept of adaptive traffic signal control is to continuously distribute green time equitably for all traffic movements by progressively moving vehicles through green lights to creating smoother traffic flow through constant monitoring and updating. This optimization is usually performed through a software module or “plug-in” for a larger centralized arterial management system using one or more adaptive algorithms to calculate timing adjustments for participating intersections based on vehicle detection data.

Currently, less than 1 percent of the 272,000 traffic signals in the U.S are operating under Adaptive Traffic Signal Control, according to the Federal Highway Administration’s Every Day Counts adaptive control technology initiative. The application of any traffic control strategy, including the adaptive system, is very site specific. It is important to understand that adaptive systems are not suitable for every signalized intersection (reference: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/).

On January 3, 2022, Caltrans adopted a policy on the use of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control at signalized intersections on the state highway system. Districts are to use adaptive traffic signal control methods in conjunction with the Caltrans-approved central system management software to improve the performance and management of traffic signals. To determine which Adaptive Traffic Signal Control is to be used at signalized intersections on the state highway system, Caltrans has developed the Transformational Operations Process.

The Transformational Operations Process has been created to mainstream new methods and solutions that will help Caltrans and our local partners adapt to the rapidly changing transportation landscape. The Traffic Operations Division manages the state highway system using Transportation System Management and Operations strategies and a Safe Systems Approach to improve the safety and mobility of all transportation users and workers. To that end, the Division and its Districts strive to introduce state-of-the-art methods and solutions to improve detection, leverage data analytics, expand central traffic management systems, enhance communication networks, and connect our transportation system with all modes. This process will systemize innovative pilot projects and build more collaboration across the state.

The analysis of Alternative 2, which includes Adaptive Traffic Signal Control technology with expanded auxiliary lanes and turn lanes at the intersections, showed that the Adaptive System Traffic Control alone would not improve operations at the signalized intersections and are expected to increase delay and queuing for the 20-year horizon conditions without the construction of auxiliary through lanes. Caltrans examined Alternative 2, and the benefit-cost ratios using the most updated information show that Alternative 2 has a lower benefit-cost ratio than Alternative 1.

Caltrans District 5 in partnership with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County submitted a proposal through the Transformational Operations Process for a pilot project to evaluate the use of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control on signalized intersections within the State Route 68 corridor, and conceptual approval for the pilot project was received. Adaptive Traffic Signal Control includes AI (artificial intelligence) elements to varying degrees depending on the manufacturer. The intent of the pilot project is to determine if the application of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control would be an effective interim measure to use prior to construction of the preferred alternative.

From a safety perspective, installing Adaptive Traffic Signal Control technology alone at the existing intersections would keep the same number of conflict points within each intersection; also, Alternative 2 with the addition of auxiliary through lanes would increase the number of conflict points at each intersection. The Federal Highway Administration Crash Modification Factor Clearinghouse was found to have several 4-star-rated studies regarding the safety impact of installing Adaptive Traffic Signal Control at signalized intersections. The collision reduction factors developed from these studies regarding all collision types range from a 5 percent decrease to a 9 percent increase in the collision rate.

Comment I44-9: Pedestrians and Bicycles

Caltrans states that “Pedestrian and bicycle access would improve” with roundabouts but give no details as to how that will be accomplished. It is already established that roundabouts are a problem for sight impaired

pedestrians and bicyclists will need to either merge into the traffic going through each roundabout or stop and use the pedestrian crosswalk.

Conclusion

AI Signal Controls is the new technology and at least needs to be evaluated thoroughly. It produces better congestion and pollution results, can communicate with autonomous vehicle's, does not have the negative side effects of roundabouts like increased emergency response times, and will adapt better in the future as even newer technology develops. I request that TAMC and Caltrans pump the brakes on the roundabout bandwagon and start investigating AI. I have been told by Doug Bilse that it would not require any Environmental Impact Reports since it is using the existing intersections. So, what do you have to lose in investigating it, other than saving $200 million and getting a better product for the Hwy 68 commuters and residents. At the very least, request that the adaptive signal section of Alternative 2 be considered separately from the intersection widening.

Thank you for your attention and consideration,

Dwight Stump

Additional Information

Scenic State Route 68 - Salinas to Monterey - Transportation Agency for Monterey County (tamcmonterey.org)

Public Notice (ca.gov)

Build Alternative 1 | Caltrans

Build Alternative 2 | Caltrans

Scenic State Route 68 Corridor Improvement Project Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (ca.gov)

Scenic State Route 68 - Salinas to Monterey - Transportation Agency for Monterey County (tamcmonterey.org)

7592ed6e-7cbf-4379-85e7-11147b2b6aed (publicinput.com)

8d73be84-097e-47b4-995c-695dab674cb6 (publicinput.com)

871b0437-0b9a-4982-896a-25749207bd21 (publicinput.com)

Roundabouts: An Informational Guide – Second Edition | The National Academies Press

On-Road Measurement of Vehicle Tailpipe Emissions Using a Portable Instrument (tandfonline.com)

Miovision_RapidFlow__Surtrac_Peterborough_CaseStudy (1).pdf

Response to Comment I44-9: Roundabouts would improve access for pedestrians and bicyclists since they are designed to improve safety for all road users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. For pedestrians, roundabouts include features such as splitter islands, which allow walkers to cross one direction of traffic at a time, enhancing safety. For bicyclists, roundabouts can reduce conflicts with vehicles by having bicyclists "take the lane" and traverse the roundabout or walk their bike and follow the pedestrian crossing path depending on their level of comfort.

In comparison, signalized intersections can present challenges for pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly when drivers fail to yield during turns or when signal timing does not adequately account for non-motorized users. While signalized intersections can be designed to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists, they often involve higher vehicle speeds and more conflict points than roundabouts.

Your opposition to the roundabout alternative is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process. Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative, as discussed in Section 1.6 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact. Refer also to responses to comments I44-1 through I44-8 above.

Commenter I45: Shelly Anonali-Tinsley

Comment I45-1: Stop the installation of the 9 roundabouts on Hwy 68 and install AI Signal Controllers instead."

Response to Comment I45-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process. Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative as discussed in Section 1.6 of this document. See also response to comment I44-1, which addresses a suggested AI signal-control alternative to roundabouts for the project intersections, and a planned pilot project to implement AI signal control.

Commenter I46: Beth Mazerik

Comment I46-1: As a 68 Corridor resident: This is a NO

As a taxpayer: This project is a HARD NO As a former emergency responder: NO! In the name of common sense, go with upgraded traffic lights. Faster, cheaper, very few unintended consequences.

Response to Comment I46-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process. Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative as discussed in Section 1.6 of this document. See also response to comment I44-1, which addresses a suggested AI signal-control alternative to roundabouts for the project intersections, and a planned pilot project to implement AI signal control.

Commenter I47: Sally Anne Smith

Comment I47-1: Over all I was delighted with the proposal to put roundabouts on the congested Hwy 68 between Monterey and Salinas. We need to improve the flow of traffic along that route. Having lived in the UK for many years - roundabouts are the ultimate solution that is not reliant on electrical powered traffic lights. They can keep the traffic flowing in cases of emergencies. They also can beautify the travel corridor providing places for landscaping, public art or a majestic tree. Nine sets of traffic signals will be ugly and too urban in this scenic corridor.

Here are my thoughts - starting from Monterey, going east: 68 @ Jossalyn Canyon: Instead of a round about, I feel a solution like on Carmel Valley Road @ Robinson Canyon Road would be a better solution, where the opposite lanes go under the road. There is not a lot of traffic that goes in and out of this road as compared with the other intersections.

68 @ Olmsted Road: Perfect place for a round about. The island could celebrate the airport.

68 @ Del Rey Oaks: I feel a roundabout here is perfect - in fact it could lend itself to a gateway to Monterey and the other coastal communities with a magnificent sculpture/public art in the middle.

68 @ Ragsdale - I do not feel we do not need a roundabout here. The current solution of making Salinas bound traffic go to York is still a good idea. What is needed are long slip lanes on the west bound side and a yield sign for the left lane turning into Ryan Ranch from the east bound side. If traffic is kept to 1 lane going through the intersection, (not including slip lanes), then it will be easier to cross with yield sign from the east bound left lane.

68 @ York and Boots Road: All perfect places for a roundabout

68 @ Laurels Grade: Great location for a round about - it would be great if Laguna Seca would reroute their entrance to come off the round about. Often seen dangerous situations of cars/trucks with long trailers trying to turn cross over and turn left on to the highway going east.

68 @ Corral De Tierra: Perfect place for a round about - would be great if the proposed approved shopping center would be built at that intersection also. What is the delay?

68 @ San Benacio: Also a good place for a round about.

Response to Comment I47-1: Your support for the project roundabouts is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

This proposal for Josselyn Canyon Road would suggest design and construction of an interchange with on- and off-ramps that would extend as far as Olmsted Road, thereby affecting the Olmsted Road intersection at State Route 68. The close proximity of these two intersections (Olmsted and Josselyn Canyon) would preclude an interchange unless Olmsted Road remains without connecting to State Route 68. The project corridor's constrained right-of-way makes grade-separated intersections impractical, as they require substantially more space for ramps and elevated structures or underpasses. Expanding the footprint to accommodate such designs would lead to significant impacts on surrounding properties and environmental resources. Also, grade separation involves higher construction and maintenance costs compared to roundabouts, due to the complexity of engineering and materials required. These factors make roundabouts a more feasible and cost-effective solution for this corridor.

Regarding the comments that roundabouts would not be necessary at either Ragsdale Drive or at Josselyn Canyon Road, this scenario would result in a combination of signalized intersections and roundabouts in the 9-mile project corridor. A combination of signalized intersections and roundabouts would not yield the safety benefits of having only roundabouts. As discussed in Section 2.1.9 of this document, roundabouts result in better safety performance with fewer potential conflict points than signalized intersections, thereby reducing the rate and severity of collisions, which is one of the purposes of the project.

Signal-controlled intersections and roundabouts control traffic flow very differently. Signalized intersections result in "platooning" of traffic, that is, groups of vehicles are separated by gaps in flow caused by red (stop) phases at the signals. Roundabouts require continuous flow to operate efficiently. If a queue from a downstream signalized intersection backs up into an upstream roundabout, the roundabout will gridlock. This has a cascading effect for intersections farther upstream. Since traffic signals must stop mainline traffic to service traffic on the side street, having a continuous flowing roundabout upstream would continuously increase the queue length at the traffic signal until the next green cycle. With high traffic flows and closely spaced intersections, both of which the State Route 68 corridor has, mixing traffic signals with roundabouts is not advised for improving traffic flow and operations, which is another key part of the purpose of the project. In addition,

coordination of signal timing would likely be ineffective for optimal traffic flow and overall operations with roundabouts interspersed between signals.

Regarding the comment about the Laureles Grade intersection, Caltrans Transportation Planning and Traffic Operations staff have had discussions with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Monterey County about a connecting north leg and are receptive to reviewing such a proposal. None of the alternatives presented in this project would preclude Monterey County from studying and environmentally clearing a connecting north leg at Laureles Grade.

For responses addressing the status of the proposed shopping center at Corral de Tierra Road, the commenter will need to contact the appropriate staff at the County of Monterey, which has jurisdictional planning responsibility for that property. The Corral de Tierra Road/State Route 68 intersection improvement is among several intersections at the east end of the project limits that are prioritized for the first phase of improvements.

Comment I47-2: One thing that needs to be installed as one approaches the roundabout are a lengthy series of raised stripes or Bott's dots to force traffic to slow down as they approach the roundabouts. The roundabout at 68 @ Pebble Beach does not have them, which would have been a good investment, because some drivers fly through without looking to the left.

Response to Comment I47-2: Standard pavement delineation, pavement striping and signage per the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices will be used to address the driving behavior required through the roundabouts.

Comment I47-3: Also the island in the middle should have a high curb or short perimeter wall around it to prevent traffic from riding over the island. Again, I support TAMC and DOT for their solution of roundabouts on Hwy 68 between Monterey and Salinas.

Response to Comment I47-3: Low mountable curb within the circulating roadway adjacent to the truck apron central island is used for mounting by the larger design vehicles such as semi-tractor trailers that are allowed through the corridor and to accommodate the swept path of the rear tires. The use of high curbs beyond the truck apron will be evaluated in the final design phase. Your support for the project roundabouts is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I48: Karen Mortensen

Comment I48-1: I wish to comment on the possibility of either roundabouts or intersection traffic lights. I have had experience on Jefferson St. in La Quinta, CA and others in that area with roundabouts. When Jefferson St. was first

installed as a 2 lane intersection roundabout, it was a nightmare. Quite a few accidents occurred there until the intersection was changed to one lane.

The roundabout that was constructed off of Hwy 1 going over Holman Hwy 68 was a huge improvement. I am all in favor of roundabouts on Hwy 68 in Monterey County. I drive often during each week going in either direction to Monterey or to Salinas; sometimes twice a day. It's very important for all of us to plan our day around the traffic going west in the morning and then going east in the afternoons. Drivers are running red lights and dangerously passing often on the right side of the road.

Traffic lights to try to fix this conundrum would just be more nightmare situations in my opinion. I am very anxious to see some roundabouts start to happen regarding this situation.

Response to Comment I48-1: Your support for the project roundabouts (the selected preferred alternative) is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I49: Christina Renteria

Comment I49-1: Please inform me the estimated arrival of emergency response teams using the proposed project vs current response times in the affected area as outlined in the proposal.

Response to Comment I49-1: Refer to response to comment A2-1 regarding the effects of roundabouts versus signals on the response times for emergency response vehicles.

Comment I49-2: What about the use of AI signals and the cost vs the cost of the proposed projects?

Response to Comment I49-2: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding the AI signal system and a pilot project for AI signal controllers planned as an interim project. See response to comment I49-4 regarding costs.

Comment I49-3: What is the actual time saved for the commuter in both directions with the proposed project?

Response to Comment I49-3: Section 2.1.9, Traffic and Transportation, of this environmental document provides travel delay savings in future years with and without the project (Build and No-Build alternatives). The preferred alternative, roundabouts, is projected to provide a 28 percent reduction in travel delay through the project corridor, measured in both daily vehicle hours of delay and daily person hours of delay. See Tables 2.1.9.9 and 2.1.9.10 in Section 2.1.9.

Comment I49-4: What is the actual cost of the available AI technology vs the actual cost of the proposed project. I have been using Highway 68 for 15 years and am well aware of the traffic conditions. Thank you and I look forward to a response.

Response to Comment I49-4: The cost of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control systems versus the cost of roundabouts (Alternative 1) would not be an equivalent comparison, as the Traffic Operations Analysis Report concluded in its analysis of Alternative 2: that installation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control would also require construction of auxiliary through lanes to accommodate traffic volumes for the 20-year horizon conditions. The most updated benefit-cost ratios are less for Alternative 2 than for Alternative 1, meaning that Alternative 1 has a greater benefit versus cost than Alternative 2.

Commenter I50: Andrew Hawryluk

Comment I50-1: I am writing to inform you that I am opposed to the recommendation that "roundabouts" be installed on HW 68. I dislike roundabouts and the traffic confusion that they create. Putting 9 roundabouts along a short section of highway is absurd. In several locations, two roundabouts are placed within a mile or two of each other.

The congestion that will be created on feeder streets (such as Olmstead Road) onto HW 68 will be horrendous. I and my wife are opposed to this plan and strongly recommend that you abandon it.

Response to Comment I50-1: Your opposition to roundabouts is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Regarding the concern about close spacing of multiple roundabouts within the project limits, a study conducted by the National Academy of Sciences showed that corridors with irregular intersection spacing show a higher likelihood for having better travel times under a roundabout configuration than a signalized configuration.

Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, NCHRP Report 772, Evaluating the Performance of Corridors with Roundabouts, dated 2014, https://nap.nationalacademies.org/download/22348#.

Regarding the concern about congestion on feeder streets such as Olmsted Road and the perceived difficulty of vehicles on side streets finding a gap to enter the roundabout, while it is true that vehicles within the roundabout have the right-of-way, roundabouts typically create consistent gaps in traffic for vehicles from arterial roads to merge.

Commenter I51: Jay Cook

Comment I51-1: The alternative AI installation is a no brainer. Why spend hundreds of millions on round a-bouts when AI installation is less than one million. If the round a-bouts are approved CalTrans must be in bed with the contractors and should be prosecuted for misuse of public funds.

Response to Comment I51-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Regarding the suggestion of AI adaptive signal control, refer to response to comment I44-1.

Commenter I52: Jerry Wilkinson

Comment I52-1: I have resided at San benancio for 60 years and know all too well the problem with traffic. I have a suggestion and hopefully you have tested it or maybe not. The State should try an inexpensive experiment either manually, electronically or maybe computer. synchronize the signals at San Benancio, Corral, and Las Laureles intersections. all green, then all red and monitor the traffic congestion at peak hours. cheap experiment before spending millions of tax dollars. it really worked in desert from La Palm Desert to Cathedral City. I have studied the problem and if the log jam can be eliminated at these three stop lights, the traffic would flow much better.

Response to Comment I52-1: Your suggestion regarding synchronization of the three easternmost project intersection signals is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Response to comment I44-1 provides information regarding the proposed Build Alternatives (roundabouts or expanded signalized intersections with adaptive signal control) and the project objectives and purpose in comparison to other public suggestions for Artificial Intelligence (AI) controlled signal system with no structural intersection modifications. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are planning to implement an interim pilot project using AI signal control technology, as discussed in response to comment I44-1.

Commenter I53: Warren Lyons

Comment I53-1: I do not believe the environmental impact report has taken into consideration the proposal to add over 1300 dwelling units in an area across from the airport. Such construction would negatively impact the improvement project's goal to maintain the environment and improve traffic conditions on Highway 68. The EIR should be readdressed to take such a project into consideration.

Response to Comment I53-1: Refer to response to comment I36-1.

Commenter I54: John and Julie Calzada

Comment I54-1: How do you think this option will be safe for all the new teen drivers who have… NEVER been taught how to use roundabouts properly!??

Not to mention speeding adult drivers! This will inevitably lead to many accidents and injury! I am a San Benancio resident and am a firm NO on this project! I am fearful for the safety of my family as I'm sure 8 roundabouts will cause confusion and pileups. Humans are creatures of habit this will be dangerous and tooo expensive. Surely there is a better solution!

Response to Comment I54-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative for the project is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

A traffic safety analysis was conducted as part of the traffic study for the project. As discussed in Section 2.1.9, studies of roundabouts compared with signalized intersections conclude that roundabouts have substantially fewer potential vehicle conflict points than signalized intersections and, as a result, serious collisions and fatalities are much lower with roundabouts.

Navigating a roundabout requires drivers to yield the right-of-way to circulating vehicles and accept gaps in the circulating traffic stream. Roundabouts are becoming a common intersection control option throughout California. Driver education and testing are key requirements to obtaining a driver's license. Rules-of-the road on how to navigate through a roundabout is included on page 40 of the California Driver's Handbook [https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/handbook/california-driver-handbook].

Commenter I55: Rick Ricci

Comment I55-1: Have you gathered the facts necessary to compare the benefits of round abouts on hiway 68 versus the benefits of traffic lights controlled by means of Artificial Intelligence on Hiway 68? If so, please let me know these facts and your conclusions based on the facts.

Response to Comment I55-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 which addresses the suggestion for AI signal control technology instead of roundabouts and the planned interim pilot project that will implement AI technology for existing signals on State Route 68.

Commenter I56: Ellen Evers

Comment I56-1: I am apposed to the round abouts on Highway 68. If the merge lane at the Pasadera entry is eliminated, residents will have to wait for a break in the traffic to get into the round about. At certain times of the day and when there are special events, the traffic is a very high volume which would make it difficult to safely get onto Highway 68. This will lead to the

need to take dangerous risks to merge onto the highway. If land is taken at the entry to Pasadera, making it necessary to shorten access to the entry gate, at times of high volume event traffic, vehicles could be backed up making dangerous conditions for all**.**

Response to Comment I56-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative for the project is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

The function of a merge/acceleration lane is to allow motorists to merge with highway traffic at or near the speed of traffic. Highway traffic has the right-of-way; the motorist who is attempting to merge with highway traffic must take precautions to avoid an accident. At roundabouts, motorists approaching a roundabout must reduce their speeds, look for potential conflicts with vehicles already in the circular roadway and be prepared to stop for pedestrians and bicyclists. Vehicles travel counterclockwise around a raised center island, with entering traffic yielding the right-of-way to circulating traffic. Vehicles within the roundabout move slowly, and consistent speeds are maintained, between 15 and 20 miles per hour, by the deflection of traffic around the center island and the relatively tight radius of the roundabout. Slow speeds help vehicles move smoothly into, around, and out of a roundabout. Refer also to response to comment 04-1b.

Commenter I57: John Kuehl

Comment I57-1: I want to make a couple of comments and requests for the HWY 68 project.

1. At the Laureles Grade intersection. I am part of the Laguna Seca Water Company. We have 58 water connections which are fed from a well located in an easement on the Fire Department parcel on the corner of Laureles Grade and HWY 68. It appears the construction could impact the well currently in place. We need to know what mitigations will be made during construction as well as long range to protect the well from damage.

Response to Comment I57-1: A parcel owned by Laguna Seca Water Company was found to be located just west of Seca Place. If this is the well in question, no impacts are expected under Alternative 1; however, this would not be the case under Alternative 2. Also, Alternative 1 improvements are planned to stay on existing predeveloped areas, therefore reducing potential for impacts. After receipt of public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, Caltrans' Project Development Team selected Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative to move forward into the final design phase.

Every effort will be made to minimize permanent and temporary impacts to non-state highway properties. Where property impacts are unavoidable, there will be obligations Caltrans will adhere to as part of the right-of-way process

and negotiations to compensate owners for damages or improvements impacted by the project right-of-way needs.

Comment I57-2: 2. I live off of Quail Ridge Ln. I would like to see a traffic simulation so I will have an idea of how this new project will impact my ability to access HWY 68.

Response to Comment I57-2: Quail Ridge Lane is one-half mile east of Laureles Grade and 1.25 miles west of Corral de Tierra Road. The proposed intersection changes at these two intersections with State Route 68 are not expected to increase delay or queuing from Quail Ridge Lane.

Commenter I58 through I61: Dwight Stump

Comment I58-1: Can the $50 million from Title X that is currently proposed be used in its entirety to partially fund the $153 million roundabouts, be used instead to pay for AI controlled signals at all 9 intersections at a total cost of ½ Million and use the other $49.5 Million to pay for pot hole repairs and other urgent road projects in Monterey County?

Response to Comment I58-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI signal control technology and an interim pilot project to implement that technology on the project corridor.

Comment I59-1: What was the specific reason(s) that Caltrans withdrew the proposed 4 roundabouts on Hwy 126 in Ventura County in 2017?

Response to Comment I59-1: The project referenced in the comment is located in another Caltrans region, District 7, with headquarters in Los Angeles. District 7 representatives would be the effective resource for further information on that project. Each project has unique circumstances that factor into decisions on funding the design and construction phases of each project. These factors can involve funding constraints, site-specific conditions, regional priorities, and other issues. The decision to fund the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project and to select the preferred alternative was based on the information analyzed for this project location and conditions and the specific purpose and need of the project.

Comment I60-1: Since most (70%) of collisions are rear end type collisions along the 8 mile stretch of 68, will the proposed nine roundabouts actually cause more rear end collisions during the 20 hours of non-peak commute per day, since the roundabouts will force all vehicles to slow to 10 to 15 mph 9 times over 8 miles, where currently traffic proceeds smoothly through a majority of greenlights?

Response to Comment I60-1: By design, roundabouts promote continuous traffic flow by compelling each vehicle to slow every time it enters the roundabout. This consistency with needing to slow down, along with advance

warning signs, helps drivers anticipate the need to reduce speed as they approach the roundabout. This expectation of needing to reduce speed can help mitigate the conditions that lead to frequent rear-end collisions, such as reducing instances of sudden stops caused by red lights at signalized intersections. The reduction in speed required to safely move through the roundabout also helps to lower the risk of high-speed rear-end collisions, which tend to be more severe.

Queuing will occur (as studied in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report), and consideration will be made to include signage or flashing beacons to alert the traveling motorists of changed road conditions that would include the need to reduce speeds ahead.

Comment I61-1: Since the DEIR states that “congestion, coupled with speeding between signalized intersections, is largely the cause of rear end collisions”, how would installing 9 roundabouts make any difference with the speeding component?

Response to Comment I61-1: By design, roundabouts promote continuous traffic flow by compelling each vehicle to slow every time it enters the roundabout. While the speed limit between intersections will remain at 55 miles per hour, the consistency with needing to slow down, along with advance warning signs, helps drivers anticipate the need to reduce speed as they approach each roundabout.

Commenter I62: Christina Renteria

Comment I62-1: I have serious concerns regarding the proposed project of 9 roundabouts planned for Highway 68. I am concerned about how it affects the response time for emergency vehicles, the lack of actually solving the traffic issue during peak hours, the waste of taxpayers’ monies needed, and the lack of transparency listing the pros and cons from CalTrans.

There are other options. One, AI technology used. Two, a third lane used strictly for peak traffic times to help with the flow of traffic. Three, close off the ability of morning commuters traveling east to west of utilizing the Toro Park neighborhood as a bypass.

I am a commuter who utilizes the highway 68 corridor and actually utilizes the roundabout at the top of Holman Highway. I am a fan of that particular roundabout but am strongly opposed of 9 roundabouts in a eight mile span as proposed by Cal Trans.

Response to Comment I62-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding the suggestion of AI signal adaptation as an alternative to the roundabouts alternative. Regarding emergency vehicle response times, refer to response to comment A2-1. Reversable lanes on a highway are considered for highway improvement projects that add lane capacity or realign a major

street or highway; the proposed project does not include realignment or add capacity for additional vehicle travel lanes, as discussed in Chapter 1. During the scoping phase of the project, it was determined that lane management, including reversable lanes, was not recommended for State Route 68 because the traffic on the highway corridor has a fairly even directional split and numerous intersecting streets. Managed lanes were also considered and eliminated due to the equivalency of volumes in opposing directions of traffic, as discussed in Section 1.7.3 of this environmental document. Regarding the traffic bypass problem at the Toro Park neighborhood, refer to response to comment O2-2.

Comment I62-2: Will there be an opportunity for the public to voice their concerns and offer suggestions?

FYI, CalTrans has not responded to my questions and are required to do so and again I reiterate that Cal Trans has not listed the cons of the project so I feel that the proponents of said project are not being completely transparent. Thank you for your time and I look forward to a response and not a response that directs me only to the CalTrans web page but one that actually addresses my concerns.

Response to Comment I62-2: The opportunity for public comments and suggestions was offered during the 60-day public review period for the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, from November 8, 2023 to January 8, 2024. In addition, prior to the circulation of the draft environmental document, a scoping meeting for the public was held in September 2019 after the publication of the Notice of Preparation for the draft environmental document. Three public meetings were held during the public review period for the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. These meetings were held in November and December of 2023, and were an open forum format, with display boards and Caltrans and Transportation Agency for Monterey County personnel on hand to present information about the project and answer questions. Information also noted how the public could submit comments. Pursuant to Caltrans' standard process for environmental evaluation documents, specific responses to public comments are included in this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact.

The Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment documents presented the potential environmental impacts, including traffic impacts, as well as benefits of the proposed project, including both Build Alternatives and the No-Build Alternative. Therefore, the impacts, or "cons" of the alternatives have been addressed and compared. This Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact includes information on the selection of the preferred alternative that will be carried forward for final design. This document is also published on the Caltrans project webpage for public access.

Commenter I63: Dan Bowman

Comment I63-1: My wife & I have attended two open forum hearings held at Laguna Seca Raceway concerning the Caltrans/Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC) joint proposal to either 1) install nine roundabouts or 2) install expanded signalized intersections between San Benancio Road and Josselyn Canyon Road in Monterey County. We have talked to numerous Caltrans and TAMC representatives who were present at both meetings: communicated with David Sargenti (Monterey County Regional Fire District Fire Chief); and reviewed the Caltrans Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Assessment & Evaluation.

We understand the purpose of the project is to reduce vehicle delay, the rate & severity of collisions & several other concerns including wildlife safety & bicycle/pedestrian access.

My wife and I would like Caltrans to either adopt the installation of the expanded signalized intersections or artificial intelligence controlled signals instead of the nine roundabouts. The reasons for our request are as follows:

1. Contrary to the Environmental Impact Report recommendation, the installation of nine roundabouts will adversely impact response time for fire engines and emergency services to respond to home fires and life threatening emergencies such as strokes and heart attacks, as well as respond to victims of vehicle accidents. Fire Chief Sargenti has advised his heavy fire trucks will need to slow down to 10 - 15 mph when navigating each roundabout and require 32 seconds to regain momentum, only to slow down again for the next roundabout. When each roundabout delay caused by slowing down is taken into consideration, as well as ambulances also slowing down when returning critically ill/injured patients to hospitals in either Salinas or Monterey, this additional time could likely mean the difference between the patient surviving or not.

A large percentage of the residents who live off Hwy 68 between San Benancio Road and Josselyn Canyon Road are retired citizens, and access to emergency vehicles is a major issue of concern.

These concerns are mitigated by the proposed expanded signalized intersections as emergency vehicles would continue to have priority access through signalized intersections.

Response to Comment I63-1: Caltrans in partnership with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County agrees that roundabouts will increase emergency response time. Our analysis shows that the delay is approximately 18 seconds per intersection compared with signalized intersections with emergency priority control. However, the expected benefits of constructing roundabouts will include reduction of the rate of collisions at the intersections as well as the reduction of

severity of the types of collisions compared to the conventional intersections. Refer to response to comment A2-1 for further discussion of emergency vehicle response time.

Comment I63-2: 2. The 8.9 miles affected by the Caltrans proposal is located in a Wildland Urban Interface area that is prone to wildfires. With the installation of single lane roundabouts in 8 of the 9 intersections, Hwy 68 during a wildfire will become just as congested as those currently occurring during commute times. Residents who reside in areas where their only escape is to Hwy 68 (such as San Benancio, Corral de Tierra, Boots Road, and Laureles Grade) may become severely backed up & trapped as vehicles trying to enter Hwy 68 are going to be prevented from entering since those vehicles already on Hwy 68 entering the roundabout have right of way over those entering from an arterial road. When we addressed this concern with the Caltrans representatives at the forum hearing, we were told CHP officers would be directing traffic at each of the nine roundabouts to ensure adequate egress would occur from the arterial roads. During such an emergency, it is highly doubtful either the CHP or the Sheriff's department will have sufficient staff available to handle that function. It would only take one major traffic accident in a single lane roundabout to stop or seriously restrict the flow of traffic for most of the 8.9 mile stretch of Hwy 68. This is due to the fact there are only three exits on this stretch of Hwy 68 that lead out of a wildfire area: Monterey to the west; Salinas to the East; and Canyon Del Rey to the North. Laureles Grade to the south only leads into a worse wildfire area. One only need observe current commute restrictions to foresee what a disastrous impact a wildfire along Hwy 68 would have on resident deaths who become trapped on arterial access roads.

And Fire Chief Sargenti has stated: "The District is concerned that Alternative 1 with the nine contemplated roundabouts would not only delay the emergency response for public safety agencies but also compromise the flow of traffic and route flexibility in the event of an emergency evacuation. The same concerns are not present with Alternative 2 or current existing conditions."

Response to Comment I63-2: While it is true that vehicles within the roundabout have the right-of-way, roundabouts typically create consistent gaps in traffic for vehicles from arterial roads to merge. If a natural disaster occurs, State Route 68 is more likely to be closed to interregional traffic to facilitate the orderly evacuation effort of local residences, which would reduce congestion at each roundabout. Also, roundabouts operate in an orderly fashion without the need for electricity, unlike traffic signals. Traffic signals may not be operable due to a power outage in a disaster event. Out-of-service signalized intersections are treated as all-way stop-controlled intersections, which would cause significantly more congestion than a roundabout in evacuation efforts.

Regarding concerns about collisions within a single-lane roundabout, the reduced speed required to safely move through roundabouts reduces the likelihood and severity of crashes as their design naturally lowers vehicle speeds and minimizes conflict points. Low speed collisions are less likely to cause injuries or disable a vehicle. Page 77 of the California Driver's Handbook directs drivers to move their vehicle out of traffic if no one is injured [source: https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/file/california-driver-handbook-pdf]. Also, Caltrans reached out to the California Highway Patrol in Santa Barbara County where two state highways have included roundabouts for several years. The California Highway Patrol personnel said that they were unaware of any significant time delay in regard to roundabout crashes compared to signalized intersection crashes.

Regarding emergency vehicle response times with the roundabouts alternative, refer to response to comment A2-1.

Comment I63-3: One of the two main purposes of the Caltrans proposal is to reduce vehicle delay on Hwy 68. Installing nine roundabouts will accomplish just the opposite. The Caltrans Dratt Environmental Impact Report states: "Traffic delay at the corridor intersections is caused, in part, by the inefficiency of the existing intersection controls due to limited green time for each direction of travel at the intersections and the lack of coordinated signal timing among the intersections" [page iv, Summary, Intersection Operations]. Replacing the current signals with the expanded signalized intersections would significantly solve that issue currently as well as in projected 2025, 2035 & 2045 traffic delays. Again, the Caltrans Draft Environmental Impact Report states that the expanded signalized intersection proposal results in a "higher Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay savings" over both the "No-Build" alternative or the roundabout alternative [page ix, Traffic & Transportation - Intersection Operations].

Response to Comment I63-3: Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are committed to delivering a project that strikes a balance between the operational needs of the corridor while proactively striving for a safety performance that aligns with the Department’s Zero Vision goals at each of the intersections under study; they are committed to a safe systems approach to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on California roadways.

As addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and noted in the comment, Alternative 2 with advanced adaptive signal control and enhanced lane configurations would have greater daily hours of vehicle delay savings than Alternative 1. However, the updated Alternative 1 will still reduce daily hours of vehicle delay by approximately 28 percent compared to the No-Build Alternative for the 20-year horizon design conditions; it has the added advantage of better meeting the second purpose of the project—to reduce the number and severity of collisions in the corridor. Refer to Section 2.1.9 of this document. Also, the most updated benefit-cost

ratios are less for Alternative 2 than for Alternative 1, meaning that Alternative 1 has a greater benefit versus cost than Alternative 2.

Comment I63-4: 4. We also question why Caltrans has not considered the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) controlled signals where signal operation is based on real time situations that change during the day as they do on Hwy 68. Our understanding is that a study of artificial intelligence-controlled signals was funded at Carnegie Mellon University by the US Dept. of Transportation Congestion Management Technology Deployment, and that this technology has been applied to actual installations since 2012 in places like Pittsburgh, PA and Peterborough in Canada. Travel times are reported to have been decreased 25% in Pittsburgh. And Peterborough did a pilot project to compare traditional signal timing systems with adaptive signal systems. The project resulted in close to $1 Million in reduced user costs, and decreased vehicle delay by 41.3%.

We have been advised it is estimated to cost between $177,000 and $440,000 to install artifical intelligence controlled signals (depending on detector hardware) in all 9 of the intersections compared to the $227 Million projected for the 9 roundabouts. If this is correct, why would Caltrans advocate for spending hundreds of millions and years to install roundabouts (with additional traffic delays resulting from the construction) when the primary purpose of the project can be accomplished for far less expense and commuter hassel?

Response to Comment I63-4: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI Signal Control and the planned implementation of an interim pilot project using AI technology.

Comment I63-5: In conclusion, we strongly advocate for either the artificial intelligence controlled signals or the expanded signalized intersections alternative. In addition to the reasons previously cited, it is not apparent any of the Caltrans employees who appeared at the forum hearings or who have been involved in the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project actually live in the impacted area of this project. To ignore the concerns of the majority of those who do live here as well as those issues raised by our emergency response leaders who serve this area seems fool hardy at best, especially when one considers many more lives may realistically be lost due to emergency response delays or a wildfire, than the unfortunate few who die or are seriously injured by rear end vehicle collisions this proposal was designed to eliminate.

Response to Comment I63-5: Your comments are appreciated and were shared with the project team.

Commenter I64: Steve Kayser

Comment I64-1: I want to express my discontent with the proposed approach to address traffic on highway 68 using roundabouts. It is expensive, will create real issues at the Pasadera entrance/exit, may result in emergency services having longer response times while BETTER solutions exist with current technology. Better use of smart/controlled traffic lights is my vote. Mush less expensive and could be installed much sooner.

Please, let's do something smart with today's technology and not let studies made years ago drive current day solutions.

Response to Comment I64-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Regarding the concern about access from the Pasadera community, see the responses to comments I30 series and response to comment I56-1. Regarding emergency vehicle response times see response A2-1. Regarding the suggested AI Signal control alternative, see response to comment I44-1.

Commenter I65: Gail Robbins

Comment I65-1: For those of us who travel and/or live off of the Highway 68 corridor, the morning and afternoon congestion/gridlock is significant. The road usage is almost double what the road was designed to carry.

The roundabout at 68 and highway 1 near CHOMP has eased congestion to a degree and appears to be a better solution that traffic lights.

With the airport recently being approved for expanding terminals as well as non-stop flights, has potential increased traffic to the airport been figured in? Please commented respond.

The County of Monterey has proposed creating 1,327 apartments in land parcels from Highway 68 along Olmsted to the former Foothill School on the West Side of Olmsted, and on the East side to include the land parcel from the corner of Olmsted and Via Malpaso inward. This would most likely add 2,000 to 3,000 cars impacting Olmsted and 68!!! A significant addition to gridlock!!! Please comment and respond.

Thank you for your kind attention in this matter.

Response to Comment I65-1: Your support for the roundabouts alternative is appreciated and has been shared with the project team. The Monterey Peninsula Airport did not mention any plans for expansion of the airport and/or flight service in its comment letter on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, but rather noted its plans for modifying access to the airport. Therefore, projected traffic increases linked to the

purported airport terminal expansion were not considered. Refer to response to comment A1-1.

Regarding potential planned multi-family residential projects around the intersection of Olmsted Road/State Route 68, Caltrans is currently aware of one 100-unit residential development application near that intersection, through recent coordination with the County of Monterey; however, County staff would have the most current information. Caltrans traffic operations planning for the State Route 68 corridor is based on the Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018), which incorporates transportation planning information for the region. Any future development that is approved along the project corridor would be responsible for mitigation of additional traffic operational impacts generated by the development to the state highway and local roadways. Refer to response to comment I36-1.

Commenter I66: Dwight Stump

Comment I66-1: In Alternative 2, exactly what type of “upgraded signalized intersection, controls“ would be used, what would the separate cost be for just those upgraded signal controls, and why can’t they be installed without the intersection widening, which adds more conflict points, and thus more collisions?

Response to Comment I66-1: Only signal controllers that comply with Caltrans Information Technology’s standards can be used on state highways. Adaptive Traffic Control Systems are the type of upgraded signal systems that would be included with Alternative 2. The cost for the Adaptive Traffic Control Systems technology alone is estimated to be $1 million. The existing signalized intersections cannot meet future traffic demands with only improved signal control because that could not increase the throughput at the intersections sufficiently to handle projected traffic volumes in the 2045 horizon year. Therefore, widening the signalized intersections, in combination with optimized signal timing, was included in Alternative 2. As noted in the comment, doing so would “add more conflict points,” and thus the potential for more collisions. Alternative 1, the preferred alternative, will reduce the number of conflict points at the project intersections.

Commenter I67: Nora Shen

Comment I67-1: I am writing in regards to the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvement Project with MANY concerns. We live off of Highway 68 in the proposed area. As this is a major connection between Salinas and the Monterey Peninsula, we see many commuters, tourists, delivery trucks and emergency vehicles travel on this route.

1) Eight of the nine roundabouts planned would be single-lane roundabouts. How easy is this for large trucks to navigate? How would emergency vehicles efficiently navigate through when there is only one lane?

Response to Comment I67-1: Refer to response to comment A2-1 regarding emergency vehicles accommodation in roundabout designs. After the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for public comment, Caltrans selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative, as discussed in Section 1.6 of this document. In addition, the roundabout designs for the three easternmost intersection locations have been refined to be a hybrid design with two travel lanes on State Route 68 and a single lane on the local connecting streets (refer to discussion in Section 1.4.1 of this document). The additional lane on two sides of the roundabout circle will provide additional space around the roundabout for large emergency vehicles going through those roundabouts.

Comment I67-2: 2) On paper it may seem like a good idea but I have traveled through the roundabouts in Monterey neighborhoods, at the exit off Highway 1 that leads to Pebble Beach, and in the auto mall in Seaside. The neighborhoods and the auto mall have cars going at much slower speeds and with much less traffic. The exit off of Highway 1 makes more sense than those planned on Highway 68 as it is placed at the “end” of Highway 68 eastbound before it merges into Highway 1 and at the exit going southbound. Even then, there is still occasional confusion about which car has the right-of-way…

Response to Comment I67-2: The roundabouts alternative has operational and safety performance benefits that are supported by traffic operational analyses and federal highway research, as discussed in the Traffic and Transportation section 2.1.9.

Design of entry speeds and circulating speeds is based on the roundabout size and geometry. The roundabouts at those locations have differing geometry (135 to 140 feet inscribed circle geometry at the interchange of State Route 1/State Route 68), and the mall roundabout is composed of urbanized connecting roads with simulating downtown-type streets that tend to have lower speeds. Single-lane roundabouts are designed for entry speeds of 25 miles per hour for the fastest path, and circulating speeds were determined to fall within 15 to 20 miles per hour. Hybrid roundabouts are designed for entry speeds of 30 miles per hour for the fastest path, and circulating speeds were determined to fall within 15 to 20 miles per hour.

Comment I67-3: 3) During rush hour, there is a constant stream of cars going along this route. Those of us who live in neighborhoods off this route may have difficulty accessing the roundabouts at those times.

Response to Comment I67-3: The concern about accessing the highway via roundabouts during peak traffic periods is acknowledged. At roundabouts, motorists approaching a roundabout must reduce their speeds, look for potential conflicts with vehicles already in the circular roadway and be prepared to stop for pedestrians and bicyclists. Traffic entering the roundabout will yield the right-of-way to circulating traffic moving at slow and consistent speeds, usually between 15 and 20 miles per hour. During peak periods of traffic, cross-street traffic wanting to enter the roundabout may have to wait longer for gaps to occur in the flow of traffic in the roundabout; however, the slow speeds in the roundabout allow for entering vehicles to merge in via smaller gaps. Also, left-turning vehicles using the roundabouts create a break in the eastbound/westbound through traffic on State Route 68, providing side street traffic a gap to enter the roundabout. See also response to comment O2-4.

Comment I67-4: 4) The underground culverts planned for wildlife crossings…is this a proven solution for the threat to wildlife crossing the highway? Will this impact the integrity of the roadway in the event of natural disasters, such as floods or earthquakes? Just wondering, as the highway is the essential connection between the Peninsula and the “rest of the world.” Thank you so much for taking into consideration my concerns.

Response to Comment I67-4: Field studies that included the placement of cameras confirmed the use of underground structures by wildlife. The underground structures such as the culverts proposed with this project are a common infrastructure that currently crosses all roadway facilities for drainage of runoff. They are designed so that they would not impair the integrity of the roadway itself.

Wildlife crossing structures have been used successfully throughout the world to connect fragmented habitats and provide safe passages for wildlife movement across existing roads. These crossing structures can be culverts and underpasses for wildlife to cross underneath the highway safely, or they could be overpasses and land bridges for wildlife to cross over the road. The topography of this corridor lends itself best for undercrossings, which were studied and designed to accommodate a suite of species. The structures are designed and constructed with the same integrity and safety in mind as a typical culvert or bridge, just with a different primary purpose (though some portions of the culverts also convey water). In addition, several culverts are being enlarged relative to their existing size, so they will have greater water-carrying capacity. Wildlife crossing structures have proven to be very successful in almost doubling the population size for the Florida panther and preventing vehicle collisions with mountain lions and other wildlife in Banff, Canada (Gloyne, C. C. & Clevenger, A. P. 2001, Safe Passages 2010).

Commenter I68 through I74: Dwight Stump

Comment I68-1: Why does Caltrans, in the DEIR, try to emphasize the collisions in very "selected" areas on the 8 mile stretch of Hwy 68 when according to SWITRS data from 2011 to 2022 there have been 22 fatalities on the entire length of Hwy 68 and only one of those was killed in an intersection (the only type a roundabout may prevent) plus, Caltrans own data shows that this 8 mile stretch of Hwy 68 has been below the state average for all collision since 2017?

Response to Comment I68-1: The collision data within the project limits presented in highway segments and intersections (i.e., spot location within a 250-foot radius) are consistent with the format used for all state highway projects. See also response to comment I110-1.

Caltrans committed to a safe systems approach to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on California roadways. Caltrans' Vision Zero Goal 2050 program has promoted a proactive approach to ensuring safety along the state highway system. The program aims to make 2050 the first year without a single death or serious injury on the state highway system. As provided in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.1, one of the purposes of the project is to reduce the rate and severity of accidents. Data on collision rates on State Route 68 as provided in Table 1.2 show that five of the nine project intersections exceeded the statewide average rate for similar facilities in the categories of Fatality plus Injury (F+I) and/or Total Collisions for the period 2017 through 2019.

As discussed in Section 2.1.9 Traffic and Transportation, typical signalized intersections are known to have 32 conflict points compared to 8 for roundabouts. The lower speeds introduced by roundabouts would also help with delivering a safe and reliable corridor for the traveling motorist.

Comment I69-1: How will the wildlife crossings be effective in preventing the 8 animals reported killed from 2005 to 2015 and where has a similar design been used and how effective has it been?

Response to Comment I69-1: Refer to response to comment I67-4.

Comment I69-2: Additionally, what is the separate cost of the wildlife crossings from both Alternatives?

Response to Comment I69-2: Estimated costs for the wildlife crossings for both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 is $7.04 million ($7,040,000). The costs vary per site location and depend on their opening size, the length across the highway, and the required grading for surrounding terrain.

Comment I70-1: How can Caltrans state that there will be a predicted 2.37 collisions per year from Joscelyn Canyon to Olmstead when there have been "0" observed annual collisions per year?

Response to Comment I70-1: The source of the data in the comment (2.37 collisions per year) is unclear. Section 2.1.9 presents quantitative data of documented accidents on the project corridor limits from 2017 to 2019 and 2019 to 2022. Collision data is reported by the Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System (TASAS) per million vehicle miles for the project route compared to the state average. No future accident forecasts are presented.

Comment I71-1: In a PowerPoint slide presentation to the TAMC Board in June 2017, it states that Adaptive Signal Controls will reduce the evening commute by 5.10 minutes compared to roundabouts at 5.00 minutes. What specific kind of adaptive signal controls was it referring to ?
(email included image of slide “What Does That Mean for My Evening Commute?”)

Response to Comment I71-1: Traffic simulation models do not assume specific equipment brands for traffic controllers, including Adaptive Signal Controls. Modeling of traffic signals is typically limited to the peak morning and evening periods on weekdays, and analysis assumes typical adaptive traffic signal operations that adjust cycle parameters based on traffic demand.

Comment I72-1: In the Caltrans TOAR Addendum report (2023), it states that “the AM peak hour performance of the proposed Alternative 1 (9 Roundabouts) is marginally better than the No-Build”, so why are 9 roundabouts being pushed as a solution to peak commute congestion that will cost over $200 million and not really improve the current AM peak commute?

Response to Comment I72-1: As addressed in Section 2.1.9, the traffic analysis found the savings of vehicle hours of delay at the 20-year design horizon conditions for Alternative 1 with mostly single-lane roundabouts to be marginal during the morning peak period. However, the vehicle hours of delay savings during the evening peak period were found to be significant (244 and 261 hours of delay savings for 2035 and 2045, respectively, as shown in Table 2.1.9.12). Further, Alternative 1, which has been updated with hybrid design roundabouts at the eastern three intersections (see Section 1.4.1), is projected to reduce daily vehicle hours of delay by 28 percent compared to the No-Build Alternative. Alternative 1 was also chosen for the preferred alternative because the safety benefits of roundabouts address the safety improvement components of the project’s purpose and need, as roundabouts reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions compared to signalized intersections.

Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are committed to delivering a project that strikes a balance between the operational needs of the corridor while proactively striving to meet our commitment to a safe systems approach to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on California roadways.

Comment I73-1: How will construction of the 9 roundabouts be done to minimize the significant impact that it will have on traffic trying to use Hwy 68

during the construction, what specific amount of delay is predicted and how long will it take to build each roundabout?

Response to Comment I73-1: Caltrans recognizes that all construction projects will cause delays on the state highway system. All state highway system projects include a Transportation Management Plan completed during the design phase, as identified in Table 1.5 in Chapter 1. The Transportation Management Plan includes specific measures for movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists through the project intersections, such as lane closures, reversible lanes, detour routes, and public information programs and procedures.

The construction of the 9 corridor roundabouts will be phased, and not all 9 will be in construction in the same year. A critical path method for the construction timeline will be developed for each roundabout intersection location and will include evaluations by the Construction representatives to ensure that the construction working days are adequate for the proposed improvements. Any opportunity to shorten the construction efforts, while still meeting the performance measures and permit conditions, will be explored to minimize the construction impacts to traveling motorists.

A State Route 68 corridor roundabout may take from one to two years to construct. This timeframe may need to be extended if more than one roundabout is planned to be constructed as part of any contract plan set. It should be noted that the specific roundabout improvements such as retaining walls, bridge widening work, extensive earthwork and grading, wildlife crossings, and regulatory construction work window restrictions will influence the construction duration. Another factor that may increase the construction duration is the extent of utility relocations at each roundabout, which may require construction work windows that would interrupt/stop roundabout construction work to allow for the necessary utility owner relocation efforts.

Comment I74-1: Why does TAMC and Caltrans state as a “Project Benefit” that the 9 roundabouts will “Reduce emergency response times” when a letter from the Monterey County Regional Fire District clearly states exactly the opposite and has done actual tests to show that each roundabout will cause at least a 32 second delay for a total of at least a 5-minute delay caused by the 9 roundabouts (assuming that the roundabouts are not clogged with vehicles)? Is Caltrans aware that the proposed 4 roundabouts in 8 miles on Highway 126 in Ventura County was rejected by the local communities in 2017, mainly due to the roundabouts increasing emergency response times? What was the official reason for Caltrans withdrawing the proposed 4 roundabouts in Ventura County?

Response to Comment I74-1: Regarding emergency vehicle response times, see response to comment A2-1. Caltrans, in partnership with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, agrees that roundabouts will

increase emergency response time. Our analysis shows that the delay is approximately 18 seconds per intersection compared with signalized intersections with emergency priority control. However, the expected benefits of constructing roundabouts will include reduction of the number of collisions at the intersections as well as the severity of the types of collisions compared to the conventional intersections, thereby reducing the need for emergency response calls for highway-related collisions.

Regarding the comment about proposed roundabouts on Highway 126 in Ventura County, see response to comment I59-1.

Commenter I75: Beth Mazerik

Comment I75-1: This roundabout project is a hard NO! In the name of all that is practical, scrap this plan and go with the AI lights.

PS- Also, didn't your father tell you about how money doesn't grow on trees??

Response to Comment I75-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding a suggestion for AI Signal-controls and a planned pilot project.

Commenter I76: Thomas Ford Gowing

Comment I76-1: If you are going to put in 9 roundabouts on Hwy 68 as well as many others roads in CA. then maybe you should give some training on how to drive thur them. Most drivers in CA. are poor drivers. Also by closing the southern boarder you will have less people in CA. to drive.

Response to Comment I76-1: Studies of roundabout usage over time have shown that the majority of accidents that occur in the roundabout in the early stages of its use are primarily of a minor "fender bender" nature but, once drivers become accustomed to yielding the right-of-way when other vehicles are in the roundabout, the number of accidents taper off (study citations: https://www.iihs.org/topics/bibliography/ref/2180 and https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0001457523004773). As discussed in Section 2.1.9, traditional signalized intersections have a much greater number of potential conflict points than roundabouts. Refer also to responses to comments I24-1 and I54-1.

Driver education and testing are key requirements to obtaining a driver's license. Rules-of-the road on how to navigate through a roundabout is included in the California Driver's Handbook https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/handbook/california-driver-handbook.

Navigating a roundabout requires drivers to yield the right-of-way to circulating vehicles and accept gaps in the circulating traffic stream. The following guidelines should be exercised when traveling through a roundabout:

1. Slow down.

2. If there's more than one lane, use the left lane to turn left, the right lane to turn right, and all lanes to go through, unless directed otherwise by signs and pavement markings.

3. Yield to pedestrians and bicyclists.

4. Yield at the entry to circulating traffic.

5. Stay in your lane within the roundabout and use your right-turn signal to indicate your intention to exit.

6. Always assume trucks need all available space, do not attempt to pass them.

7. Clear the roundabout to allow emergency vehicles to pass.

Commenter I77: Sheu Nardeux

Comment I77-1: While I am not completely opposed to roundabouts, I have a concern if the fire dept needs to move expediently through them Currently the fire engines have a way to control the signals now, but if they are removed for roundabouts how will they be able to get through 68 to an emergency? While cost is certainly a valid concern, safety x the best of service should come first.

Response to Comment I77-1: Refer to response to comment A2-1 regarding emergency vehicle response times.

Commenter I78: Mary and Steve Pendlay

Comment I78-1: I attended the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements OD Dec. 6, saw the Josselyn Cyn. Rd. exhibits and spoke/listened to William(?) about the 3 options. We vote no changes to the Josselyn Cyn. Rd./Hwy 68 intersection. We resisted a traffic light 30 yrs.ago, but the Deer Flat residents won and created more traffic with contractors and Salinas residents using our road as a shortcut from Mark Thomas Dr. (Mont.) to Hwy 68.

Response to Comment I78-1: Your preference for no changes to the intersection of Josselyn Canyon Road and State Route 68 is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. As part of the selection of Alternative 1 (Roundabouts) as the preferred alternative for the project moving into final design, the three easternmost intersections of the project (San Benancio

Road, Corral de Tierra Road, and Laureles Grade) are being prioritized as the first phase to be constructed. Construction timing for the remaining project intersections will be determined pending availability of future funding.

Comment I78-2: Address cell phone “lagging” at stop lights: huge issue.

Response to Comment I78-2: Cell phone operation is the responsibility of cell phone companies. Functionality issues with cell phones is outside of the purview of this project.

Commenter I79: Robert N. Lea

Comment I79-1: I am in favor of the proposed improvements to Hwy 68 which include underground culverts for wildlife crossings. My concern regards present signage. There is only one sign that I am aware of indicating be aware of wildlife (near toro Café going to the west). I feel that 3 Be Aware of Wildlife signs, in each direction, would greatly improve driver awareness and reduce road mortality.

Response to Comment I79-1: Your support for the proposed wildlife underground crossing improvements is appreciated and has been shared with the project team. Regarding the signage concern, Caltrans District 5 strategically places such signs in collaboration with Department of Fish and Wildlife authorities to pinpoint locations where deer are statistically more likely to cross state highways. This selection process aims to balance safety measures without overburdening drivers with excessive signage in accordance with federal- and state-mandated guidelines outlined in the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The concern for oversaturation is paramount, as it could potentially lead to desensitization and diminish the effectiveness of warning signs. Therefore, typically one sign is used at the beginning of each segment for each direction. In evaluating the current signage, the eastbound direction sign was more than likely knocked down. The District 5 sign coordinator was notified about the missing eastbound sign, and it was reinstalled in July 2024.

Commenter I80 through I84: Dwight Stump

Comment I80-1: Is Caltrans aware that there are several proposals for very low, low, and moderate-income housing along Hwy 68 for the area between Olmstead Road and the entrance to Monterra for approximately 1400 units (3,000+ cars) and were they included in the traffic analysis in the DEIR and each of the two TOARs? How will that impact the operation and capacity of the single lane roundabouts proposed for that area?

Response to Comment I80-1: Refer to responses to comments A1-4 and I36-1: The 20-year traffic forecast used for the Traffic Operations Analysis Report was based the Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

(2018), which incorporates transportation planning information for the region. Therefore, planned future developments not included in the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan are not accounted for in the traffic report.

It is important to note that this is an operational improvement project and not one that adds capacity. That said, traffic impacts from all planned development are required to mitigate both project-specific and cumulative impacts as needed to either maintain acceptable level of service and/or reduce vehicle miles traveled on both the state highway system and local road network. It is incumbent on Monterey County as the CEQA lead agency for land use to ensure that the conditions of approval for the development include any necessary mitigation. Questions pertaining to aspects of potential development proposals within the County jurisdiction should be addressed to Monterey County Housing and Community Development Department.

Comment I81-1: How will one of the stated purposes of the DEIR, that the nine roundabouts will "improve bicycle assess within the project corridor" be achieved when all bicyclists will be forced to merge from their current, separate bike line along Hwy 68 into the single lane vehicular traffic in each of the nine roundabouts, or need to get off their bikes and walk their bike through the pedestrian crossings? Did Caltrans consult with local bicycle clubs regarding their preference?

Response to Comment I81-1: The roundabout designs provide options for the bicyclists traveling through the roundabouts: either use the slow-moving circulating roadway or to use the bike ramp leading to the multi-shared use path separated from the roadway. The roundabout designs also include crosswalks to further facilitate access for bicyclists at the roundabouts.

State Route 68 currently does not have Class II bicycle lanes (separated from the vehicle travel lane) for bicycles. The highway has shoulders that meet the minimum required to accommodate bicycle traffic. An exclusive non-motorized path or separate lanes for bicycles is beyond the scope of the project. The project purpose to "improve bicycle and pedestrian access within the project corridor" as stated in Section 1.2.1 is intended to improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians at each of the project intersections compared to the existing intersection conditions.

The project mailing list for the Notice of Preparation and the environmental document circulation includes Bicycling Monterey, a bicycle organization in the project region.

Comment I82-1: It is a well-known fact that roundabouts are dangerous and difficult to use for sight impaired pedestrians, as compared to signalized intersections, so how will nine roundabouts be safer and improve their access compared to the current intersections and achieve the DEIR stated goal that roundabouts will "Improve pedestrian access within the project corridor"?

Response to Comment I82-1: As noted in Section 2.1.9, and in these responses to comments, roundabouts have substantially fewer potential conflict points between vehicles and bicyclists and pedestrians, and lower vehicle speeds in and approaching the circle (see Figures 2.1.9.2 and 2.1.9.3). Roundabouts have shorter route distances to cross compared to the existing signalized intersections. Pedestrians need to focus on only one direction of travel per crossing. Vehicles are also traveling at lower speeds. Roundabout design criteria also require ensuring that no obstructions are in the driver's line of sight of pedestrian crossings. See also response to comment I98-1.

Comment I83-1: With the significant, additional land acquisition that will be necessary as described in the DEIR for the construction of the 9 roundabouts, what will happen if a property owner of the land needed for the new roundabouts, not consent to sell their property to Caltrans for the construction of the nine roundabouts?

Response to Comment I83-1: Caltrans will follow the Uniform Land Act policy for acquisition of property needed for the project. The process includes eminent domain action should there be a need.

Comment I84-1: How many vehicles, per hour, currently travel through the 8 mile stretch of Highway 68 during peak AM and peak PM commutes and what happens if that exceeds the operational capacity of the proposed single lane roundabouts, either currently or in the future with the predicted increase in traffic, since roundabouts are fixed structures that cannot adapt to changing traffic? Are different calculations used cars vs trucks vs semi-trucks and how does that impact roundabout operational capacity?

Response to Comment I84-1: The existing traffic volumes during the peak periods in the project limits of State Route 68 varies between 800 to 1,100 vehicles per hour per lane with 4 to 6 percent trucks. The original traffic study (Traffic Operations Analysis Report) includes existing traffic volume data. The roundabout operational analyses show that the roundabout designs will meet current and future traffic demands with a 20-year design life.

The operational analysis contained in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report is based on the Highway Capacity Manual methodology uses of passenger car equivalents to account for heavy vehicles. Heavy vehicles (RVs, buses, trucks, etc.) are converted to passenger car equivalent depending on the gradient and/or terrain (i.e., level, rolling, or mountainous) of the roadway facility. The adjusted traffic values (sum of peak hour volume and passenger car equivalent) are then used for the analyses to evaluate roadway operations.

Commenter I85: Fred and Phyllis Meurer

Comment I85-1: The current Route 68 Corridor Improvement draft EIR/EA document states in the project summary that the project is needed because Heavy congestion along the State Route 68 corridor leads to travel delays, occurring primarily at signalized intersections….Queueing (lines of vehicles backed-up) at intersections occurs during peak hours of the morning and late afternoon/early evening when vehicles are unable to move through the intersection during the first green light period (also referred to as a signal phase) they encounter and must wait until the next green light period to move through the intersection. This queuing results in delays along the project corridor through stop-and-go traffic conditions at multiple intersections. Queuing also routinely blocks access to upstream side streets (cross- streets at State Route 68 behind an intersection) and driveways."

The document fails to identify sufficient alternatives to address the current corridor congestion issues. In fact, a target "delay improvement" for the project now and in 20 years is not even established in the document. The use of Daily Vehicle Hours Delay and Daily Person Hours Delay summarized for the entire corridor are not measurable in the field nor is it possible to validate these performance measures. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IT IS NOT A METRIC THAT THE PUBLIC WILL GRASP!!!. It is recommended that project benefits be reported in terms of one or more measurable metrics that specifically address the stated project need including peak hour intersection delay and queues for each movement. Alternatively, the existing and forecasted hourly intersection delay and queuing analysis can be added to the final document with an assessment of how this data can be used to validate the daily corridor delay results. Without a target for success, there is no real metric to evaluate or track the benefit desired from the proposed investment of almost a quarter billion dollars.

Response to Comment I85-1: Motorists can relate to average delay and travel time metrics. The Build Alternatives evaluated for the project purpose and need were found to be viable for reducing delay and increasing safety by reducing potential collision levels of severity within the project corridor.

Caltrans does not use delay improvement targets for projects. When a viable alternative is studied, anticipated improvements to delay are calculated and weighed against the other viable alternatives along with other metrics such as safety aspects.

Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay (DVHD) is the industry standard metric used for analyzing operations of roadways as stated in the State Highway Systems Management Plan. Caltrans is currently transitioning from using Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay to using Daily Person Hours of Delay (DPHD) as the standard metric. The method for calculating Daily Person Hours of Delay is outlined in the document found at this link:

https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=001779225245372747843:uh1ozfcfcdu&q=https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/traffic-operations/documents/trafficops/202409-ch-175-part-2-dphd-guidelines-a11y.pdf&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwiF14uC5piLAxXqJEQIHeRkLjUQFnoECAcQAQ&usg=AOvVaw19w2z9xSWJt2OFWFx-v2Xk .

Anticipated peak hour Vehicle Hours of Delay (VHD) for the forecast years for the selected Build Alternative, Alternative 1 Roundabouts, as well as Alternative 2, Expanded Signalized Intersections with Adaptive Traffic Control Systems, and the No-Build Alternative are shown in Tables 2.1.9.11 and 2.1.9.12 in Section 2.1.9, Traffic and Transportation.

Comment I85-2: The analysis fails to adequately address the trip growth impact associated with the growth in trip demand that will result from the State imposed RHNA housing requirements and the population growth that we know will continue to occur. It is difficult to assess what land uses are being reflected in the forecasted traffic scenarios. Please include this information that identifies the location and data used for baseline and forecasted land uses (e.g., a GIS map). This can be used by the public to validate travel forecasts. Do these land use forecasts adequately reflect current conditions and currently approved developments in the study area?

Response to Comment I85-2: Travel forecast in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report is based on the Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018), which incorporates transportation planning information for the region. Development projects approved after 2018 are not accounted for in the traffic forecast. Refer to response to comment I36-1 regarding future planned development along the State Route 68 corridor.

Comment I85-3: The alternatives being considered may not provide the additional capacity required to address today's needs. The trip carrying capacity of the "improved" corridor will be inadequate the day the ribbon is cut. Even if it is not an environmental impact, the relative capacity of each alternative should be included for comparative purposes. Wishfully thinking that these new trips that will be generated between the Peninsula and the Salinas Valley will move to other corridors (that are also inadequate), take the bus or ride a bike ignores the housing/jobs geography, work needs, cultural realities, and the demography of the region. The preferred alternative should be selected based on a metric (e.g., roadway capacity) that addresses ability to address the congestion problems between Salinas, the "reused" Ft. Ord and the Monterey Peninsula that were generated when the planned Ft. Ord Eastside Bypass was eliminated from the Ft. Ord Reuse plan and CALTRANS abandoned the capacity enhancing alternative to the current 68 Corridor alignment.

Response to Comment I85-3: The project traffic analysis is based on a 20-year design criteria, using the AMBAG 2014 Regional Growth Forecast as well as information from the 2018 AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. See Section 2.1.9 and Table 2.1.9.9 for details on the functionality of the roundabout alternative (Alternative 1) for the 2045 design horizon; the tables show that the proposed improvements will meet current and future traffic demand for the year 2045 and reduce vehicle delay by 28 percent compared to the No-Build scenario. In addition, Caltrans' adoption of the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure and the 2020-2024 Caltrans Strategic Plan, in combination with implementation of Senate Bill 743, guides Caltrans to limit/de-prioritize capacity-increasing projects that would add vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gases on the state highway system.

Comment I85-4: For the public to adequately comment on the proposed environmental document requires additional detailed modeling of the proposed alternatives that demonstrate the increase in trip efficiency being anticipated by the roundabout oriented projects. There also needs to be at least 1 additional alternative that adequately addresses how to meet the "current" demand for trip capacity as well as the new demand that is going to come from the growth generated by the State mandated housing construction. This could be a double lane roundabout or a hybrid roundabout or of course widening the whole corridor.

Response to Comment I85-4: Since the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was circulated for public review, the design for Alternative 1 was refined to include hybrid roundabouts on the project corridor at San Benancio Road, Corral de Tierra Road, and Laureles Grade (refer to discussion in Section 1.4.1). The design update was addressed in the Traffic Operations Analysis of Updated Alternative 1 for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project (January 2025), which used micro-simulation modeling to assess reduction in travel time delay of Alternative 1 compared with the No-Build Alternative. The analysis shows that Alternative 1 is projected to reduce daily vehicle hours of delay by 28 percent compared to the No-Build Alternative. The traffic analysis documents are included in Volume 2 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact.

The Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018), which incorporates transportation planning information for the region, were used to forecast traffic volumes for horizon years (2025, 2035, 2045). The project Build Alternatives were designed for the 20-year (2045) horizon year, and both were forecast to operate effectively under current traffic conditions as well.

Refer also to responses to comments I85-2 and I85-3.

Comment I85-5: The document summary states: “Traffic delay at the corridor intersections is caused, in part, by the inefficiency of the existing intersection controls due to limited green time for each direction of travel at the intersections and the lack of coordinated signal timing among the intersections.” Separate from the proposed project, there are flow improvements that could and should be made immediately. These projects would make common sense operational improvements on the corridor that could probably generate trip time reductions almost as large as being touted as being possible with the preferred project. For example, in today’s age of technology, it is somewhat amazing that the signalized intersections on the corridor are not coordinated or made “smart”. There are adaptive sensors and controls that are on the market today that could improve intersection operations and be installed without a significant CEQA review. Improvements in corridor trip times could be designed and installed in months, for hundreds of thousands of dollars rather than the proposed improvements that are going to take years and hundreds of millions of dollars and result in minimal trip time improvement.

Response to Comment I85-5: The green time provided at signalized intersections is finite. “Smart” signal controllers can improve efficiency and adjust signal time in real-time for changing demand on each approach. The inherent inefficiency (lost times, yellow, all red) of the traffic signals cannot be fixed with the “smart” controller. The traffic analysis found that upgrading each traditional traffic signal with a “smart” controller would not have the capacity to meet future traffic demand of the corridor without auxiliary through lanes at each intersection.

In addition, Caltrans District 5 Traffic Operations was provided conceptual approval for the pilot use of AI controllers to implement Adaptive Traffic Signal Control, and further discussions took place with regard to potential funding for procurement of the firmware to support Adaptive Traffic Signal Control. Discussions and approval shifted to review of existing traffic data, existing infrastructure, and firmware compatibility to support the pilot project. Regular meetings between the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and District 5 Traffic Operations took place for implementation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control at signalized intersections within the State Route 68 project corridor. Implementation at these intersections provides the ability to best implement, make adequate observations, make adjustments and learn lessons from an engineering and traffic operations perspective for installation at additional intersections along the corridor. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are currently moving forward with the pilot project to procure, install, and use Adaptive Traffic Signal Control on the project corridor as an interim solution. The pilot project is currently scheduled to run for 5 years. Refer also to response to comment I44-1.

Comment I85-6: Another operational improvement example is the Terero-68 intersection. That short segment of road could be turned into an emergency only exit from Toro Park. This would eliminate the queueing impacts

associated with the cut through traffic and school drop off traffic. The cut-through traffic would be forced not to bypass 68 and school drop-off traffic could use the interchange or be encouraged to increase school bus usage. The project should be revised to include an analysis of this intersection or identify the need to address these issues as part of a separate effort.

Response to Comment I85-6: Regarding the cut-through neighborhood traffic problem at Torero Drive and State Route 68, refer to responses to comments O2-1 and I13-1.

Comment I85-7: The draft document also contains statements of fact that are questionable. The most important example of this is the statement that Public Safety access (Fire and other emergency vehicles) will be improved. The fixed, inadequate geometry and capacity limitations of the single lane roundabouts cannot help but slow the response of emergency vehicles because of their size, the need to decelerate and then accelerate to get around the circle, all while waiting for cars to clear out of the roundabout to pull to the shoulder. Of course, an even greater delay will be generated if the driver does not exit the circle prior to trying to pull off to the side. During morning and afternoon peaks, portions of the corridor are saturated with traffic which will also delay clearing of the circle quickly to allow large emergency vehicles to pass. Larger vehicles and trucks that often use the 68 Corridor also will slow the emergency response of larger fire vehicles in the congested areas. The current signals allow for control by emergency vehicles that is not possible with the single lane roundabouts. Each roundabout will add unacceptable time to the emergency response.

Whatever project is built must have sufficient capacity and flexibility to improve public safety response times. Such a project could be a double lane roundabout, potentially a hybrid or turbo roundabout. Whatever designs are chosen should be coordinated with all public safety responders. It was obvious at the public meetings we attended that the fire service leadership had not been consulted sufficiently to resolve his concerns. The public will be adamantly opposed to the construction of any corridor project that increases current response times!

There will also be considerable public opposition to a project costing hundreds of millions of dollars that does not allow for substantially improving current response times. The public must be shown how response time will be improved.

Response to Comment I85-7: Regarding emergency vehicle response time, refer to response to comment A2-1. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County have engaged in coordination with the local fire authority, the Monterey Regional Fire District Chief, regarding the proposed project, including the roundabout designs as they pertain to emergency vehicle access and timing though the roundabouts. Three of the project intersection locations at State Route 68 are now being planned for hybrid

roundabouts (part of the circle would be a single lane and part would be two lanes) as part of the first phase of the project, including the Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road intersections, as discussed in Section 1.4.1 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact.

Comment I85-8: There are several high-volume side roads that connect into the 68 Corridor such as San Benancio, Corral de Tierra, Laureles Grade and at times Laguna Seca. It is very hard to visualize how the peak traffic on the side roads will merge into the traffic circle peak at AM, PM and special event peak trips if the circle is a single lane. This condition also must be more precisely modelled to demonstrate how the system is going to function. That emphasizes the need to include performance measures like queue lengths to determine how each alternative is expected to perform against a measurable metric. Since the roundabouts do not have the flexibility that exist with a "smart" signalized intersection, it is critical that these conditions be modeled in such a way that one can better evaluate their positive and negative impact with various traffic loadings. As with public safety access, the Public will need to be convinced with more than words that the selected project will have the capacity/ flexibility to improve trip times from the main feeder roads to their Salinas or Peninsula destination. Failure to demonstrate improvement before such a substantial proposed investment will generate major public opposition to the project and ultimately to the sponsors of the project.

Response to Comment I85-8: Caltrans based the designs for the roundabouts on traffic counts collected during weekday peak periods in order for the roundabouts to function properly under typical peak traffic loads. As discussed in responses to comments O2-4 and O4-1b, traffic on two-lane conventional highways tends to travel in platoons with a slow-moving lead vehicle, especially where passing opportunities do not exist within the corridor. Between the travel platoons are gaps allowing traffic to enter the traffic stream. In addition, speeds in the roundabout are 20 miles per hour or lower for single-lane roundabouts and 25 miles per hour or lower in multi-lane roundabouts. Slower speeds allow cross-street vehicles to enter the circulatory roadway with smaller gaps. Left-turning traffic using the roundabouts would create a break in the eastbound/westbound through traffic on State Route 68, providing opportunities for side street traffic to enter the roundabout.

Further, as noted in response to comment I85-7, three of the project intersection locations in the east end of the project limits are now planned for hybrid rather than single-lane roundabouts as part of the first phase of the Corridor Improvements project. The intersection designs at these locations were updated to increase vehicular throughput. High volumes at Laguna Seca are typically caused by special events and not typical peak period traffic upon which the designs are based.

Comment I85-9: In a somewhat similar vein, the project's design's failure to address future trip demand is very surprising. A project requiring the level of capital investment being contemplated for this project that is not including how to manage the trip demand increase over the next 20 years, will not sound logical to the public. To intentionally not consider future traffic needs when building a project on such a critical transportation artery makes no sense. It is even more nonsensical when you consider that the proposed design is inadequate to meet even today's trip demands.

We look forward to your reply and answers regarding how the project will be amended to address our concerns.

Response to Comment I85-9: Refer to response to comment I85-3.

Commenter I86: Lauren and William Keenan

Comment I86-1: We are both in favor of the roundabout option… Alternative 1. We are aware that many folks express concerns about emergency vehicles being slowed by the roundabouts. But countries all around the world use them very successfully. A very good example of a successful roundabout is near the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, which obviously has emergency vehicles using it multiple times a day.

The visuals used at your presentation were outstanding. Thank you, Lauren & Bill Keenan.

Response to Comment I86-1: Your support for the project roundabouts alternative is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Commenter I87: Steve Kayser

Comment I87-1: A roundabout at Pasadera is strongly discouraged as during peak hours a left turn l Pasadera would be extremely difficult. Please set up a plan that determines if one is really necessary before implementing AND…

Response to Comment I87-1: The signal for the Pasadera approach to State Route 68 operates with a permissive left-turn (i.e., left-turn yield to opposing through traffic) phasing. The driver must be cognizant of the opposing vehicular traffic and its speed, and presence of pedestrians. At traffic signals, failure on the part of a driver can be associated with occasionally severe consequences for drivers involved in a collision. In contrast, drivers at the yield line entering a roundabout can focus attention entirely on the circulating traffic stream approaching from the left. While maneuvering in a roundabout requires increased driver attentiveness, as compared to traffic signals, the consequence of an error at a roundabout is less severe in comparison to a conventional signalized or unsignalized intersection.

Comment I87-2: In all cases the traffic/congestion during construction AND as a possible means to alleviate traffic - please evaluate opening up the South Boundry entrance to Pasadera to alleviate traffic on Highway 68 and as a means to alleviate delays during construction. The area is controlled but an unmanned gate controlled by existing RFID technology could be implemented. The site currently uses Transcore RFID readers. I understand the county may have to agree to open up the road for access.

Response to Comment I87-2: Portions of South Boundary Road overlap with the boundary of the Fort Ord National Monument, and other portions of the road are in Monterey County jurisdiction. Constructing new connecting roadway segments from existing roads on the Fort Ord National Monument property would be under the purview of the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which manages the property. Circulation systems in County jurisdiction are managed by County Public Works. We are not aware of any plans to extend the existing roads from the Monument property through County property to connect with private development to provide alternative routes to State Route 68. New roadway connections through this area would impact sensitive species habitats and resources as addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment Chapter 1 discussion of alternatives to the project that were evaluated but eliminated from further consideration. In addition, new roadway segments would likely require widening and other physical enlargements of existing roads as alternative routes for State Route 68 highway traffic. See also responses to comments I18-2 and I31-2.

Commenter I88: Neal Thompson

Comment I88-1: I would like to submit the following comments on the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project dated November, 2023, Monterey County, California 05-Mon-68-PM (4.8-13.7) EA 05-11790 Project ID 051800006, State Clearinghouse Number 2019090448, Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation. I have been following the project since August of 2017. It has become very clear that Caltrans, TAMC and other transportation planning groups in positions of authority have no long-term plan on how to improve the Highway 68 corridor between the Cities of Salinas and Monterey (to Hwy 1) as this project is called a mid-term project. Indeed in 2013 the legislature passed, in the name of climate change, SB 743, which prohibits capacity improving projects on California Highways in both rural and urban areas. This draft EIR actually states that the proposed alternatives will not increase capacity; however, in other places it states traffic flow will be improved. One of the supposed purposes of the project is to improve traffic flow even though state law mandates reduced VMT (vehicle miles traveled).

In an attempt to comply with state law and the current fad of only considering roundabouts, planners (not engineers) concocted a plan to supposedly

improve safety and traffic flow by placing 9 or more roundabouts in a nine-mile stretch of Highway 68 between San Benancio Road and Josselyn Canyon Road. This multimodal urban arterial design project will reduce travel speeds to 20 mph or less at 9 roundabout locations during non-peak hour travel periods and essentially stop traffic during certain peak hour periods and unusually high demand periods.

This project will convert a rural 55 mph speed limit highway into an urban traffic mess. Emergency vehicles will no longer be able to respond to residents living near the corridor during non-peak hour periods as quickly and ambulances will be delayed in delivering patients to hospitals in Salinas and Monterey. At a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars this project should have been stopped from the very beginning.

Response to Comment I88-1: Your opposition to the proposed roundabouts at the nine project intersection locations is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team. Your input is important part of the decision-making process for the project.

A traffic safety analysis was conducted as part of the traffic study for the project. As discussed in Section 2.1.9, studies of roundabouts compared with signalized intersections conclude that roundabouts have substantially fewer potential vehicle conflict points than signalized intersections and, as a result, collision frequencies as well as level of severity of collisions are much lower with roundabouts.

The project will improve traffic flow at the signalized intersections without adding capacity overall through the State Route 68 project corridor; therefore, the project is considered a non-capacity-increasing project in regard to Senate Bill 743 (refer to Section 3.3 Climate Change). Roundabouts have been designed and built for rural, urban, and suburban locations throughout California and around the U.S. with inscribed circle diameters due to smaller design vehicles and existing right-of-way constraints. Roundabouts designed for rural locations typically have higher approach speeds and thus may need special attention to visibility and approach geometry. In addition, the traffic analysis concluded that converting the intersections to roundabouts is projected to reduce daily vehicle hours of delay by 28 percent compared to the No-Build Alternative (see Section 2.1.9, discussion under Daily Person Hours of Delay).

Regarding the concern about emergency vehicle response times being impacted by roundabouts, refer to response to comment A2-1.

Comment I88-2: What is needed in the sections of Highway 68 not already widened to four through lanes is a narrow right-of-way and esthetically pleasing four-lane scenic highway as called for in the Monterey County's 2010 General Plan and also in other agency planning documents. A four lane

highway is needed for commuting, emergency vehicle response and emergency evacuations like the one in 2020. Of course, we also need to change existing law. With the increase in electric vehicles and the promise of hydrogen ones, changing state law should be easier now.

Response to Comment I88-2: As discussed in Section 1.7.1 and response to comment I18-1, a four-lane widening of State Route 68 would require a much larger physical footprint for the additional highway lanes and would result in greater impacts on environmental resources and adjacent public and private property. Furthermore, a four-lane widening would have a much higher cost than the two Build Alternatives considered for the proposed project improvements, including the preferred alternative, Alternative 1. Early cost estimates for the four-lane full corridor widening were estimated to be about $200 million, a value that would be much higher in today's dollars.

In addition, a four-lane widening alternative for the highway is not included in the list of financially constrained projects in the Association of Monterey Bay Area Government's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018), or the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's Regional Transportation Plan. The State of California has adopted goals and policies for reduction of greenhouse gases and traffic-related air pollution, which capacity-increasing transportation projects can cause. A road widening conflicts with these objectives, which would also create a deterrence for potential funding of a project that would induce auto travel along a highway corridor. For these reasons, the full corridor widening concept was removed from further consideration.

Comment I88-3: My preferences listed in order of desirability of the three alternatives presented are:

1. Upgraded signalized intersections with enhanced lane configurations. I support this alternative because it saves much more vehicle or person hours of delay than the proposed roundabouts project. See pages 161-164 of your draft EIR. Also, in contrast to the roundabout alternative, the additional through lanes will further advance the construction of four through lanes for all of Highway 68 which is what is needed. This project does not necessarily waste two hundred million dollars if Caltrans judiciously constructs the right improvements at the right locations.

Response to Comment I88-3: Your preference for Alternative 2, and ultimately a four-lane widening of State Route 68 is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. As addressed in Section 1.7, widening State Route 68 to four lanes (an expressway) was considered but dropped from further consideration because environmental resources and adjacent properties would be impacted to a much greater degree because it would have a much larger physical footprint (area of environmental impact) in order to expand the current highway. A full corridor widening alternative would

not be consistent (align) with the project's purpose and need and would have a much higher cost than the roundabouts (Alternative 1) or Alternative 2.

Comment I88-4: 2. No-build Alternative. I support this alternative much more than the roundabout alternative because roundabouts are by far the ugliest of the three alternatives presented (roundabouts require massive amounts of traffic signing, raised islands and other curbing, landscaping treatments will degrade with time, and they require pine and oak tree removal at many locations).

Response to Comment I88-4: Your preference for the No-Build Alternative over roundabouts is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team. As addressed in Section 1.4.2, the No-Build Alternative does not meet the project's purpose and need, which include improving intersection operations to reduce vehicle delay, improving access for bicyclists and pedestrians, reducing collisions, and enhancing wildlife connectivity.

Comment I88-5: Also, emergency vehicle response times and in fact all vehicular travel will be faster with the no-build alternative during non-peak hour times.

Response to Comment I88-5: Caltrans acknowledges that emergency vehicles will need to slow down to navigate each roundabout, which could increase response times. It should be noted that, based on field observations, emergency vehicles have been known to slow to pass through signalized intersections to ensure that vehicles on cross streets yield. Also, the traffic analysis concluded that converting the intersections to roundabouts is projected to reduce daily vehicle hours of delay by 28 percent compared to the No-Build Alternative (see Section 2.1.9, discussion under Daily Person Hours of Delay).

Comment I88-6: 3. Construct roundabouts in place of the existing signalized intersections. I do not support this alternative. This alternative does little to improve roadway capacity or traffic flow and will worsen emergency vehicle response time during all non-peak hours every day of the week. It also hinders all vehicular traffic during non-peak hours. Residents will remain trapped in their homes along the corridor during any high traffic demand period. Also, roundabout construction will needlessly hinder traffic flow on Highway 68 for a decade or more to come. This alternative is the worst alternative from anesthetics perspective.

My concluding statement is please don't waste two hundred million dollars or trap the residents in their homes along the Highway 68 corridor. Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on this draft EJR.

Response to Comment I88-6: Refer to responses to comments I88-1 through I88-5.

Commenter I89: Martin Wegenstein

Comment I89-1: My name is Martin Wegenstein, a resident of Carmel Valley. I am an avid cyclist and ride along Hwy 68 on a regular basis in both directions.

I applaud the proposed Scenic Route 68 project to improve traffic flow, bike and pedestrian safety and animal crossings. I completely agree with the initial preference for Alternative 1, the construction of roundabouts. Roundabouts have proven to be the safest and easiest way for cyclists to navigate intersections, not to mention the benefits of traffic calming and traffic flow.

However, these improved intersections lead in many cases to unmarked and/or narrow shoulders. In other words, certain sections between the proposed roundabouts do not seem to meet minimal bike lane standards.

Therefore, I would urge you to review, as part of the EIR/EA, all sections between the 9 intersections for deficiencies that needed to be addressed, to meet current standards for a bike facility along Hwy 68. Furthermore, I would ask that the draft EIR/EA recommends necessary improvements/changes along the road shoulders that are needed to provide a continuous bike facility along the 8.9 mi corridor.

Response to Comment I89-1: Your support for the project roundabouts is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Bicycles and pedestrian traffic are not prohibited on this stretch of State Route 68. State Route 68 within the project limits currently has shoulders that meet the minimum required to accommodate these modes of mobility. An exclusive nonmotorized path such as continuous bicycle lanes within the highway shoulder areas (Class II lanes) between each of the project intersections is beyond the scope of this project, which is focused on intersection improvements. The roundabouts provide the multi-shared path that takes traffic off of the roadbed and use crosswalks to further facilitate the travel of these modes. However, the suggestion for continuous Class II bike lane improvements throughout the corridor could be considered as part of a future project. This potential future effort would be led by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County consistent with existing planning documents.

Commenter I90: David Rosenberg

Comment I90-1: Thank you for putting together this proposal. As a resident of Toro Park and someone who has to commute to Monterey daily during peak traffic, I am extremely supportive of the proposed solution and hope it will move forward. The traffic causes many safety concerns including commuters using the Toro Park neighborhood to bypass the traffic on Highway 68 (a mother and child were hit by a car just over a month ago). The neighborhood streets are not built for this type of traffic and volume and it is a

danger to residents - especially kids who are walking to their bus stop or the elementary school. Additionally, the roundabouts will reduce the need for idol vehicles - this dramatically reduces the negative environmental impact of the commuters.

The roundabouts will provide a proven benefit and keep traffic moving on the 68 corridor. Please let me know if I can do anything else to support this important project.

Response to Comment I90-1: Your support for the project roundabouts alternative is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Regarding the traffic from State Route 68 using the Toro Park neighborhood to bypass traffic congestion on the highway, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County implemented a separate pilot project during the summer of 2024 to remediate the cut-through traffic affecting the neighborhood. Refer to response to comment O2-2 for the full discussion.

Commenter I91 through I101: Dwight Stump

Comment I91-1: Since Caltrans/TAMC's own studies predict that the 9 roundabouts will reduce the PM peak commute by only five minutes and the AM peak commute only "marginally better" than doing nothing, how can that predicted reduction get any better with future increased traffic since the roundabouts are physical structures and can't be changed to accommodate more vehicles during the peak commute?

Response to Comment I91-1: The traffic forecast analyses for the project used the Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018), which incorporates transportation planning information for the region. The single-lane roundabout designs for eight of the intersections and one multi-lane roundabout that were analyzed as Alternative 1 in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment were determined to be sufficient to accommodate forecast traffic in the 20-year horizon, pursuant to Caltrans design standards. The roundabouts were assessed to reduce future travel delay along the project corridor compared with the No-Build Alternative and are expected to reduce potential traffic conflicts and severity of accidents compared to expanded and existing signalized intersections (Alternative 2) (refer to Roundabout Traffic Safety discussion in Section 2.1.9).

Further, as discussed in Chapter 1 of this document, the design of the Alternative 1 roundabouts at the three easternmost intersection locations has been adjusted to hybrid design to provide additional throughput capacity (at the roundabouts only, not the entire project corridor), which will help relieve queuing for westbound vehicles east of Torero Drive during peak periods.

Comment I92-1: Are you planning to add traffic signals to the roundabouts when they don't operate effectively as other installations have done with busy roundabouts in Portland, Scottland and the UK, especially when the flow of traffic is unequal as in the case with the 8 miles on Hwy 68?

[This comment also included a link to an article called "Why have UK's roundabouts been gradually replaced by traffic lights?", source: www.quora.com]

Response to Comment I92-1: The roundabouts are designed to meet the 20-year travel forecast demand along the State Route 68 corridor. Beyond that time, expansion of roundabouts may be evaluated as part of the tracking and monitoring of the roundabouts' operational performance.

The roundabout cited in the article does not meet modern roundabout design standards (e.g., yield control of all entering traffic, channelized approaches, and geometric curvature and features to control vehicular speeds).

Comment I93-1: Does the $153 Million listed on the current Caltrans website for the 9 roundabouts include design and all other expenses for property acquisition and how much inflation is added for each year of delay until construction actually starts? Also why is the $153 Million quote significantly different than the $227 Million total listed on TAMC's Project Fact Sheet?

Response to Comment I93-1: No, the $153 million listed on the project website for Alternative 1, 9 roundabouts, does not include support costs (design, environmental studies, right-of-way, and construction support and administration), only construction capital costs. Support costs are estimated to cost $67 million, and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County project fact sheet may have been published to the website at a time when costs were being determined. Escalation rates are as follows (updated as of this writing): capital construction is escalated at 4.89 percent for Fiscal Year 2025/2026, 3.8 percent per year for Fiscal Year 2026/2027 and beyond, and support costs are escalated at 3.7 percent per year.

Comment I94-1: What was the total cost to produce the recently released DEIR and what was the cost to produce each of the TOAR's conducted by Caltrans for this Hwy 68 Project?

Response to Comment I94-1: The questions in the comment do not raise any matters related to the environmental analysis or the project alternatives, As noted in response to comment I93-1, support costs, which include environmental studies among other project tasks, are estimated at $67 million.

Comment I95-1: What portion of the projected cost of each of the two alternatives is allotted to the cost of the wildlife crossings and can the wildlife crossings be installed without either alternative being constructed?

Response to Comment I95-1: Refer to response to comment I69-2 for cost information. Yes, wildlife crossings could be installed separately from the whole project. However, the wildlife crossings are only one portion of the project purpose and would not meet the entirety of the project purpose and need derived from public input and documented in the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan. The rest of the purpose and need pertains to improving intersection traffic operations to reduce vehicle delay as well as reducing the rate and severity of collisions in the project corridor.

Comment I96-1: How will 9 roundabouts help the current peak AM commute when most of the backup occurs each morning near Portola Drive where the two lanes merge to one and even TAMC/Caltrans own assessment stated that the 9 roundabouts would only be “marginally better” than doing nothing?

Response to Comment I96-1: The lane merge will remain in the foreseeable future and may potentially function as a meter, thus allowing for smoother traffic flows through the project corridor.

A separate pilot project was implemented by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County at Torero Drive/State Route 68 to address the westbound morning queuing on State Route 68 and Portola neighborhood cut-through traffic issue. Refer to response to comment O2-1.

Comment I97-1: If the current $68 billion budget deficit in California prevents funds from being available for the construction of the 9 roundabouts, will just one or two be constructed and how will that be decided? If less than 9 roundabouts are constructed, how will that impact all of the studies that have been done using all 9 and thus the alleged performance values, plus would that not be inconsistent with the promises made to the public and therefore a misuse of their tax funds?

Response to Comment I97-1: The draft environmental document stated that only the three easternmost roundabouts have identified funding sources, and the final environmental document maintains that information. Therefore, any construction of the three easternmost roundabouts would be consistent with that information. Future use of state funding sources, such as SB 1 Cycle 5 funds, will depend on availability of those funds and, if not available, other regional funding would be necessary to fund the remaining six roundabouts.

The environmental document and supporting technical studies analyze the entirety of the proposed project with nine intersection improvements to cover the whole of the action under the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, rather than piecemealing the project’s effects on the environment. Also, the Traffic Operations Analysis of Updated Alternative 1 report, which analyzed the updated hybrid roundabout designs for the three easternmost project intersections concludes that there will be

additional delay reduction provided by the roundabouts at the eastern end of the project that are planned as the first phase of construction.

Comment I98-1: Although the DEIR states that a purpose of the proposed 9 roundabouts is to “Improve bicycle and pedestrian access within the project corridor”, exactly what part of the design achieves that and how, given the single lane roundabouts make is less safe for bicyclists based on available statistics and less safe for sight impaired pedestrians. How is it better that the current signalized intersections?

A recent article from The Guardian, based on experience in the UK, stated “Cyclists have a demonstrably harder time with roundabouts. Research suggests that on large urban roundabouts, cyclist have an injury rate 10-15 times that of motorists. There is a tendency for motorists at roundabouts to look through cyclists while watching for other motor vehicles.”

Response to Comment I98-1: Pedestrian-vehicle conflict points are reduced at roundabouts. Conflicting vehicles come from fewer directions as pedestrians need only to cross one direction of traffic at a time at each approach as they move through the roundabout. For pedestrians, the risk of being involved in a severe collision is lower at roundabouts than at other forms of intersections due to slower vehicle speeds and fewer number of potential conflict points than at signalized intersections, as shown in Section 2.1.9, Figure 2.1.9.1. Splitter islands act as refuge areas to allow pedestrians to resolve conflicts with entering and exiting vehicles separately.

Bicyclists have a choice of using the road or the ramp to connect to a shared-use path off the roadway in the circle. If cyclists choose to travel through the roundabout in the travel lane rather than the shared path, there are potential conflicts depending on the exiting and entering movements of both the cyclist and motor vehicles.

The UK research was based on “large” urban roundabouts with higher bicycle volumes than the project area on State Route 68, thus higher incidents with bicyclists traveling through roundabouts. The roundabouts proposed on State Route 68 are of the minimum size needed for the design vehicles to circulate and therefore reduce the speeds to mimic those of bicyclists. Experienced bicyclists may choose to travel in the lane behind vehicles, thereby being more visible than what bicyclists in the UK tend to do, which is travel to the right of vehicles where they are not as visible to drivers as they make their turning movements.

Comment I99-1: If during peak commute, the main flow of traffic is continuously going through the roundabouts, how will traffic from the side roads enter the roundabouts since they need to yield to the vehicles already in the roundabout? If the side road vehicles enter the roundabout, will that

disrupt the flow on the main line, thus negatively impacting the peak commute traffic flow and add to the congestion?

Response to Comment I99-1: Traffic flow on two-lane conventional highways tends to travel in platoons with a slow-moving lead vehicle. This is especially true where passing opportunities do not exist, where passing is not allowed, and/or where there is a no-passing lane along the corridor. Between the travel platoons are gaps allowing traffic to enter the traffic stream. Speeds in the circular roadway (roundabout) are 20 miles per hour or lower for single-lane roundabouts and 25 miles per hour or lower in multi-lane roundabouts. These lower speeds allow for last minute yielding by either the circulating vehicle or the entering vehicle and, if neither yields, there is potential for low-speed sideswipes. Slower speeds allow vehicles to enter the circulatory roadway with smaller gaps. Also, left-turning traffic using the roundabouts create a break in the eastbound/westbound through traffic on State Route 68, providing opportunities for side street traffic to enter the roundabout.

Roundabouts keep the traffic flowing at roadway confluence points with side streets. Overall, there would be less idling time for motorists entering and exiting roundabouts.

Comment I100-1: What happens to traffic when there is a collision within the roundabout and there is no way to go around it since 8 of the 9 proposed roundabouts are single lane?

Response to Comment I100-1: After the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, to further improve the travel delays along the corridor, the three easternmost intersections (Laureles Grade, Corral De Tierra, and San Benancio Road) were modified to hybrid roundabouts (two eastbound and westbound lanes), as discussed in Section 1.4.1. Research of collisions at roundabouts has documented results that the collision severity is reduced and, with lower speeds, the majority of collisions are property-damage-only (see Section 2.1.9). The likelihood of vehicles becoming inoperable after a property-damage-only collision at a roundabout is very low. If the vehicle is operable after collision, guidance in the California Driver's Handbook is to move "…vehicle out of traffic if no one is hurt. Then call 911." Observations of collisions in the roundabout at the State Route 25 and State Route 156 intersection result in vehicles moving out of the circulating roadway after a property-damage-only collision, thus clearing the roadway. However, serious and fatal injury collisions that are more likely to occur at a signalized intersection result in increased downtime at an intersection due to the extent of vehicle damage and the additional law enforcement needed to conduct the traffic collision investigation.

Serious collisions that result in inoperable vehicles within the roundabouts will be handled by law enforcement and emergency responders with the same diligence and protocols as collisions in conventional intersections (such as

traffic signals or stop control). Safety remains our top priority, and our commitment to ensuring the well-being of motorists remains steadfast.

Comment I101-1: What are the projected speeds that each type of vehicle will need to slow down to in order to navigate the proposed single lane roundabouts and how much longer will it take to traverse it as compared to traversing the current intersection with a green light? Car? Dual Axle Trucks? Semi Truck? Firetrucks?

Response to Comment I101-1: The entry, circulating, and exit speeds at the roundabouts are low by design in comparison to conventional intersections, and therefore safer (i.e., lower speed). Maximum entry speeds are designed at 25 miles per hour for single-lane roundabouts and 30 miles per hour for hybrid roundabouts and vary depending on vehicle type and capability. Travel speeds circulating in the roundabout range from 10 to 20 miles per hour, single-lane to hybrid design.

Commenter I102: Greg Galin

Comment I102-1: Why would we not formally evaluate AI traffic signals? It seems irresponsible to not analyze this option. Please forward to all voting members.

Response to Comment I102-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI adaptive signal control system.

Commenter I103: Thomas Lukes

Comment I103-1: I am opposed to adding nine roundabouts on highway 68. Using AI signals is a better approach for four reasons:

1. Less disruptive;

2. Less cost;

3. Get started this year;

4. Not every intersection will need to be treated.

Here’s the approach that I would suggest:

1. Install AI controlled lights at San Benancio and Corral de Tierra Rds ASAP.

2. If it is successful, do the same at Laureles Rd.

3. This alone should solve the congestion problem.

Response to Comment I103-1: Your opposition to the proposed roundabouts is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County will implement a temporary pilot project to test AI signal control as discussed in response to comment I44-1. The pilot project, however, is not anticipated to replace the proposed roundabout improvements at all nine project intersections as it would not achieve the purpose and need of the project, particularly the reduction of vehicle delay for the 20-year design horizon, and reduction of the rate and severity of collisions through the project corridor. The eastern three intersections on State Route 68 at San Benancio, Corral de Tierra, and Laureles Grade are planned to be the first phase of the project to be constructed.

Commenter I104: Peter De Gregorio

Comment I104-1: The plained changes for highway 68 is a waste of time and money. Moreover and more important, the purpose changes does not serve the public.

Infrastructure is well over due across the USA and to do a change to highway 68 that serves no one and does nothing for people anywhere in California.

Changes to highway 68 should take into account what is wrong with the current highway 68 and what parts work for the public as is.

I think you will be very hard pressed to find anyone upset with the part of highway 68 that is an actual freeway with a limit of 65 miles per hour, except at the point where it goes down to a 2 lane road.

This highway needs a better solution for the general productivity of Monterey County and California.

Any proper planner would just make the whole thing a 4 lane highway with a limit of 65 miles per hour straight through.

Please, don't waste time and money trying to do the nonsensical plan that was shown in 2019 and with little updates at the end of 2023.

We have an opportunity to increase productivity for the public and the government transportation services should just do it and stop kicking around half-ass solutions that serves no one! California deserves better!

Response to Comment I104-1: Your opposition to the proposed project is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team. Regarding the preference to widen State Route 68 to four lanes, refer to response to comment I18-1.

Commenter I105 and I106: Dwight Stump

Comment I105-1: Why did TAMC and Caltrans not even consider an evaluation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) signal controls as an alternative for the Hwy 68 project, since AI has been installed in congested intersections in the US since 2012 and the articles reporting on the excellent results (especially with traffic congestion and emission reduction) have been easily accessed via Google searches for over 5 years. Will Caltrans hold off on further action with the proposed 9 roundabouts, until AI signal controls are at least evaluated since one of their main advantages is making signals "smart and efficient" which solves the problem stated on page 8 of the DEIR that the "Traffic delay at the corridor intersections is caused, in part, by the inefficiency of the existing intersection signal controls"?

Response to Comment I105-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI adaptive signal control system.

Comment I106-1: Why was the public and the TAMC Board of Directors given misleading or false information for years, on the benefits of installing 9 roundabouts in 8 miles on Hwy 68, which mislead the public in forming opinions and in the TAMC Board taking actions? The TAMC Project Fact Sheet stated that the 9 roundabouts would "reduce emergency response times" when in fact they would increase the response times by at least 5 minutes as reported and tested by the Monterey County Regional Fire District in their 1/2/24 report.

Response to Comment I106-1: Refer to response to comment A2-1 regarding emergency response time.

Comment I106-2: The "Fact Sheet" also stated that the 9 roundabouts would "decrease Greenhouse gas" when in fact they will increase emissions since they force all vehicles to slow to 15 mph and then accelerate to 55 mph, 9 times in 8 miles, 24/7 and studies show that emissions from acceleration is 5-10 times greater than emissions from idling which TAMC claims would be reduced by only 5 minutes during the PM peak commute, from the installation of the 9 roundabouts.

Response to Comment I106-2: Alternative 1, Roundabouts, would not increase greenhouse gas emissions overall. At signalized intersections, a large percentage of the vehicles would come to a dead stop (red phase during the higher volume periods), idle, then accelerate to full speed from 0 miles per hour. At roundabouts, accelerating after slowing to 15 to 20 miles per hour through the roundabout, in most instances not requiring to stop, generally causes less emissions than accelerating from a full stop.

As discussed in Section 2.2.6 Air Quality, roundabouts would likely reduce traffic congestion and related vehicle idling so that overall air quality would be

improved (see discussion under Environmental Consequences, Build Alternatives). Under the No-Build Alternative (retaining the existing signalized intersections without improvements), traffic delays and associated bottlenecks would continue during peak traffic periods, overall average travel speed through the corridor would continue to slow, and vehicles would likely use additional fuel while idling and accelerating in stop-and-go traffic.

While there are numerous studies that can be found on emission generation at various intersection designs, one study conducted by the Federal Highway Administration Office of Safety as part of a seven-part series of studies on roundabouts is particularly relevant to this topic. The study, Accelerating Roundabouts in the U.S.: Volume III of VII, "Assessment of the Environmental Characteristics of Roundabouts" Publication SA-15-071, September 2015, developed a method of estimating pollutant emissions generated at roundabouts and comparing them to emissions at signalized intersections. The study models considered various factors, including driver behavior such as acceleration/deceleration, vehicle characteristics (e.g., engine size and age), traffic conditions, weather conditions, and infrastructure design. Traffic volumes during the simulation studies varied for the models to cover a demand-to-capacity ratio of 0.1 to 1.4. The study found that emissions rates at roundabouts tended to be lower than those at signalized intersections in general for oversaturated traffic periods.

Comment I106-3: Even the claim that the roundabouts will "reduce collisions rates" is not defined or quantified and is probably false since over 70% of the current collisions on Hwy 68 are rear end type and forcing all vehicles to slow to 15 mph, 9 times over 8 miles, 24/7, will likely increase rear end collisions.

Response to Comment I106-3: The high proportion of rear-end collisions along the corridor are emblematic of the traffic congestion (i.e., stop-and-go traffic), mostly during the peak periods. Even when there are heavy volumes, vehicles in roundabouts continue to advance slowly in moving queues rather than coming to a complete stop, reducing the potential for rear-end type of collisions. Refer to discussion under Roundabout Safety in Section 2.1.9, which discusses data from research conducted by the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety and the Federal Highway Administration.

Comment I106-4: The "Fact Sheet" claim that the roundabouts will "Improve traffic flow" fails to quantify by how much when in fact, the "improvement" by Caltrans own computer simulations is alleged to be an only 5 minute improvement in the current 36 minute PM commute and does not reveal that the 9 roundabouts will actually increase the non-peak (about 20 hrs/day) commute time, since it forces all vehicles to slow to 15 mph, 9 times in 8 miles when currently traffic proceeds through a majority of green lights, since side traffic is minimal.

Response to Comment I106-4: State highway infrastructure projects are typically driven by peak period operation. The objective of the project is to balance operations (reduce delay) and safety for peak and off-peak traffic periods. Slower speeds and the angle at which cars enter roundabouts significantly reduce the likelihood of head-on and broadside collisions. The potential for fatal or injury crashes will decrease significantly with the roundabouts. In addition, the roundabouts alternative will reduce travel delay by 28 percent compared to the No-Build Alternative; see discussion in Section 2.1.9 and Tables 2.1.9.9 and 2.1.9.10, Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay and Daily Person Hours of Delay.

Comment I106-5: The “Fact Sheet” also claims that the roundabouts will provide safe passage for wildlife when those wildlife crossings are totally separate and could be done without the roundabouts being installed.

Response to Comment I106-5: Yes, the wildlife crossings could be constructed separately from the whole project. However, the wildlife crossings are only one portion of the project purpose and would not meet the entirety of the project purpose and need derived from public input and documented in the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan. Though the crossings could be built as a separate project, it is more efficient to incorporate them in existing projects for funding and construction cost efficiency; they would enhance the safety component of the Corridor Improvements project, which addresses the need to improve intersection traffic operations by reducing vehicle delay as well as reducing the rate and severity of collisions.

Comment I106-6: TAMC states that the roundabouts will facilitate the relocation of the Laguna Seca Racetrack’s entrance when it could be done totally separate and added to the current intersection at Laureles Grade.

Response to Comment I106-6: Alternative 1 or 2 designs at Laureles Grade would not preclude a future Laguna Seca intersection connection.

Comment I106-7: These false or misleading statements, along with the total omission of the well-established and published negatives of roundabouts, is a blatant disregard of the responsibility of Caltrans and TAMC to provide transparent, objective, and unbiased information to the public and voting TAMC Board Members. Why has that been done and why have these statements continued to be posted online, even when false?

Response to Comment I106-7: Caltrans is responsible for following established policies and guidelines for implementation of various intersection types on the highway system. The roundabout designs developed are driven from research by the Federal Highway Administration and the extensive collaborations and studies with local and private transportation agencies that have documented the proven operational benefits and safety performance of roundabouts.

Commenter I107: Anne Hepfl

Comment I107-1: I would like to address the issue of installing 9 roundabouts versus artificial intelligence traffic signals on Highway 68. We have been residents of Toro Park since 1996 and I commute to Monterey daily so I am well aware of the issues involved with traffic in both directions of Highway 68.

I understand it needs to be addressed but for the life of me can not comprehend why you would willingly spend (not taking into account the current rate of inflation) $227 Million dollars, disrupt the lives of not only the people that live along 68 but the commute time for all of us that travel the road twice daily.

You have an option of installing and evaluating a much more cost effective option for AI Signal Controllers for around $500,000.00. What do you have to lose? If the AI Signal Controllers are ineffective, you can always go back to building the roundabouts.

I am hoping this suggestion does not fall on deaf ears, as I am certainly one who will be affected twice daily, at least.

I have hope that whomever reads this can see it is a viable option and can save the taxpayers a substantial amount of money. Some things aren't always as difficult as they seem.

Response to Comment I107-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding the AI Signal control system and an interim pilot program proposed for evaluation. All public comments on the proposed project are valued and thoroughly considered.

Commenter I108: Dwight Stump

Comment I108-1: How is the calculation done in Table 1.3 of the DEIR where it shows an Actual Fatal Rate for the SR18/Hwy 68 intersection of 0.022 for 3 years and does that mean there was a fatality at that intersection during that span of time and what were the exact circumstances? Since there are Actual Fatal Rates of "0" for all the other 8 intersections in this 8-mile stretch, does that mean that there were no fatal collisions in any of those intersections in that 3-year period?

Response to Comment I108-1:

The calculations for the accident data requested are based on the following division formula:

> Collision Rate (collisions per million vehicles) equals the Number of Collisions divided by the following calculation: Total Annual Average Daily Traffic multiplied by time in days, divided by 10 to the sixth power

Annual Average Daily Traffic is composed of Annual Average Daily Traffic on State Route 68 plus the Annual Average Daily Traffic on the cross street.

Table 1.3 in Chapter 1 shows the intersection collision rates. Only collisions that occurred within a 250-foot radius of the center intersection are included in the collision rate calculations. The 8 intersections with zero fatal collision rate means no collision involving fatality took place within 250 feet of the intersection.

Commenter I109: Nina Dunaven

Comment I109-1: I lived in Europe for a while and have traveled in many countries that use roundabouts. I love roundabouts but after I did more research I do not think that it is the answer to the Highway 68 traffic woes. I was under the impression that the roundabouts would be double lanes, not single lanes (except for one) which will significantly slow down the flow of traffic. I also was unaware that there are plans to do 9 roundabouts in such a short span of the highway. Nine roundabouts in 8 miles is absolutely crazy!

After significant research, I feel strongly that Caltrans and TAMC should investigate installing AI based signal controllers at the 9 intersections which could be done immediately and for less than $500,000 and will produce better congestion reduction than roundabouts. If that does not significantly improve the peak congestion problem, then they can always consider other options later. Installing 9 roundabouts for over $200 Million, is a huge waste of taxpayer money and will not provide significant relief for congestion during peak commute hours nor the other misleading claims. Hopefully, we use the new AI technology and HOPEFULLY it does not take 20 years for them to be installed.

Response to Comment I109-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding a pilot project using AI Signal control systems that Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are proposing to implement.

Although the project traffic study found that single-lane roundabouts for eight of the nine project intersections would be adequate for existing and future forecasted traffic for the 20-year planning horizon, the project team looked for ways to further enhance traffic operations. As a result, the designs of the roundabouts at the three easternmost intersections within the project limits were updated from single-lane to hybrid roundabouts, meaning half of the roundabout has two travel lanes and the other half has a single travel lane.

Commenter I110: Dwight Stump

Comment I110-1: Why does Caltrans in the DEIR, cherry pick 3 small portions (0.1 miles, 1 mile, 2 miles) out of the entire 8 miles of Hwy 68 to make it seem like the collision rates on Hwy 68 exceed the state average when the average collision rate for the entire 8 miles of Hwy 68 is below the state average since 2017 as shown below in Caltrans' own date obtained

through a Public Records Request this year. Is the purpose to make Hwy 68 collision rates appear higher or more significant than they actually are?

[The comment email included snip of TASAS data Table 4.1A collision rates SR 68 PM 5.215 to 13.33 1/1/2013 to 12/31/2022.)

Response to Comment I110-1: Collision data are presented in a format as shown in the TASAS (Traffic Accident Surveillance and Analysis System) report in segments that are defined by highway rate groups. Rate group criteria categories include highway type (e.g., conventional highway, expressway, freeway), terrain (e.g., flat, rolling, mountainous), design speed, and area type (e.g., rural, suburban, urban). The Traffic Operations Analysis Report includes the collision data for the project segment as a whole as well as the individual segments by rate group. Therefore, the data are consistent with the format used for all state highway projects.

Section 1.2.2, (Project) Need, and Section 2.1.9 include traffic collision data primarily for the periods prior to 2019 (Tables 1.2 and 1.3, and Tables 2.1.9.4 through 2.1.9.7) to reflect the more typical travel demand conditions prior to the 2020 COVID pandemic. Table 2.1.9.8 provides data from 2019 through 2022 when traffic volumes were less than the recent prior years, for which the majority of the project limits had accidents less than the statewide average, with the exception of Ragsdale Drive to east of York Road.

Commenter I111: Don and Myrna Locke

Comment I111-1: my wife and family members, are long time residents of the Coral de Tierra area on Highway 68 area. We are concerned about the so called “Scenic Route 68 Corridor project that calls for the construction of Nine roundabouts on Highway 68. We strongly agree that the artificially controlled signals or the expanded signaliized intersections alternative, would be a much better solution in terms of possible fire evacuations, safety for area residents, construction costs, Traffic during the long construction period,and the multiple Monterey peninsula events, etc,etc. In summary we support two options mentioned above would be a much better solution than the proposed nine roundabout.

Response to Comment I111-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative for the project is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Regarding a suggestion for AI signal control and a planned pilot project, refer to response to comment I44-1.

Commenter I112: Lee and Allison Hinkle

Comment I112-1: We are residents of the Highway 68 corridor between Salinas and Monterey. We have lived in this beautiful area for 37 years. In November of 2017, via letter, we addressed our opposition and concerns to

TAMC about the proposed 11 roundabout "viable solution" that was being considered to address traffic problems on Highway 68 between Salinas and Monterey, per an article in the Salinas Californian newspaper. Please see attached TAMC2017 document.

After re-reading our letter of 2017, all the concepts we expressed concerns about still exist:

1) the traffic is a nightmare during the 7-9am and 4-6pm commute hours; most of the rest of the time we can travel to Monterey in less than 15 minutes at the current 55mph speed limit--much depends on Monterey Peninsula events and tourists.

2) The use of our neighborhood as a Highway 68 bypass has intensified; speeders are common and other times it can take 20 minutes just to get from our house onto the highway--a distance of less than 1/2 of a mile!

3) Apparently the number of roundabouts proposed has decreased from eleven to nine since the Salinas Californian article was written.

[Email has attachments: 1) 2017 comment letter; and 2) Comments on project from Dan and Mary Bowman]

Response to Comment I112-1: The proposed intersection modifications in this current Corridor Improvements project have been designed to address the operational deficiencies of State Route 68 between San Benancio Road and State Route 1. Two of the original intersections considered for evaluation in the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan—Blanco Road and Torero Drive—were removed from the project after the highway improvement concept that emerged from that study showed no improvement at those two locations; see discussion in Section 1.1.1.

As discussed in response to comment O2-2, though the eastern project limit is San Benancio Road at State Route 68, the neighborhood traffic pass-through behavior from traffic on State Route 68 into the Toro Park neighborhood is being addressed by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and the County of Monterey. The Transportation Agency for Monterey County has coordinated with Monterey County Public Works Department with assistance from Caltrans and the Monterey County Regional Fire District to develop and implement traffic-calming (circulation-routing) measures to discourage motorists from using the Toro Park neighborhood internal road system to bypass the westbound queue on State Route 68 during the morning peak period. A pilot program for this purpose was implemented by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County on July 12, 2024 for a period of several months. The objective of the pilot project was to prevent diversion of traffic from westbound State Route 68 onto neighborhood streets via Portola Drive and Torero Drive. The pilot project is separate from the subject

Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project since the pilot project area is outside of the proposed State Route 68 Corridor project limits and not in Caltrans' right-of-way. The pilot project is now concluded, and the partial closure at Torero Drive remains in place and under the management of Monterey County. This will receive ongoing evaluation, with possible additional measures and/or modifications in the vicinity.

Comment I112-2: 4) Californians still are not polite drivers and have no clue how to use roundabouts--they definitely won't be courteous enough to let traffic from side roads enter the traffic circles ahead of them when they have been crawling along for an hour trying to get home.

Response to Comment I112-2: At roundabouts, motorists approaching a roundabout must reduce their speeds, look for potential conflicts with vehicles already in the circular roadway and be prepared to stop for pedestrians and bicyclists. Vehicles travel counterclockwise around a raised center island, with entering traffic yielding the right-of-way to circulating traffic. Vehicles within the roundabout move slowly, and consistent speeds are maintained, between 15 and 20 miles per hour, by the deflection of traffic around the center island and the relatively tight radius of the roundabout. Slow speeds help vehicles move smoothly into, around, and out of a roundabout. Refer also to responses to comments I54-1 and I67-3.

Comment I112-3: 5) The cost of 'studying' the roundabouts appears to have more than doubled from $48 million to $114 million--tax dollars to be spent without having any traffic relief come from the money spent--just to get "information" that is already intuitively known: the highway needs to be widened, improved traffic intersections/signals need to be installed, and alternative routes need to be opened.

Response to Comment I112-3: Refer to response to comment I18-1 regarding a four-lane widening option previously considered, and responses to comments I18-2 and I31-2 regarding extending existing roads as alternative routes to State Route 68.

Comment I112-4: 6) Wildlife still don't obey traffic signals, however, there has been some evidence discovered in the past six years that if animals are separated from a thoroughfare by a high fence that leads them to an overpass or underpass, they might learn to use it.

Response to Comment I112-4: The comment is correct; wildlife fencing will be a large component of the wildlife crossings being installed as part of the project. Exclusion fencing will be installed at four of the five proposed new culvert undercrossings to guide wildlife to the crossing location openings, as described in Section 1.4.1.

Comment I112-5: 7) If the state of New Jersey removed their traffic circles/roundabouts because they intensified the traffic problems, why is TAMC spending hundreds of millions of tax payer dollars to install nine?

Response to Comment I112-5: Traffic circles are not the same as roundabouts. Traffic circles, built prior to the 1960s, tend to have large diameters that allow higher speeds in the circular roadway. According to our research, New Jersey Department of Transportation is phasing out the traffic circles by retrofitting them with traffic signals or converting to an interchange at the circle junction. The traffic circles were built in the 1920s and 1930s when vehicle volumes were lower.

Modern roundabouts were first introduced in the United Kingdom in the 1960s, with smaller diameters to keep speeds in the circular roadway at 20 miles per hour or lower. Compared to stop-controlled, traffic signals, and traffic circles or rotaries, modern roundabouts reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions greatly by reducing traffic speeds and eliminating the potential for broadside and head-on collisions.

Comment I112-6: 8) Roundabouts still slow emergency vehicles, big rigs, RV's and busses down to under 25 mph, affecting all traffic behind them.

Response to Comment I112-6: Refer to response to comment A2-2 regarding emergency vehicle response time.

Comment I112-7: Last summer we attended a TAMC community presentation held at Laguna Seca about the progress TAMC has made in finding an acceptable solution to the traffic problem. A third lane changeable direction lane and a four lane highway option were totally off the table, as were other creative solutions that had potential for relieving traffic congestion; the roundabout/traffic circle option was the only one presented as viable. What we discovered during our visit with TAMC officials is that the decision had already been made. The TAMC officials we met were totally close-minded and were not willing to listen to, or discuss, the thoughts and opinions of the local residents. We left the presentation very disenchanted, with a clear vision that the day would come when we would be selling our beloved home and leaving the area, rather than have to fight the nightmare that will come when the roundabouts are installed and traffic "creeps" all the way to Monterey.

Response to Comment I112-7: Your dissatisfaction with the information and responses to your questions provided by the Caltrans and Transportation Agency for Monterey County project representatives staff at the open house in July 2023 has been noted. The intent of the public meeting was to give an update on the status of project design and the alternative design options under evaluation for the environmental analysis. As explained below, there are several reasons for initially considering, but then ultimately dismissing, certain concepts.

Various improvements for State Route 68 have been considered over the years since the 1950s and more recently leading to the current project purpose and need that stemmed from the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan in 2017. Earlier proposals for highway realignments and widenings were evaluated but eventually dismissed for several reasons as explained in Sections 1.1 and 1.7. These include sensitive environmental resources and properties (e.g., the proclamation of the former Fort Ord as a National Monument property in 2012), and passage of various California Assembly and Senate bills and executive orders and transportation system planning guidance to reduce vehicle miles traveled and related greenhouse gas emissions in state transportation projects. The passage of Senate Bill 743 (2013) changed the metric by which analysis of transportation projects' effects on the environment is conducted, geared toward non-capacity-increasing types of highway improvements, specifically multi-modal improvements with congestion relief elements. Therefore, widening of State Route 68 and/or new bypass alignments to the existing highway alignment were not further pursued. The preliminary plans for both the roundabouts alternative (Alternative 1) and the signalized intersection expansion designs (Alternative 2) were presented at the Open House in July 2023.

Comment I112-8: We received a copy of an email sent to you by Dan & Mary Bowman, see "TAMC--Dan & Mary Bowman 2024" attached, and would like to add our total agreement to their comments and recommendation that TMAC choose expanded signalized intersections and/or artificial intelligence-controlled signals rather than slowing traffic down with roundabouts 24/7.

Response to Comment I112-8: Refer to responses to comments I63 (Bowman) and I44-1 (Stump). Regarding your preference for an AI controlled signal system, your opposition to the roundabouts is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process.

Comment I112-9: We agree a wildfire situation along Highway 68 full of single lane roundabouts would create a situation much like that of the Paradise, California "Camp Fire" in which more than 85 people lost their lives because the forest along the only road out of town was burning. Highway 68 is the only way out for thousands of residents. Interesting that the Monterey County Regional Fire District Fire Chief concurs that roundabouts would affect fire management, evacuation efforts, and limit emergency vehicle access along the Highway 68 corridor in the event of an emergency.

We definitely don't see the reality of CHP or Sheriff's deputies being available to direct traffic at each of the nine roundabouts--they aren't rapidly available to our corridor when crimes occur, why would one think they would be available in the event of an emergency? They can't direct vehicles when they aren't moving in the first place. And...they haven't managed to stop the drivers who traverse our neighborhood at dangerous speeds to bypass Highway 68 traffic.

Response to Comment I112-9: Regarding emergency evacuation on roadways with roundabouts, refer to response to comment I63-2. Response to comment A2-1 addresses roundabouts and emergency response capabilities.

Comment I112-10: Please reconsider TAMC's decision to install roundabouts/traffic circles on Highway 68--there are alternatives that will not slow traffic to a crawl day and night, and will make our corridor safer:

1) other routes to the peninsula can be opened--they already exist

2) intersections can be improved

3) the highway can be widened in critical places

4) animal bypasses can be built and high fences installed

5) utilities can be buried

6) bike trails can be built along, but not on the main road

Hopefully our concerns will be heard by the decision makers at TAMC.

Response to Comment I112-10: Your opposition to the roundabouts for the intersection improvements is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project moving forward. Section 1.6 in this document addresses the reasons for the selection and the evaluation process.

Regarding the preference for alternative road connections/routes, and a four-lane widening of State Route 68, refer to responses to comments I18-1 and I18-2. In accordance with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Public Utilities Code 320, it is expected that existing overhead lines (AT&T telecommunication, PG&E electrical distribution, and Comcast Television) that are in conflict with roadway improvements will be undergrounded.

Construction of off-road bicycle lanes outside of the existing state highway right-of-way would require additional property acquisition. The roundabouts include shared bike/pedestrian paths and crosswalks, as described in Chapter 1 of this document.

Commenter I113: Tony Angelo

Comment I113-1: I am a resident living along the highway 68 corridor between Monterey and Salinas, and I'm acutely aware of the significant traffic jams which occur along this route on a daily basis. I have taken time to learn about alternatives being considered for improving traffic flow, and I feel strongly that Caltrans and TAMC should thoroughly investigate the option of

installing Artificial Intelligence (AI) based signal controllers at the 9 intersections along this route instead of constructing roundabouts. I understand the AI installation work could be done in under a year (vs. 8 years of more for constructing roundabouts) and has the potential to produce better congestion relief than roundabouts. With respect to cost, I have learned that estimates for the AI based solution are in the neighborhood of $500,000, vs. estimates of $200 million for the roundabouts. If the AI based signals system does not significantly improve the peak congestion problem, then the roundabout solution could be considered at a later date

I would greatly appreciate a reply to this e-mail. If there are reasons that CalTrans does not feel the AI signal controllers are a viable alternative, I would be interested in learning what those reasons are. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Response to Comment I113-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI Signals and a planned pilot project to implement AI Traffic Signal Control technology on an interim basis.

Commenter I114: Lori Fowler

Comment I114-1: I am a homeowner living near the Highway 68 corridor between Monterey and Salinas, off of the intersection of Pasadera and Boots Roads, and I'm writing to express concerns about the proposed construction of 9 roundabouts along that roadway. I have often been stuck in the infamously slow East and Westbound traffic backups, which are more frequent and heavier with each passing year. Based on my experience using roundabouts in similar locations, I know it will be difficult and dangerous to try and merge into a roundabout when it is constantly filled with a steady unbroken stream of cars coming from the East and/or West who will always have the right-of-way. A traffic signal ensures that I and my fellow community members can safely make a left-hand turn onto 68 within a reasonable timeframe, and also allows me safe passage to ease into the Westbound flow of traffic using the existing merge lane.

Response to Comment I114-1: First, traffic flow on two-lane conventional highways tends to travel in platoons with a slow-moving lead vehicle. This is especially true where passing opportunities do not exist, where passing is not allowed, and/or where there is a no-passing lane along the corridor. Between the travel platoons are gaps allowing traffic to enter the traffic stream. Second, speeds in a roundabout's circular roadway are 20 miles per hour or lower for single-lane roundabouts and 25 miles per hour or lower in multi-lane roundabouts. These are low speeds that allow for last-minute yielding by either the circulating vehicle or the entering vehicle and, if neither yields, there is potential for low-speed sideswipes. Slower speeds allow vehicles to enter the circulatory roadway with smaller gaps. Third, left-turning traffic using the roundabouts would create a

break in the eastbound/westbound through traffic on State Route 68, providing opportunities for side street traffic to enter the roundabout.

Comment I114-2: I understand that a more attractive alternative approach to managing traffic on this corridor of Highway 68 involves the installation of advanced AI signal controllers that sense optimal traffic flow and operate the traffic lights accordingly. This would allow us to use existing infrastructure and avoid the excessive cost, lengthy construction process and extensive disruption along this corridor. Thank you for your consideration.

Response to Comment I114-2: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI Signals and a planned pilot project to implement AI Traffic Signal Control technology on an interim basis.

Commenter I115: Linda Millerick

Comment I115-1: To the powers that be at CALTRANS/DOT, TAMC and all others in this decision process, First off - I want to voice my very strong NO to any roundabouts on SR-68, ever.

2nd - I want to see the AI Signal Controllers used and tried for a lengthy time frame for proper evaluation and at a much reduced cost to all taxpayers vested in this process.

Response to Comment I115-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts for the intersection improvements is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project moving forward. Section 1.6 in this document addresses the reasons for the selection and the evaluation process.

In addition, Caltrans District 5 Traffic Operations was provided conceptual approval for the pilot use of AI controllers to implement Adaptive Traffic Signal Control, and further discussions took place with regard to potential funding for procurement of the firmware to support Adaptive Traffic Signal Control. Discussions and approval shifted to review of existing traffic data, existing infrastructure, and firmware compatibility to support the pilot project. Regular meetings between the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and District 5 Traffic Operations took place for implementation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control at signalized intersections within the State Route 68 project corridor. Implementation at these intersections provides the ability to best implement, make adequate observations, make adjustments and learn lessons from an engineering and traffic operations perspective for installation at additional intersections along the corridor. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are currently moving forward with the pilot project to procure, install, and use Adaptive Traffic Signal Control on the

project corridor as an interim solution. The pilot project is currently scheduled to run for 5 years. It should be noted that traffic analysis in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report concluded that installation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control would also require construction of auxiliary through lanes to accommodate traffic volumes under the 20-year horizon conditions. Refer also to response to comment I44-1.

Comment I115-2: 3rd - NO further go ahead for roundabout installation on our Scenic Hwy. 68- part of the DeAnza Trail and if I recall correctly - designated by Lady Bird Johnson via the Highway Beautification Act of 1965 and signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965.

**How and when was that ever changed, altered, un-designated and if so how and by who or by what statute, code, or other means to override? It is supposed to run from SR-1 to the Salinas River, which encompasses this very stretch of SR-68 being scheduled for destruction.

4th - NO Historical item, building, object or land of any kind should be allowed to be compromised, altered or in any way destroyed for the sake of any roundabout or highway construction. As custodians, we should preserve any thing historical.

Response to Comment I115-2: Historic and recreational resources within and adjacent to the project highway limits and study area were evaluated for potential impacts by the project in Sections 2.1.3, 2.1.11, 3.2.5, 3.2.16, and Appendix A, Section 4(f) Analysis. Neither the proposed roundabouts (Alternative 1) nor Alternative 2 would have any adverse effects on historic-era built environment resources (Section 2.1.11). The Section 4(f) Evaluation determined that the Juan Bautista De Anza National Historic Trail was designated a National Historic Trail by the U.S. Congress in 1990 through an amendment to the National Trails System Act (16 U.S. Code 1241-51). A portion of the historic De Anza Trail lies along the western edge of the Fort Ord National Monument property on the north side of State Route 68, but this is not an active trail. The analysis in Section 2.1.3 (Parks and Recreational Facilities) found that there are no active trails or other recreational uses in the peripheral areas of the National Monument that would be impacted by permanent highway intersection improvements.

Comment I115-3: 5th - No wetlands, growing oak trees or animal habitat should be allowed to be encroached upon, altered and/or destroyed to make any space for any roundabout on or along SR-68 in Monterey County. No ghastly, un-scenic retaining walls on our Scenic Highway 68 [SR-68] either. As custodians, it's our job to protect the 'scenic' part that is Hwy. 68 in its entirety.

Response to Comment I115-3: Your concern for impacts to wetlands and other natural habitats is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team; your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the

project. Impacts to natural habitats and plant communities are minimized to the degree possible when designing the project improvements to the intersections, and replacement habitat and other mitigation measures will be implemented as documented in Section 2.3. Additional measures to protect biological resources will be required as part of the permits issued by resources agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Retaining walls on this project are used to minimize impacts to environmental resources and reduce property acquisitions to the best extent possible. These retaining walls will be aesthetically treated to be consistent with community goals and visual impact assessment recommendations by the project Landscape Architect. The retaining walls are planned to be stained and/or integrally colored and would have a form-lined architectural treatment. More specific type of aesthetic treatments will be developed during the project final design phase.

Comment I115-4: **6th - WHO stands to pocket the proposed $200+ million - 9roundabout project and line their pockets with the help of TAMC & CALTRANS on the backs of California taxpayers? Name Construction Companies, entities, politicians, etc. who will be on the profit side and are considered, and/or pushing to construct the 9roundabouts on SR-68. Taxpayers need to know this.

Response to Comment I115-4: The estimated project costs are programmed in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program in the 2024 State Transportation Improvement Program. The project is also identified in the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's 2016 Transportation Safety and Investment Plan through funding received from the County's Measure X. These programs identify public transportation infrastructure improvement needs and emphasize safety and traffic flow improvement measures.

The cost applies to design, environmental analysis, permitting applications, mitigation plans, right-of-way analysis to determine property impacts, construction and maintenance, and other elements. No politicians will receive funds intended for the project development and construction processes.

The contract awards process begins once the project is advertised and is open for contractors to bid. Caltrans will solicit bids from qualified contractors to perform the work as planned. All responsible, qualified contractors who submit a bid will be considered. More information can be found on this webpage: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/construction/construction-manual/section-3-2-bidding

Comment I115-5: 7th - Stop any installation of 9 [or any] roundabouts on SR-68 [Hwy.68] and firstly seek more reasonable and less destructive means such as installing AI Signal Controllers.

Response to Comment I115-5: Your opposition to the roundabouts for the intersection improvements is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project moving forward. Section 1.6 in this document addresses the reasons for the selection and the evaluation process. The roundabouts alternative has been evaluated to reduce travel delay in the project corridor by 28 percent compared to the No-Build Alternative (refer to Section 2.1.9 of this document). Response to comment I44-1 addresses the suggestion for an AI Signal Control system on the corridor and provides information about a pilot project using AI technology signal controllers that Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are moving forward with at project intersections to test as an interim solution.

Comment I115-6: 8th - No destruction of the San Benancio Rd. job we taxpayers paid $4 million for already. Your lack of planning is no reason to undo or destroy what was supposed to be a fix there.

Response to Comment I115-6: The preferred Alternative 1, Roundabouts, design will maximize the use of the prior improvements at San Benancio Road/State Route 68, particularly the bridge on San Benancio Road.

Comment I115-7: **In the five decades or more that SR-68 has been getting increasingly overcrowded where has CALTRANS and/or TAMC been?

** Why was there never completion of the 1980's freeway continuation from where it abruptly ends at Toro Park Estates? The proposed route up behind Cypress Community Church across lands of the former Fort Ord was on the maps that long ago. Your repeated band-aid 'fixes' do not constitute using a tourniquet now.

Many studies have shown ever increasing overuse of SR-68 long before classified as a Level 'F' highway. Traffic and congestion have severely increased and yet you did no adequate long term project to alleviate the growing congestion and all the bottlenecks, accidents and such that happen daily. ** Not counting the number of fatalities within that 8-9 mile stretch is falsifying records as to the danger level that really does exist.

With proper foresight and real planning over the past five decades workable alternatives should have been implemented and done to avoid where the congestion is now. You knew of the limitations and the increasing demands yet did nothing like planning means. Long ago a two lane westbound section from Toro Park Estates should have been planned to connect at/with the old North South Road [now General Jim Moore Blvd.] with connectors at/to Laureles Grade Road, Corral de Tierra Road, and 218, or such.

A separation between East & West could be like there is down near Santa Barbara and places along Hwy. 101. The two lane SR-68 would not have been disrupted during construction and when the westbound completed, all could've been tied together and the old two lane part made one way, Eastbound toward Salinas. With under and over passes, on and off ramps and such the flow could've been kept flowing - not stagnant or stopped.

The under pass by Toro Regional Park/7-Eleven does well to redirect in either Westerly or Easterly direction. The same or similar could be done with proper planning. Driving a 1/2 mile to a mile to redirect should be better than no progress with roundabouts. Laguna Seca track could have it's own exit off the west bound part & link back to the east bound from its current entrance on SR-68. York Road could be tied in to the new west bound above York School and east bound would enter SR-68 where it does now. If some plan like this would've been done there would not be a projected $200+ million estimate now. Waiting never solves a thing. With only two main ways to Monterey Peninsula it didn't need glaring lights to show that SR-68 needed, or would need upgraded- AND, the sooner, the better.

** If any of you had to drive SR-68 daily would any of this be, or have been, satisfactory to you? Think of the daily commuters, service companies, businesses, Hwy. 68/SR-68 residents, school busses that must deal with the mess your entities and agencies have created by no action for way too long. I know of it since 1972 and it won't improve without good projects to improve, not worsen traffic flow and/or congestion.

Therefore I once again must say - STOP 9roundabouts on Hwy. 68 [SR-68]

Response to Comment I115-7: The commenter's opinion about the roundabouts is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team.

Regarding the suggestion to build an additional alignment route for ultimately a four-lane State Route 68 and connectors to existing roads on former Fort Ord, Section 1.7 addresses a four-lane widening and alternative bypass route alternatives to the proposed project that were previously considered but eliminated. Both highway widening to four lanes and bypass route alternatives were rejected for several reasons, including the potential for significantly greater impacts to sensitive resources and adjacent properties due to new roadway alignment footprints beyond the existing highway, and substantially higher cost (much higher than the current project). In addition, State Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders have since been executed for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled in the planning and design of state transportation improvement projects.

Regarding traffic congestion of State Route 68, Caltrans' traffic study has shown the recurring congestion during the peak periods is due to outdated and, therefore, insufficient signalized intersections along the corridor. The

Corridor Improvements project objectives are to improve both safety and operations without widening the highway between the intersections for reasons described above.

Commenter I116: Barney Buck Jones

Comment I116-1: I have lived on the Monterey Peninsula on and off since 1959. Subsequent to my retirement in 2007 I have been a full time resident. I have seen the growth and the restrictions that have subjected Monterey County to restrained growth. This will all change do to the recent enactment of the RHNA, Regional Housing Needs Allocation. The RHNA mandates that each California city/county prepare General Plans to accomodate the state housing shortage. Monterey County is tasked to allow for an additional 33000 homes. In particular the communities of Salinas, Monterey, Pacific Grove Seaside, Marina, Carmel, Sand City, Del Rey Oaks and Pebble Beach are tasked with an additional 14,000 homes. These are the communities most affected by SR 68. The DEIR is either shortsighted or basically an inadequate document to fully analyze options that are available to improve the SR 68 congestion. A 4 lane route improvement should be included for comparison.

On page 87 there is reference to the 2014 and 2018 Regional Transportation Plans identifying SR 68 as a widening goal to 4 lanes between Toro Park and Corral de Tierra. Even a short section of 4 lane improvement is beneficial. That should be evaluated as well. Dismissing a 4 lane improvment due to present finances and expecteed environmental issues is just kicking the problem further into the future. There are other references in the DEIR to the fact that the ulitmate solution is a 4 lane highway. Widening to 4 lanes would offer increased opportunity for Monterey – Salinas Transit to schedule more commuter buses that would not be affected by the present constant commute time backups. Thus reducing single person commutes.

Should Alternative 1 be approved I can see a time in the future when all of those roundabouts will need to be demolished to make way for the 4 lane improvement. Another example of a shortsighted investment. Better to take the money required for Alternative 1 and use it to build whatever that budget allows for the 4 lane alternative. At a minimum an analysis of another alternative for the traffic impact for a less than full rebuild would be beneficial to determine its effectiveness in comparison to either proposed Alternatives. When additional money becomes available and it will, then continue the full buildout as envisioned in many of Monterey county's planning documents.

Response to Comment I116-1: The 20-year traffic forecast used for the project traffic report (Traffic Operations Analysis Report) was based on the 2014 AMBAG Regional Growth Forecast traffic model, as well as regional transportation goals and plans in AMBAG's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018). Planned future developments not included in the Regional Growth Forecast are not accounted for in the traffic analysis. It is important to note that

the proposed Corridor Improvements project is an operational improvement project and not one that adds capacity. Traffic impacts from all planned development are required to mitigate both project-specific and cumulative impacts as needed to either maintain acceptable level of service and/or reduce vehicle miles traveled on both the state highway system and local road network. Refer also to response to comment I36-2 regarding regional housing needs and transportation system planning for forecast development.

The purpose of this project is to both improve traffic operations (i.e., reduce delay through the corridor during peak periods) and reduce the rate and severity of traffic collisions thought the highway corridor. The proposed roundabouts as the selected preferred alternative meet those purposes of the project.

Regarding the four-lane widening suggestion for State Route 68, Section 1.7 addresses a four-lane widening alternative that was previously considered for State Route 68. The highway widening to four lanes was rejected for several reasons, including the potential for significantly greater impacts to sensitive resources and adjacent properties due to new roadway alignment footprints beyond the existing highway, and substantially higher cost (much higher than the current project), In addition, State Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders have since been executed for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled in the planning and design of state transportation improvement projects.

Comment I116-2: Page 98: The Laguna Seca Recreation Area project improvement plan is somewhat vague. Given the combined average daily vehicle useage from the Recreation Area and the SPCA entrance is small, the DEIR makes no mention of the significant spikes in traffic during major events. This seems a missed opportunity to incorporate a plan for the siginificant volume of traffic during those peaks. Figure 1-4, sheet 5/6 shows the present Recreation Area entrance as within the area of potential impact, however it is not clear how the traffic will be accomodated onto SR 68. An option would be to use the Laureles roundabout for eastbound traffic exiting the Recreation Area, and westbound traffic using the present entrance with a shoulder widening. Thus decreasing the total volume using the roundabout. Otherwise exiting traffic as presently is done, will create another stop/go backup.

Response to Comment I116-2: The resulting design for the Laureles Grade intersection at State Route 68, both in Alternative 1, Roundabouts, and Alternative 2, Adaptive Signal Control and expanded lanes, used the Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and the 2018 AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which incorporates transportation planning information for the region. The selected preferred alternative for the project is Alternative 1, as discussed in Section 1.6. The roundabout design at Laureles Grade and State Route 68 was a single-lane roundabout as presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment. According to the analysis in the traffic study, the

single-lane design would have adequately accommodated traffic as projected for the project's 20-year design horizon. Since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for public review, the roundabout designs at the three easternmost intersections of the project, Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road, were refined to a hybrid design, which has two lanes around the roundabout on the eastbound and westbound sides and single lanes on the north and southbound sides of the roundabout; refer to the discussion in Section 1.4.1.

If there would be any future development plan proposed for the Laguna Seca Recreational area property, that would be a separate project undertaken by Laguna Seca management in conjunction with the County of Monterey. Any property development or improvements that would generate additional traffic and/or cause modification of the existing access to and from State Route 68 from the property would be reviewed by Caltrans as part of Local Development Review procedures with the County. Any circulation and environmental impacts of proposed improvements connecting the Recreational Area property to the state highway would require mitigation measures and funding by the owner of the project in coordination with the County and Caltrans.

Commenter I117: Caitlin Cameron

Comment I117-1: I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed turnabout on Highway 68. While I understand the need for traffic improvements, I believe this particular solution may create more problems than it intends to solve.

The current flow of traffic on Highway 68 is relatively smooth, and introducing a turnabout could disrupt this, causing congestion and delays. Additionally, the construction of a turnabout is likely to lead to increased noise levels, inconvenience for residents, and potential environmental impacts.

A better alternative to roundabouts is AI controlled signals (see study at Artificial Intelligence Signal Controls - 9 Roundabouts versus Artificial Intelligence Traffic Signals

I urge you to reconsider this proposal and explore alternative solutions that address traffic concerns without negatively impacting the existing infrastructure and the surrounding community. Public input and collaboration are crucial in making decisions that affect the well-being of our community, and I hope that alternative options will be thoroughly examined before finalizing any plans.

Response to Comment I117-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI Signals and a planned pilot project to implement AI Traffic Signal

Control technology on an interim basis. Your objection to the roundabouts is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team.

Commenter I118: Allison Becker

Comment I118-1: Why will you not evaluate and install AI Signal Controllers for $440,000 and better results, instead of 9 Roundabouts at $227 Million with worse results and which will increase emergency response times and increase emissions on Highway 68? Please consider our concerns!

Response to Comment I118-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI Signals and a planned pilot project to implement AI Traffic Signal Control technology on an interim basis.

Commenter I119: Mike McCullough

Comment I119-1: I wanted to provide comments about the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project. As a commuter who has used this highway every workday for over 20 years, I feel as though I am a qualified person to provide insights into the proposed alternatives. As noted in the DEIR, the purpose of the project is to: 1) Improve intersection operations to reduce vehicle delay throughout the project corridor, 2) Reduce the rate and severity of collisions on State Route 68 within the project area, 3) Enhance wildlife connectivity and reduce the rate of collisions between vehicles and wildlife, and lastly) Improve bicycle and pedestrian access within the project corridor.

I submitted a lengthy letter to Matt Wilkinson over 4 years ago on this very project. The letter dated 11/7/29 highlighted various options for consideration. The theme of my letter to Mr. Wilkinson was first and foremost, CALTRANS should take a comprehensive approach to addressing traffic congestion. Unfortunately, both CALTRANS and TAMC have failed to provide a comprehensive solution for the HWY 68 issue. How has it taken 4 years to develop only 2 alternatives for this important transportation artery? I know the pandemic put a wrench into logistics, but from a community perspective – there was a long period of radio silence. Neither one of the alternatives we are faced with today does not adequately address the biggest issue for commuters going west bound in the morning.

As mentioned previously, I frequently must sit in traffic as the west bound two-lane highway merges into one lane. On a recent Thursday morning commute, December 14, 2023, I logged how long it took me when I hit the bumper-to-bumper traffic on the two-lane portion of west bound 68 to the area where the congestion stems from, Torero Drive. The distance I travelled during the slow crawl of merging traffic was 1.2 miles and took 19 minutes to traverse this segment. Once commuters stop letting in cut-through traffic from Torero Drive onto Hwy 68, the commute to York Road only took me 9 minutes and I travelled 6.6 miles. The length of this commute is tragically all too common

when school is in session. When school is not in session, the commute times are significantly shorter as traffic on HWY 68 does come to a stop as traffic entering 68 from Torero Drive is very limited.

Response to Comment I119-1: Response to comment O2-1 addresses the westbound morning traffic congestion and the Toro Park neighborhood cut-through traffic issue and a pilot project that was implemented by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County in the summer of 2024. The pilot project is outside of the project limits not within Caltrans' highway right-of-way and is therefore a separate project from the proposed intersection improvements farther west starting at San Benancio Road. However, the pilot project implemented circulation-routing measures to discourage motorists from using the Toro Park neighborhood internal road system to bypass the westbound queue on State Route 68 during the morning peak period. The pilot project is now concluded, and the partial closure at Torero Drive remains in place and under the management of Monterey County. It will receive ongoing evaluation with possible additional measures and/or modifications in the vicinity.

Comment I119-2: Not addressing the Torero Drive right turn into oncoming westbound traffic and merging two lanes to one lane part of Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project is incredibly frustrating. As noted above, most of the congestion and length of the west bound commute occurs in this area. While there may be land restrictions on the south side of HWY 68 in this stretch, the area to the North has federal and county easements. Did CALTRANS have discussions with the County and/or the Federal government about expanding this segment of HWY 68? Agency to Agency dialogue and cooperation can and does occur every day, especially on important transportation projects. Did CALTRANS or TAMC engage local electeds in discussions to aid in coordinating easement agreements? This stretch seemed like a logical area for a four-lane expansion of HWY 68. After hearing the various TAMC/CALTRANS presentations about the project and speaking with several CALTRANS staff members, I was very disappointed to learn that the hot spot area (Torero Drive) was not going to be addressed in the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project.

Extending the four-lane highway or a second west bound lane to San Benancio (a middle school exit) or Corral De Tierra Road (an elementary school exit) would alleviate a large portion of the west bound commuting traffic during the school year. Eliminating the left turn into Torero Drive (eastbound) and adding a merge lane from Torero Drive (westbound) at a minimum should be included in the project. Merge lanes already exist on HWY 68 (west bound from Corral, east and west bound at Boots/Pasadera). Concepts like eliminating the portion of Torero Drive for regular traffic (emergency vehicle access still allowed with gate access) should be considered. Adding a metering light onto west bound HWY 68 at Portola Road and River Road could space out traffic entering HWY 68.

Response to Comment I119-2: Refer to the response I119-1 and responses to comments O2-1 and O2-2 regarding the Torero Drive and neighborhood cut-through traffic issue and resulting pilot project.

Widening of State Route 68 was previously evaluated as part of the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, but it was eliminated from further consideration for multiple reasons. It would be inconsistent with California's multiple Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders for reduction of vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gases for transportation system projects. In addition, it would not be consistent with one of the current project's purposes, which is to reduce the severity of collisions on the highway; it would also be much costlier than the current proposed improvements. It would have substantially greater environmental impacts due to additional physical footprint impacts in sensitive habitat as well as impacts to multiple private properties and public recreational resources.

Comment I119-3: Investing CALTRANS and TAMC staff time to go into the Toro Park neighborhood and listening to their concerns and ideas about traffic safety would go a long way in getting local support for a sensible solution. More unwanted traffic flows through the neighborhood because commuters cut through the neighborhood to shave a few minutes of the commute. A parent and a student were hit by a car this fall as more drivers cut through the neighborhood to avoid traffic on HWY 68. Could CALTRANS do a traffic counter in the neighborhood to count cars during school commute times and non-school commute times? I would bet the number of cars would be drastically reduced during non-school commute times. Again, looking at the Scenic Corridor Improvements wholistically should involve a community that is directly impacted by HWY 68.

Response to Comment I119-3: Refer to responses to comments I119-1 and O2-1 regarding the Torero Drive and neighborhood cut-through traffic issue and resulting pilot project.

Comment I119-4: A personal comment I feel I must make regarding one of the four benefits of the proposed project: improving bicycle and pedestrian access. I have driven Hwy 68 at all hours of the day, every day of the week, over the past 25 years. The numbers of cyclists or pedestrians using the HWY is a miniscule percentage of total users. How many pedestrians or bicyclists use HWY 68 daily? Including this concept as one of the top four reasons for improving the scenic corridor seems out of place when considering the other main concerns and the impact, they will have on improving traffic congestion for this important transportation corridor. I would suggest deleting the topic as one of the main purposes of the project.

Response to Comment I119-4: As discussed in Section 2.1.9, subsection entitled Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes, the 2017 State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan conducted a multimodal level of service analysis which

showed that while the State Route 68 corridor serves mostly vehicular traffic, bicycle and pedestrian activity occurs at many of the project intersections. The project corridor is a mostly two-lane conventional highway, with a short segment of four-lane conventional highway, both of which allow bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Therefore, all project improvements on State Route 68 must accommodate both motorized and non-motorized users, regardless of the numbers of bicyclists and pedestrians that travel the highway.

The purpose of improvement of bicycle and pedestrian access within the project corridor is to address the lack of bike and pedestrian refuge areas and marked bicycle lanes on State Route 68 as well as the high number of conflict points at existing signalized intersections; these lead to delay for bicyclists and pedestrians, conditions that were identified in the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan (2017).

Bicyclists and pedestrians do use State Route 68, as noted in comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Therefore, there is a requirement to include discussions on how these users will be accommodated in the proposed alternatives. The Transportation Agency for Monterey County's State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan (2017) addressed input from area residents and commuters on State Route 68 who expressed concerns with congestion, safety, and reliability of the route.

Comment I119-5: Based on my experiences using HWY 68, I can only support Alternative 2 moving forward. I appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments and I hope TAMC and CALTRANS will review all public comments and carefully research these remarks to see if there are other viable options that can provide meaningful improvements to Scenic Route 68 prior to moving forward with Alternative 1.

Response to Comment I119-5: Your preference for Alternative 2 is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project as it best accomplishes the purposes of the project, including reduction of travel time delay (28 percent compared with the No-Build Alternative as discussed in Section 2.1.9 of this document) and reduction of the frequency and severity of traffic collisions. Refer to Section 1.6 of this document for further discussion on the selection of the preferred alternative.

Commenter I120: Susan Needleman

Comment I120-1: To cut to the chase: I am completely opposed to the roundabouts. I have lived on Corral de Tierra Rd since 1967. 227 million dollars could be used for so many better projects. Repaving our trashy roads for instance. Using AI signals. The roundabouts slow down emergency

vehicles. They cause many fender benders. They are confusing when people don't yield the right of way.

Also, how long will this take and what will traffic do during the years they take building this crazy project? Highway #68 will be one lane!!!

I have absolutely no understanding how San Benancio will work during school drop off and pick up as the traffic is at stand still on Highway #68 during those times now. People will be stuck in the roundabout with no way to go.

I also read they were building wildlife bridges across the highway. Is this true? Because that is ridiculous.

I don't understand how Corral de Tierra and San Benancio intersections are big enough for a roundabout

The amount of money they are spending is insane. Why not put it up for a vote? 227 million can do a lot of good in the county for other much needed projects.

Response to Comment I120-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts for the intersection improvements is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project moving forward. Section 1.6 in this document addresses the reasons for the selection and the evaluation process. A hybrid roundabout design is now proposed at the three easterly roundabouts, including San Benancio Road/State Route 68. Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI Signal Control technology in relation to the proposed project and a planned pilot project to implement AI signal control technology on an interim basis.

A Transportation Management Plan will be implemented during construction to manage traffic at the project intersections; see Table 1.5 in Chapter 1. The plan will include specific procedures to enable movement of vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians, such as detour routes, temporary lane closures, reversable lanes and other methods as applicable for the locations. A public information program will also be implemented prior to and during construction activities. The construction of the 9 corridor roundabouts will be phased and not all 9 will be in construction in the same year. A critical path method for the construction timeline will be developed for each roundabout intersection location and will include evaluations by the Construction representatives to ensure that the construction working days are adequate for the proposed improvements. Any opportunity to shorten the construction efforts while still meeting the performance measures and permit conditions will be explored to minimize the construction impacts to motorists.

A State Route 68 corridor roundabout may take from 1 year to 2 years to construct. This timeframe may need to be extended if more than one roundabout is planned to be constructed as part of any contract plan set. It should be noted that the specific roundabout improvements such as retaining walls, bridge widening work, extensive earthwork and grading, wildlife crossings, and regulatory construction work window restrictions will influence the construction duration. Another factor that may impact the length of time for construction is the extent of utility relocations at each roundabout, which may require construction work windows that would interrupt/stop roundabout construction work to allow for the necessary utility owner relocation efforts.

Regarding emergency vehicles navigating roundabouts, see response to comment A2-1. Regarding morning congestion on State Route 68 at the east end of the project limits (San Benancio Road and Corral de Tierra Road intersections with State Route 68), see response to comments O2-1 and O2-2. The wildlife crossings are not bridges but rather improved culvert undercrossings, as described in Chapter 1 and Table. 1.4.

Commenter I121: Tom Rowley

Comment I121-1: COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS ON DRAFT EIR PROPOSALS FOR ROUNDABOUTS ON HWY 68 CORRIDOR

1. MY PERSONAL BACKGROUND & INVOLVEMENT WITH MTRY PENINSULA TRAFFIC PROBLEMS FOR 40+ YEARS:

* I attended Naval Postgraduate School Monterey from 1968 to 1970, and my wife Rosemary & I lived at 1426 Via Isola, Monterey, CA 93940 in Fishermen's Flats. At that time, NO traffic signals were installed on specially designated "scenic" SR 68 / Mtry-Salinas Hwy from SR 1 to the Salinas River.

* Upon retirement from Active Duty Naval Service in the Summer of 1981, our family moved back to Monterey at 2004 Marsala Circle – also in Fishermen's Flats in the city limits of Monterey. I volunteered for our local neighborhood association – Fishermen Flats Homeowners & Residents Association (FF HOs & RA) – and I have served continuously on the FF Executive Committee since the mid 1980s.

* In the 1980s – When I inquired with the Public Works Director "Mack" McIntyre of Monterey concerning safety on Hwy 68, he advised that Monterey County (then under its MCTC – MC Transportation Commission) was responsible for fixing transportation congestion and safety hazards along the highway, even though the west end of Hwy 68 from SR1 to York Road was entirely within the City of Monterey City limits. But no State funding was available. So I volunteered for a citizens County-wide Transportation Task Force to campaign for a ballot measure for a sales tax to become a self-help County. Simultaneously, I also volunteered to serve as Chair of the Monterey

Peninsula Citizens Traffic Improvement Coordinating Committee (MP-CTICC for short), which was formed up from 5 separate volunteer citizens groups interested in funding various MP transportation solutions.

* At that time in the mid-1980s, the so-called "THREAD-NEEDLE" was identified by City Staff and CalTrans as a recognized concern: This is the congested area of Hwy 68 between Hwy One and Olmsted Road (the entrance to our Monterey Regional Airport). But no funds were available to widen the Hwy or make safety improvements.

* With the support of Monterey City Staff, especially Mr. Fred Meurer (who served first as PW Director and then as City Manager), our MP-CTICC members met informally with Mr. Bill Heath, CalTrans Dist 5 Safety Director, for workshops over a period of years on how to solve MP traffic problems. We were successful in solving a major transportation congestion and safety problem on SR 1 in "CRUNCH ALLEY" – the then constricted sections of SR 1 in both directions between NPS and the Hyatt Regency Hotel. At Mr. Heath's directions, one lane was added on each side of SR 1 to totally eliminate the former safety problem. However, other problems along SR 68 – including "THREAD-NEEDLE" -- were not possible to solve due to lack of funding, but at our MP-CTICC request a "Traffic Assessment" by CalTrans engineers revealed that traffic signals were needed at numerous intersections – based on accidents and high traffic flows. In fact, LOS continued to be at "F" (the lowest possible) on SR 68 at that time: the late 1980s.

* When two students from York School were killed from a head-on collision at York Road and SR 68, that intersection became the first to receive a traffic signal. Shortly thereafter, Olmsted Road and Josselyn Cyn Rd also received their respective signals. And subsequently, all the major intersections received traffic signals and some limited traffic improvements... BUT NO widening to increase capacity.... EXCEPT in the Toro Park area of Hwy 68, which was increased to four lanes with County "Seed" money. (Monterey County did not become a "Self-Help" County until the fifth try at a County-wide vote passed by 2/3rds in 2017.)

* The City of Monterey Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) paid for one "leg" of the new light at Josselyn Cyn Rd, and the Airport District paid for two legs of the new signal at Olmsted Road.

(2) THE PROBLEMS & SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS: Two separate distinct problems along SR Hwy 68 because of jusrisdictional differences --

1. West End of Hwy 68 corridor -- all within the City of Monte]rey from SR 1 to York Road, including "THREAD-NEEDLE", And

2."Rural" areas from York Road to Salinas River, are both very CONGESTED & UNSAFE (both currently + when current and projected developments are added to existing traffic flows and accident rates).

(3) SUGGESTED PARTIAL SOLUTION TO PART 2 A ABOVE (West end from SR 1 to Olmsted Road – "THREAD-NEEDLE": The "THREAD-NEEDLE" area is a section of SR 68 similar to SR 1 in Carmel from Ocean Avenue to Rio Road. The THREAD-NEEDLE on SR 68 is in an area that generally slopes "downhill" from Olmsted Road to SR 1, and generally slopes "uphill" from SR 1. Almost the same situation as on Hwy 1 in Carmel area. The existing development of Monterey Woods PUD and the Living Hope Church of the Nazarene at Josselyn Cyn Road severely constrict the area available for a possible new roundabout. The congestion on Hwy 1 in Carmel was solved by adding one uphill lane in the northbound direction, while leaving one lane in the southbound direction. Admittedly – two full lanes in each direction would be optimum, but this compromise was definitely superior, and major avoidance of road building expenses. Thus a similar solution would work in the THREAD-NEEDLE, and totally avoid the problems and cost of a roundabout at Josselyn Cyn Road. Relatively minor cuts into the side of the hill on the Airport side of SR 68 would be needed to create 3 lanes instead of the existing 2 lanes.

Response to Comment I121-1: The footprint of what is being suggested (thread the needle) would be more like a climbing lane and would have a much larger footprint than the footprints of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 studied for the proposed project. A concept like this would result in larger environmental and property impacts, with significantly higher costs. The purposes of the proposed project (Section 1.2.1) aim to improve traffic flow at nine intersections in the State Route 68 corridor without adding capacity overall to the corridor, in compliance with state transportation and environmental regulations and policies stemming from Senate Bill 743 to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions. The project is intended to align with California's environmental goals, and any road expansion must align with these objectives. The addition of travel lanes must be carefully evaluated to ensure that meets both traffic efficiency and environmental sustainability criteria.

The preferred alternative, Alternative 1, Roundabouts, at the nine project intersections is anticipated to reduce travel delay through the corridor by 28 percent compared to the No-Build Alternative, as discussed in Section 2.1.9 of this document.

Comment I121-2: Also, it is clear that existing development on PART 2 A – Hwy 1 to Olmsted Road – includes expansion of Monterey Regional Airport Terminal Building & growing Airport activity + 4 major new residential housing complexes along Airport Road in Monterey + significant planned new residential housing along South Boundary Road in Monterey + future major

residential and commercial development on Tarpy Flats—currently 100+ vacant Acres (located at SR 68 & Olmsted Road) – none of which is analyzed thoroughly for total cumulative impacts in the draft CalTrans EIR.

Response to Comment I121-2: Refer to responses to comments A1-4 and I36-1 regarding the cumulative traffic forecasts and potential future development projects and the airport access improvements.

The 20-year traffic forecast used for the Traffic Operations Analysis Report was based on the Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018), which incorporates transportation planning information for the region. Planned future developments not included in the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan are not accounted for in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report. It is important to note that this is an operational improvement project and not one that adds capacity. However, traffic impacts from all planned development are required to mitigate both project-specific and cumulative impacts as needed to either maintain acceptable level of service and/or reduce vehicle miles traveled on both the state highway system and local road network. It is incumbent on Monterey County as the CEQA lead agency for land use to ensure that the conditions of approval for the development include any necessary mitigation.

Comment I121-3: The Living Hope Church of the Nazarene at Josselyn Cyn Road, with Pastor John Shearer has supported a new roundabout at Josselyn Cyn Road, but the Church wants to retain all of its parking capacity for its operations. While a total of 3 lanes – two uphill to the Airport access at Olmsted Road and one lane downhill from Olmsted Road to SR 1, are feasible with only a minor widening of SR 68 in the THREAD-NEEDLE area, the greater space needed for a roundabout does not appear feasible without the church "losing" vital parking spaces. This also retains the traffic signal at Josselyn Cyn Road to allow for intermittent coming and goings to both Fish' Flats + Monterey Woods PUD + Deer Flats Park neighborhoods.

The cost benefits of keeping only 3 lanes and the signal at Josselyn Cyn Road versus the cost of a new roundabout are obvious. Furthermore, the two intersections at Josselyn Cyn Road and Olmsted Road need to be considered as one project because of their close proximity. The Airport District has already advised that a two lane roundabout will be needed at Olmsted Road.

Response to Comment I121-3: Refer to response to comment I121-1. During the final design phase of the project, the roundabout design at the Josselyn Canyon Road/State Route 68 intersection will be reviewed and revised to avoid substantial impacts to the church property, and an environmental reevaluation analysis will be conducted to assess environmental effects of any design revisions.

Comment I121-4: (4) SUGGESTIONS FOR PART 2 B ABOVE (Rural Sections from York Road to Salinas River): The commentary and suggestions of Mr. Dwight Stump (e: mrdwstump@msn.com) for optimizing traffic signals along the rural portions of SR 68 (in the County of Monterey) deserve to be analyzed fully per his submitted study at www.9roundabouts.com – Also, suggestions for traffic signal improvements at Josselyn Cyn Road are within the scope of his recommendations.

Response to Comment I121-4: A pilot program to test AI signal control systems on a temporary basis in the project corridor is being implemented by Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County. Refer to response to comment I44-1 for further information about the pilot program and AI Signal Controls in relation to the proposed project and project objectives.

Comment I121-5: (5) Because my proposed solution above for adding one lane uphill to fix the aperiodic congestion at Josselyn Cyn Road, while adding a two-lane roundabout at Olmsted Road, is NOT really CalTrans options of Alternative 1 nor Alternative 2, but rather a "combination" of projects to solve congestion and improve safety at the THREAD-NEEDLE, I am sending along separately copies of this email to other cognizant parties and organizations. This includes City of Monterey (City Mgr Hans Uslar, Mayor Williamson, Council of Haffa, Garcia, Barber, Smith, CDD Kim Cole, PW Dir Andrea Kenny, Monterey Fire Dept); Living Hope Church of Nazarene (Rev John Shearer & Alex Hawkins); Deer Flats POA (chapmansusan1@gmail.com); Regency Mgmt Group (Prop Mgr for Mtry Woods PUD); FF Executive Committee; Pres Rich Ruccello of CONA; Monterey County (Dist 5 Supe Mary Adams & Dist 4 Supe Wendy Root-Askew + MC Planning Staff; Exec Dir Mike LaPier & Dir Mary Ann Leffel at Mtry Regional Airport; Gary Cursio, GA Liaison for MCHA; MPCC Exec Dir Monica Lal & GA Liaison Kevin Dayton; MPTA Pres Rick Heuer, Norm Groot, Mitt Sawnhey, Paul Bruno, Candy Ingram, Adam Pinterits; Fred & Phyllis Meurer; Dwight Stump; Alex Hulanicki; Work Estate (Julie Work Beck & Stewart Beck); Brad Slamma; Michael Waxer (Monterra Ranch & Tehama Ranch & Carmel Dev CO); MPUSD JP Diffenbaugh; AMBAG Exec Dir Maura Toumey; City of Del Rey Oaks (Mayor Sanderson & CM John Guertin); Ron Chesshire; Manny Pinheiro; Jeff Davi; John Tilley; Kate Daniels; Dean Provence.

(6) A special "Mahalo Nui Loa" to CalTrans Staff for organizing all the presentations, and also to Doug Bilse for his successful effort in meeting with citizens and groups that ALL seek longstanding congestion and safety improvements along Hwy 68 in the most cost beneficial / affordable way possible!

Sincerely yours,

Tom Rowley, President of Fishermen Flats Homeowners & Residents Association, mbr of MCAR + MCHA + MPCC
2004 Marsala Circle, Monterey, CA 93940 / Home Office TEL: (831) 373-5204 / e: TomR2004@hotmail.com

Response to Comment I121-5: The congestion observed in the eastbound direction near Josselyn Canyon Road, which is often exacerbated by heavy vehicles and high traffic volumes, is a common occurrence following two lanes merging to one lane. While the suggestion of an additional lane or truck climbing lane might seem like a plausible solution, it is important to consider the broader implications, such as compliance with environmental and traffic regulations. As discussed in response to comment I121-1, Senate Bill 743 aims to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to support California's environmental goals, and any road expansion projects must align with these objectives. The performance of vehicles, which is unlikely to be affected by slight upgrades, also factors into the decision-making process. Ultimately, the addition of lanes must be carefully evaluated to ensure that meets both traffic efficiency and environmental sustainability criteria.

The project team will continue to engage with relevant stakeholders of the project during the final design phase of the project to ensure all perspectives and requirements are considered.

Commenter I122: Scott Hennessy

Comment I122-1: I am writing to provide comment on the Highway 68 Corridor Improvement Project Draft EIR Appendix E section 2.1.10 Visual/Aesthetics.

Vis 15 (b). My concern is for the selection off all plant species to be installed at locations along the improvement project corridor and that they are primarily appropriate native species. As the DEIR lists there are significant areas of sensitive habitats in the project area on both public and private lands that need to be protected during construction and impacted area remediated. My primary concern is for the introduction of non-native invasive plant species with their potential to impact project area, to spread out of the project area and for the long -term successful mitigation for removed plants/habitats. The land disturbance of the project will, if not properly maintained, create high opportunity for invasives to get established I believe section Vis 15 (e) needs to be enhanced to have metrics for long-term monitoring/control of invasives with planting success criteria for when replanting is to occur in unsuccessful areas.

On the adjacent Fort Ord BLM land along Toro Creek there is an extensive effort to establish native habitat and to control invasive plants.

Best Wishes for a Successful Project,
Scott Hennessy

Response to Comment I122-1: Avoidance and minimization measures are included in Section 2.3.6 to manage and control invasive plants; see measures BIO-85 through BIO-89, Section 2.3.2, measure BIO-11, and Section 2.3.5 (Threatened and Endangered Species), measures BIO-35, BIO-38, BIO-49, BIO-51, and BIO-52. As discussed in Section 2.3.6, the project biological study

area contains 65 terrestrial invasive and noxious weed plant species; nine of these species are also on the California Department of Food and Agriculture's list of noxious weeds. Caltrans does not use invasive plant species in landscaping and erosion control as directed by Executive Order 13112 and Federal Highway Administration guidance. The landscaping measures listed above include removal of invasive plants in areas to be landscaped, use of certified weed- and disease-free soils and nursery plant stocks, and inspection and cleaning of construction equipment to remove any soil-containing seeds and/or invasive plant materials prior to entering the work areas. Another measure is the removal of any invasive animal species if observed in the construction work areas. The referenced measures in Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.5. include additional procedures to address invasive species.

Commenter I123: Kay and Seigfrid Magenheim

Comment I123-1: We are writing to express our disapproval of the proposed installation of roundabouts on Hwy. 68. We believe roundabouts have their place in areas where the people have a historical familiarity with them (such as parts of Europe), and in communities where they are constructed from the beginning on new roadways with plenty of room for wide lanes and proper signage. Unfortunately, most Americans do not know how to properly use them, and so the ideal vision of smooth transitions at intersections doesn't happen. The relatively new roundabout at the Holmann Hwy. and Hwy. 1 intersection is a perfect example of this. Some people go into the circle when it's not safe, others start to go in and then stop abruptly. Most just come to a complete stop at the entrance to the circle, whether or not it is clear. Drivers are confused, and what was supposed to help is actually dangerous.

Another good example of a poorly designed and executed roundabout is the new one at Hwy. 156 and Hwy. 25 outside of Hollister. They constructed a roundabout with only one lane where there was enough room for two, and it is cumbersome and awkward for all vehicles, especially the large commercial trucks that frequent the area. Unless two lanes are available at each of the proposed Hwy. 68 roundabouts, they will not work.

We have lived in San Benancio Canyon for almost 42 years and remember when there was no traffic light at San Benancio Road. It was sometimes difficult to get out, especially during commute times, so the signal was helpful. We also remember when we could leave Monterey to come home any time before 5:00 pm on a weekday and not worry about getting stuck in traffic. Then we remember how the afternoon slowdown that had gradually gotten worse would suddenly ease up going east as soon as you passed Laureles Grade. Now it stays backed up until you pass the light at San Benancio. Much of this is due to the increase in the number of cars on Hwy. 68, and some of it is due to less than perfect timing and management of signals. Morning traffic from Salinas to Monterey is bad because the fast-moving freeway lanes scale down to one lane and then hit the first signal at San Benancio. Afternoon

traffic from Monterey to Salinas is worsened by improper timing of traffic lights from Laureles Grade to San Benancio Rd.

Response to Comment I123-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project because it best accomplishes the purposes of the project, including reduction of travel time delay and frequency and severity of traffic collisions. Refer to Section 1.6 for further discussion.

Regarding how to drive through roundabouts, refer to responses to comments I24-1, I50-1 and I54-1. Roundabouts may cause drivers initial apprehension when they first open to traffic, but that would be the case of any intersection control changes (i.e., two-way stop-control to all-way stop or traffic signal). However, they are a significant advancement in traffic management and safety. Roundabouts are designed to facilitate a continuous flow of traffic, reducing the stop-and-go situations common at traditional intersections. This not only minimizes congestion but also substantially lowers the risk of severe accidents. By requiring vehicles to enter at reduced speeds and travel in one direction, roundabouts effectively eliminate the chances of high-speed, right-angle, and head-on collisions, making them a safer alternative for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians when designed properly.

In addition, the first phase of the State Route 68 corridor project includes the roundabouts at the three easternmost intersections at Laureles Grade, Corral de Tierra Road, and San Benancio Road. As discussed in Section 1.6, the design for these three roundabouts will be a hybrid design rather than a single-lane design, as described in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, wherein two travel lanes will be on the highway sides of the circles and single lanes on the cross-street sides.

The State Route 25/State Route 156 roundabout while in construction was operating temporarily as a single-lane roundabout. Congestion was expected with the single-lane roundabout during construction. However, construction of the two-lane (plus right-turn bypass lanes) roundabout at the State Route 25/State Route 156 junction is complete and operating with minimal traffic delays on all the approaches.

Comment I123-2: More people commute between Salinas and the Peninsula than ever before, but we have also observed that the expansion of medical offices and other businesses at Ryan Ranch has made a steady detrimental impact to the flow of traffic coming from both directions, and at longer hours throughout the day. Unfortunately, no one planned for mitigating these effects at the time that development was approved or as it has continued to grow.

Response to Comment I123-2: Responses to comments A1-4 and I36-1 discuss the cumulative traffic forecasts and potential future development projects and the airport access improvements. The 20-year traffic forecast used for the Traffic Operations Analysis Report was based on the Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018), which incorporates transportation planning information for the region. Planned future developments not included in the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan are not accounted for in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report. It is important to note that this is an operational improvement project and not one that adds capacity. That said, all planned development projects are required to mitigate their project-specific and cumulative impacts as needed to either maintain acceptable level of service and/or reduce vehicle miles traveled on both the state highway system and local road network. It is incumbent on Monterey County as the CEQA lead agency for land use to ensure that the conditions of approval for the development include any necessary mitigation.

Comment I123-3: In the meantime, there has been some conversations, but no action taken to improve the situation. Roundabouts as a proposed "improvement" will create more driver confusion, drastic slowdowns for emergency and other larger vehicles, and a construction process that will be a nightmare to anyone that needs to use Hwy. 68 for transportation – at any time of day or night. The cost and time to complete this are completely unreasonable considering the questionable benefits of the finished project. We understand that local fire officials and the Draft EIR call out concerns that concur with our assessment. In addition, due to the high risk of wildfire throughout the Hwy. 68 corridor, roundabout construction could result in reduced shoulders, road blockages, and restricted maneuvering that could spell disaster for our area.

We are in favor of a solution that will make a more immediate difference with less expenditure. Basically Cal Trans wants to spend $227 million for a two hour morning work and school slowdown and two hour afternoon slowdown; this is 500 times the cost of alternative options to manage the existing signal timing and flow! This makes no sense. We encourage you to choose expanded signalized intersections or other technologies such as AI controlled signals to offer relief at a reasonable cost with most efficient timing and effort.

Response to Comment I123-3: Regarding emergency vehicle response through roundabouts and AI Signal Control technology, refer to responses to comments A2-1 and I44-1, respectively. Your preference for Alternative 2 is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. As discussed in Section 1.6, Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project because it best accomplishes the purposes of the project, including reduction of travel time delay (28 percent

reduced compared to the No-Build Alternative as discussed in Section 2.1.9) and reduction of rate and severity of traffic collisions.

Commenter I124: Anne Hepfl

Comment I124-1: I would like to address the issue of installing 9 roundabouts versus artificial intelligence traffic signals on Highway 68.

We have been residents of Toro Park since 1996 and I commute to Monterey daily so I am well aware of the issues involved with traffic in both directions of Highway 68. I understand it needs to be addressed but for the life of me can not comprehend why you would willingly spend (not taking into account the current rate of inflation) $227 Million dollars, disrupt the lives of not only the people that live along 68 but the commute time for all of us that travel the road twice daily.

You have an option of installing and evaluating a much more cost effective option for AI Signal Controllers for around $500,000.00. What do you have to lose? If the AI Signal Controllers are ineffective, you can always go back to building the roundabouts.

I am hoping this suggestion does not fall on deaf ears, as I am certainly one who will be affected twice daily, at least. I have hope that whomever reads this can see it is a viable option and can save the taxpayers a substantial amount of money. Some things aren't always as difficult as they seem.

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE MY STATEMENT TO EACH OF THE VOTING BOARD MEMBERS.

Response to Comment I124-1: Regarding the preference for an AI controlled signal system, refer to response to comment I44-1, which discusses a pilot project that the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Caltrans will implement with that technology.

Commenter I125: Thomas Lukes

Comment I125-1: Carla,
I am opposed to adding nine roundabouts on highway 68. Using AI signals is a better approach for four reasons:
1. Less disruptive;
2. Less cost;

Response to Comment I125-1: Regarding the preference for an AI controlled signal system, refer to response to comment I44-1, which discusses a pilot project that the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Caltrans will implement with that technology.

Commenter I126: Mike and Rene Locke

Comment I126-1: Me and My wife have lived in the Highway 68 corridor for 52 years. This project is going to slow down emergency response time drastically, make evacuation incase of wildfire slower and could cost lives for no reason.

There has been talk about AI signal lights that would do a better job than roundabouts. The exits from Toro, Corral, San Benancio etc. would be so hard to enter the roundabouts as the Highway 68 would have the right away besides the mess it would cause during the construction.

Please reconsider the this poor decision, Me and my wife would like Caltrans to either adopt the installation of the expanded signalized intersections or artificial intelligence controlled signals instead of the nine roundabouts.

Please do the right thing abandon this project and save our county millions of dollars we don't have.

Response to Comment I126-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1, which discusses a pilot project that the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Caltrans will implement with AI Signal control technology. Your preference for Alternative 2 is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project because it best accomplishes the purposes of the 20-year design horizon, including reduction of travel time delay and rate and severity of traffic collisions. Refer to Section 1.6 for further discussion.

Commenter I127 through I130: Barry Jones

Comment I127-1: Please find attached letter outlining details of Wells and pipelines etc near the Pasadera Drive entrance and in the Area of Impact, that have not been picked up by the TAMC/Caltrans survey investigations.

Text of the comment letter contents are provided below. Volume 2 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment contains the complete letter with images that were included. Volume 2 is available upon request.

Dear Caltrans/TAMC

At the Pasadera Home Owners Association Town Hall Meeting on 4th Doug Bilse (TAMC) requested that we send information about services that may not be identified on the Area of Impact on the proposed plans in the Draft EIR for Highway 68 Corridor.

Regarding the Pasadera/Boots Intersection proposals, We have identified the following information about the Wells and pipelines etc near the Pasadera Drive entrance and in the Area of Impact, that have not been picked up by the TAMC/Caltrans survey investigations. We understand that this information has been included in the response to the Draft EIR from Concert, however we are also sending this information to you from representation on the Pasadera HOA, as some of the wells and services are on Pasadera HOA controlled land.

Information is provided and complied by

Brad Coleman Pasadera Golf Course Superintendent
Steve Keyser (Pasadera resident)
Barry Jones (Pasadera resident)

This information provided in good faith and neither TCAP nor Pasadera HOA can verify or be held responsible for their accuracy.We hope it is helpful. Please confirm receipt of this email.

Sincerely
Barry Jones

Attached comments:

Highway 68 Pasadera Drive/Boots Road Intersection.

Wells/Services that are not identified in the DEIR

1. Storm Drainage pipes are present flowing from i) the pond at Hole 10 to the culvert west of the entrance to Pasadera Drive.. and ii) from the east side of the Pasadera Drive entrance. under Pasadera Drive to the culvert.

2. Sewer drainage pipes are also present in the Area of Impact and under Pasadera Drive roadway entrance from the Sewer Plant to sewer pump number 2 located west of the entrance

3. The Old Bishop Ranch well and pumping station is located just east of Pasadera Drive near the entrance. Both are active and in use.

4. The CalAm well is located on the west side of Pasadera Drive.

5.Waterlines run between the 2 wells and under Pasadera Drive which is Pasadera HOA controlled land.

6.Wells are our primary source of water for the golf course and essential to irrigation.

7. Several of the pipes also flow under the Pasadera HOA controlled land which would have to be disturbed during construction of either Alternative.

8. These copies of parts of old diagrammatic drawings and photograph showing the locations of pipes and wells are provided in good faith. Neither TCAP nor Pasadera HOA can verify or be held responsible for their accuracy.

Response to Comment I127-1: Thank you for sharing the drawings and for the good faith offered in providing additional details regarding facilities located within the area of potential impact, otherwise known as the study area. While these subsurface utilities that provide services to residents of Pasadera are within the study area, initial review did not reveal direct impacts to facilities. As the project moves to the final design phase, any subsurface utilities will be positively located to ensure there are no design or construction conflicts. Should conflicts result, they will be identified and resolution via a right-of-way contract would be executed.

Comment I128-1: Having been to 2 Public Meetings and also various discussions with TAMC/Caltrans staff… I have not received a specific answer to why the Draft EIR is for "All Roundabout or All Traffic signal Alternatives. Please send me an answer that includes the Basis of Decision to choose these 2 alternatives for the entire corridor… rather than taking the approach of determining the best choice for each individual intersection.

I am expecting to receive facts and figures including traffic flow data at the ends of the corridor for either Alternative , for Peak and off peak periods , together with the same for each individual intersection, to substantiate the decision.

Response to Comment I128-1: Roundabouts require continuous flow to operate efficiently. If a queue from a downstream signalized intersection backs up into an upstream roundabout, the roundabout will gridlock. This has a cascading effect for intersections farther upstream. Since traffic signals must stop mainline traffic to service traffic on the side street, having a continuous flowing roundabout upstream would continuously increase the queue length at the traffic signal until the next green cycle. With high traffic flows and closely spaced intersections, both of which the State Route 68 corridor has, mixing traffic signals with roundabouts is not advised for improving traffic flow and operations, which is a key part of the purpose of the project.

Section 2.1.9, Traffic and Transportation, Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, includes tables and discussion about the traffic operations performance metrics applied in the traffic analyses for the project; see specifically Tables 2.1.9.9 through 2.1.9.12, which provide daily and peak hour savings of delay for the forecast years 2025, 2035, and 2045 for both Build Alternatives and the No-Build Alternative. Section 2.1.9 summarizes the information in the technical traffic studies prepared for the project, which are listed in Appendix M and contained in Volume 2 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment. Volume 2 is available upon request.

Comment I129-1: The DEIR lacks detail regarding traffic flow census data and simulation flow data… at the entry and exit of the corridor and also at each intersection…through traffic, turning etc

It is also not clear as to when the census where carried out ..ie dates and times ,peak/non-peak and whether they cover the dates when Laguna Seca Racetrack had huge events, Car Week traffic, seasonal traffic..high volumes in summer etc.

With the huge increase size and frequency of Laguna Seca Racetrack activities and consequential traffic volumes.. Please send to me details about the data used and how these are taken into account in the simulations

Please also provide me with send to me details/dates and sizes of which housing and business developments are being accounted for in the traffic flow data contained in the DEIR.

Also please provide data regarding the impact on traffic that the Monterey Airport expansion/growth plans will have on projected traffic flows.

Thank you in anticipation.

Response to Comment I129-1: Section 2.1.9, Traffic and Transportation, provides the results of the traffic analyses in the project traffic studies for both Build Alternatives 1 and 2 and the No-Build Alternative for daily vehicle hours of delay, daily person hours of delay and peak hour vehicle hours of delay for the forecast years 2025, 2035, and 2045 (see Tables 2.1.9.9 through 2.1.9.12).

Peak hour traffic flow data (i.e., turning movement counts and other traffic flow data) are presented in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report (2020) for existing conditions and future traffic demand for 2025, 2035, and 2045. The Traffic Operations Analysis Report and other traffic studies referenced in Section 2.1.9 are contained in Volume 2 of this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, which is available upon request. State highway projects are designed for typical midweek (Tuesday through Thursday) peak hour operation in line with the industry practice. Seasonal high, low, and special event traffic are outliers that do not represent a typical midweek day. Designing projects that cater to outliers often leads to the challenge of managing facility capacity, either resulting in underuse or, conversely, insufficient capacity. Determining effective travel forecast demand, assessing current capacity, and developing plans that align resources with projected needs are crucial in system optimization.

The 20-year traffic forecast used for the Traffic Operations Analysis Report was based on the Regional Growth Forecast traffic model prepared by AMBAG (2014) and the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2018), which incorporates transportation planning information for the region. Planned future developments not included in the AMBAG 2040 Metropolitan

Transportation Plan are not accounted for in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report. It is important to note that this is an operational improvement project and not one that adds capacity. That said, traffic impacts from all planned development are required to mitigate both project-specific and cumulative impacts as needed to either maintain acceptable level of service and/or reduce vehicle miles traveled on both the state highway system and local road network.

Any expansion projects and/or access modifications planned for the Monterey Peninsula Airport are addressed in responses to comments A1-1 and A1-2. As the Olmsted Road/State Route 68 roundabout moves into the final design phase, Caltrans and the City of Monterey will coordinate construction efforts with any improvements planned by the airport management. The 20-year traffic demand analysis conducted for this Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project and the traffic forecast based on AMBAG's Regional Growth Forecast determined that the proposed designs for the roundabouts (now preferred alternative for the project) and for Alternative 2 would meet the 20-year (2045) design horizon for the highway corridor. Planned developments that are not included in the regional growth forecast model would be responsible to mitigate their proportional additional traffic impacts on the highway.

Comment I130-1: The DEIR Alt1 Roundabout design does not include a merge lane for exit onto Westbound 68. At present there is one that helps for safe entry to the highway.

In the roundabout proposals for York and also Ryan Ranch intersections, a merge lane for right turn from their respective exit roads is included.

Clearly Pasadera has a similar need for ease and safe access onto westbound onto Highway 68. Why is such a lane not included in the Pasadera Intersection design? Please confirm that TAMC/Caltrans will include a merge lane in the next phase of the roundabout design.

Response to Comment I130-1: Refer to response to comment O4-1b. Right-turn lanes were included for the York Road and Ragsdale Drive intersections at State Route 68 because both locations were found to have heavy right turn volumes onto westbound State Route 68, particularly during the evening peak period. A right-turn bypass lane was not included at Pasadera Drive because the right turn volumes were not found to be high enough to justify a designated right-turn bypass lane. A merge lane for vehicles turning right from Pasadera Drive onto westbound State Route 68 is not necessary at the roundabout because, once a vehicle enters the flow of traffic in the roundabout, no additional merging maneuvers are required to continue onto westbound State Route 68.

Commenter I131: Lucy Ablan

Comment I131-1: As a York Hills resident adjacent to Highway 68 in Monterey for 13 years, I fully support the $500,000 AI signaling as opposed to the $200,000,000 nine roundabout option.

Response to Comment I131-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative as discussed in Section 1.6.

Commenter I132: Barry Jones

Comment I132-1: The current speed limit throughout the corridor is 55mph. I understand this is the max for this type of road.

It is well known that very many drivers speed.. .. often excessively along various sections…

As safety is one of TAMC/Caltrans key reasons for developing the Alternatives… I would ask that you consider reducing the speed limit through the Pasadera/Boots intersection to 40mph for a length of at least 1500 feet either side.

With the increased number of lanes and consequential traffic volume going through the alt2 intersection at speed..I believe this would be key to increasing safety at the redesigned intersection.

Of course there will still be some drivers that exceed the speed limit going through…but it should reduce the number of the 70 and 80+mph instances happening. I do not believe that the reduction would have a severe impact on the length of overall time it takes for people using 68 but clearly help with the safety aspect this expanded intersection.

I ask you to compare the General Jim Moore Boulevard, Monterey situation… it is a lengthy dual two-lane carriageway…..divided by hard/landscaped central reserve and has signal controls to all intersections. .. and indeed stop signs at some junctions. The traffic volumes are extremely low when compared to even existing Hwy68 traffic.The speed limit is 45mph….with the section nearest to The University end being reduced to 40 mph.

So surely a reduction through Pasadera could be instituted as part of Alt 2. Indeed I would propose that a request is put to TAMC/Caltrans to take this action now..since it will be 4 - 8 years before works starts on the Pasadera intersection.

Please given the reasons why there is a difference between General Jim and Hwy68. and also the process i should take to formally request a revision to the speed limit through the intersection.

Response to Comment I132-1: After public review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment and receipt of public input, the Caltrans Project Development Team selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for continuation to the final design phase of the project. Both Build Alternatives 1 and 2 were considered in a rigorous scored evaluation that compared the alternatives' relative achievement in meeting the purpose and need of the project, environmental impacts, cost, and reduction of vehicle miles traveled.

In response to the points raised in the comment, many factors influence drivers and their perception of the safe speed at which to operate a vehicle. The design and physical characteristics of the roadway (e.g., grade, alignment, sight distance, lane width, condition of roadway surface, type and width of shoulders, frequency of intersections), place limitations on the safe operating speed of vehicles. The design speed is a selected speed used to determine the various geometric design features (e.g., vertical curve, horizontal curve, sight distance, superelevation) of the roadway. The design speed on State Route 68 within the project limits is 55/60 miles per hour. The General Jim Moore Boulevard may have the geometric characteristics that limit to speed to 40 to 45 miles per hour.

An engineering and traffic survey (E&TS) is required to modify the posted speed limit on the state highway. However, the E&TS may be valid for seven or 10 years if certain conditions exist, as outlined in California Vehicle Code Section 40802. You can request a formal review of E&TS through Caltrans' Public Records Center portal: https://caltrans.mycusthelp.com/WEBAPP/_rs/(S(cmubwyn0obay04xskgymxobi))/supporthome.aspx.

Commenter I133: Kathleen Catania

Comment I133-1: Let me start by stating the form presented at the meeting to comment on the recommendations for Highway 68 in Monterey didn't seem to reach you. I mailed it using the form address and it was returned "Unable to forward"! Why would you provide a form to comment and then not provide a correct address?? Thus I am now re-writing my comments to you now...

"It seems quite a lot of money to be spent on a project that does not address the congestion currently or in the future (with all the additional housing planned along that highway). It also does not allow for emergency vehicles to pass quickly (the fire department is against the proposed plan for this reason.).

Response to Comment I133-1: We are sorry that your comment form was returned by the Post Office; the Caltrans office return address is correct, and we did receive comment forms from other commenters; thank you for sending comments via email.

Both of the Build Alternatives analyzed in the environmental document would improve traffic flow through the intersections along State Route 68 during peak traffic periods, as concluded by the traffic studies and Section 2.1.9 of this document. Alternative 1, Roundabouts, which was selected as the preferred alternative, would result in both travel time delay savings (28 percent reduction) and reduced rate and severity of traffic collisions compared to the No-Build Alternative.

Emergency vehicles will be accommodated with the roundabouts; see response to comment A2-1. In addition, since the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, the design of the roundabouts at the three eastern intersection locations has been refined to hybrid roundabouts (two lanes around the circle on the east-west highway sides and single lanes on the cross-street sides), which will allow for additional space for emergency vehicles to traverse the roundabouts. Regarding planned housing development along State Route 68, refer to responses to comments A1-4 and I36-1.

Comment I133-2: More futuristic planning is needed. Yes, possibly more money, but will alleviate much of the current and future increase in traffic. A four lane road with either AI lights or, more costly but best long term solution would be overpasses like the one currently at River Road and Hwy 68! (Salinas was so wise to construct the 4 lanes with an overpass - they thought ahead and it still handles the traffic with no delays!

Response to Comment I133-2: Regarding the suggested widening of State Route 68 to four lanes, as discussed in Section 1.7.1, a full four-lane widening of State Route 68 was previously evaluated as part of the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan, but eliminated from further consideration because of the anticipated higher magnitude of impacts to environmental resources due to a large scale physical footprint. In addition, a full widening would not align closely with the project purpose and need to reduce collisions, and it would be much costlier than the current proposed improvements. In addition, the State of California has adopted goals and policies for reduction of greenhouse gases and traffic-related air pollution, which capacity-increasing transportation projects can cause. A road widening conflicts with these objectives.

Regarding the suggestion for overpasses to alleviate traffic, interchanges are typically constructed on freeway segments with high speeds and usually spaced one-half mile or more apart. The project section of State Route 68 is not a high-speed roadway, and only being able to enter and exit the highway at half-mile intervals would not service many of the communities along the

corridor well. Converting the project corridor from a highway to a freeway would also require construction of a frontage road for access to local communities between interchanges, which also adds to project costs.

In addition, State Route 68 is a designated Scenic Highway; adding high vertical elements and superstructures along the rural highway would create substantial visual impacts by reducing the existing visual character by adding more roadway structures, increasing visual clutter and urban character, much more than either of Build Alternatives 1 or 2. More retaining walls and other structural features in the roundabouts alternative (as well as Alternative 2) would also be necessary for designs that include overpass structures, which would cause substantially greater environmental impacts and property acquisitions, as well as greater project cost. The project is not intended to expand the highway footprint so that it would be capacity increasing, but rather its goal is to improve intersection operations through the study corridor.

Though the project team selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred project alternative, Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are proposing a pilot project that will install AI signal technology on State Route 68. Refer to response to comment I44-1 for further information.

Comment I133-3: There also need s to be an additional/alternate way to allow traffic from Monterey to Salinas and south. With the cost of housing, more and more will be commuting from Salinas (and south) to work in the Monterey area. Work with the county and get Watkins Road open! It already is a road from Monterey to Salinas!

Additionally, General Jim Morre road should have been constructed to meet with Imjin Road. Why this wasn't done initially makes no sense. So, now it should be somehow connected to Imjin which will allow alternate ways to travel instead of what now happens, traffic goes through a housing area to connect to Reservation Road!

If none of these plans would work, at least consider AI lights instead of all those roundabouts, which will not ease the traffic and will continue to back up traffic due to the slow speed in the roundabouts!

Response to Comment I133-3: Regarding extension of roads through the former Fort Ord property. refer to response to comment I18-2. Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI signal control technology.

Commenter I134: Aaron Magenheim

Comment I134-1: It has been brought to my attention that you are considering putting roundabouts in Highway 68. I have lived on San Benancio Road pretty much my entire life and saw the traffic changes when signals were first put in 30+ years ago. When you drive this road daily, especially work. Traffic times it is evident that the signals are not time correctly. I work in

the technology industry and know that most of the problems with Highway 68 traffic is due to this and newer signals with better technology will likely solve the problem better than year construction and spending millions of dollars on roundabouts. Roundabouts were reasonably well in developing countries, or in Europe, where they are used to it, but as as evidenced in the roundabout at Highway 68 and Highway one, our population just does not know how to use them. I am confident that roundabouts will create even more traffic as well as significantly increased rates of accident.

As a long term resident I see the need to improve traffic on Highway 68 as it will double or triple commute time. At the same time it does not make sense to take the time or spend the money on roundabouts when leveraging, newer technology as AI signals is at least the right place to start.

Please take my comments and many others who deal with this daily two serious consideration, and do not move forward with building roundabouts at this point.

Response to Comment I134-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts and preference for signalized intersection expansions with AI signal control technology have been acknowledged and were shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI Signal Control technology and a planned interim pilot project on State Route 68. Regarding the comment about roundabouts increasing traffic collisions, see response to comment I-60.

Commenter I135: Barry Jones

Comment I135-1: I note that Table 1.2 shows Collision Rates for the various sections SR68 for the period prod Jan 1, 2017 to Dec 31 2019.. 3 years.

I am pleased to see that the section that Pasadera intersection falls into, has much lower collision rates than the Total Statewide averages. The length of the section considered is quite long (somewhere east of York Road to somewhere east of Laureles Grade) so it is difficult to assess where the actual collisions occurred.

This 2.77 mile section between End Posts at 8.33 and 11.10 miles has Actual Total rate 0.87 vs Statewide Average of 1.20 ie 28% lower…. and an Actual F+I rate of 0.37 vs Statewide Average of 0.49. ie 25% , plus thankfully zero fatalities.

Can you supply more recent and up to date data in the same table...as this is now 4 years old and surely we should be using more current data than in the DEIR. Please provide me with the most up to date data that you have for the entire corridor and also the Pasadera Intersection.

It would appear from my analysis that the majority of accidents that occur in the Pasadera Intersection area, are bumper to bumper collisions..probably due to cars traveling above the posted speed limit and trying to dash through the signals.. or drivers not stopping quickly enough/or too quickly at the signals ...but without more detailed data it is difficult to drawn a factual supported conclusion.

Response to Comment I135-1: Table 2.1.9.8 in the Traffic section provides three-year collision data for selected locations within the project limits for the years 2019 through 2022.

Comment I135-2: My question is…what collision rates are you predicting with either alt1 or alt2? The generic response that roundabouts are safer than signals will not suffice I'm afraid. We need to be making decisions on the last 4 years factual data.

Response to Comment I135-2: As addressed in Section 2.1.9 under "Roundabout Traffic Safety," the Insurance Institute of Traffic Safety in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration has shown that compared to traditional signalized intersections, roundabouts result in up to 37 percent fewer overall collisions and 75 percent reduction in injury collisions. Roundabouts have also been shown to reduce the number of fatal collisions by 90 percent as roundabouts have 76 percent fewer conflict points than signalized intersections.

Commenter I136: Bob Dunaven

Comment I136-1: Like most people I seldom write letters to bureaucrats but unfortunately I am compelled to voice my opinion on this matter. As a point of reference I have lived on the Hwy 68 corridor (San Benancio and Toro Park) for 36 years so I am well aware of the traffic issues along this stretch of road.

Note that I am sending this on to Senator Laird and Assemblywoman Addis. They are ultimately responsible for the efficient and cost effect spending of our tax dollars and they need to step up and stop this!

The proposed "solution" to the traffic issues is to build nine roundabouts on an eight mile stretch of HWY 68 at an estimated cost of over a quarter BILLION dollars. This is the estimate but when was the last time that Caltrans actually completed a project on budget – so in all likelihood this boondoggle will cost much more. THS IS INSANE!

More importantly this project is very unlikely to do anything to solve the problem of traffic congestion along this route let alone be anything near cost effective.

Let's consider:

1. The proposed roundabouts are to be single lane in each direction. Single lane will certainly slow down traffic if that is the intention but how will the traffic on the adjoining roads enter the roundabout when the 68 traffic is backed up entering the roundabout. Granted in the perfect world the 68 traffic will let the merging cars "zipper in" but given the traffic load this is unlikely to work with a single lane roundabout. The result: traffic will back up on the intersection roads for an extended, in not unbearable, length of time. Solution NO!

2. The roundabouts will not adjust to traffic conditions during the day/night. The roundabouts are 24 hour 365 day traffic obstacles. Never ending-never going away. They're there when there is excessive traffic (morning and afternoon) and they're there the other 20 hours per day – slowing down traffic and creating a drivers chicane. Likely making this section of 68 less safe, not more. Traffic congestion on 68 is cyclical and known to exist for a relatively short period of time during the morning and evening commutes – this is not a 24 hour problem.

3. This project will make HWY 68 completely impassible for the entire multi-year construction period. This will make the morning and evening commutes a complete disaster. Reservation road through Marina will be awful for those communities.

4. This will cost well in excess of a quarter of a billion dollars and at the end will likely make the traffic situation worse than it already is. Once completed, we the people who drive HWY 68 will be stuck with these chicanes.

Response to Comment I136-1: Roundabouts are a significant advancement in traffic operations and safety. They are designed to facilitate a continuous flow of traffic, reducing the stop-and-go situations common at traditional intersections. This not only minimizes congestion but also substantially lowers the risk of severe accidents. By requiring vehicles to enter at reduced speeds and travel in one direction, roundabouts effectively eliminate the chances of high-speed, right-angle, and head-on collisions, making them a safer alternative for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Your opposition to the roundabouts and preference for the signalized intersection alternative project is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

After circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for public review, Caltrans selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project because overall it best accomplishes all of the purposes of the project, including reduction of travel time delay compared to the No-Build scenario and reduces the frequency and severity of traffic collisions for the reasons described above. In addition, after public circulation of the draft environmental document, the project team looked at ways to further

enhance operation of the roundabouts and, as a result, the design of the easternmost three intersection roundabouts has been updated from a single-lane design to a hybrid design (combination of two lanes and a single lane). Refer to Sections 1.4.1 and 1.6 for further discussion.

Regarding construction period traffic congestion, Caltrans implements a Transportation Management Plan tailored to the highway system and conditions for each highway construction project (listed in Table 1.5 in Chapter 1). The plan will have specific measures for traffic control and access for motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians through the project intersections during construction. Measures such as lane closures, reversable lanes, detour routes, night work, and public information programs will be implemented to move traffic safely in these areas.

Comment I136-2: What's an option? How about synchronized intelligent stop lights. Its estimated that these will likely cost around $400k. So, let's assume that once Caltrans gets this project the cost more than double to $1 million. One million dollars is less than one half of 1% (.4%) of the current estimated cost of the roundabouts. In the Caltrans world this is less than a rounding error and will certainly be less than the actual cost overruns of this project.

The advantages to installing the synchronized lighting system are many:

1. The synchronized lights would be simple to implement as the intersections already exist and already have stop lights so the infrastructure is in place. This could likely be a "PLUG AND PLAY" SCENARIO. I still remember when the traffic lights were installed at San Benancio and Corral de Tierra and the mess it created for what then was a long time of frustration and traffic mess.

2. The synchronized lights are fully adaptable to the vastly different traffic patterns/conditions that exist during the day/night on HWY 68. During most of the day/night traffic congestion is not a problem and the lights can reflect and adjust to this. During periods of congestion the lights will react real-time to the changes in traffic flow. This will expedite traffic flow not only during the morning and evening commute but also during periods of high tourist traffic such as the ATT golf, car week, etc. Real time adjustments to real time changes in traffic. Roundabouts can not do this – there is no adjustment to traffic conditions with roundabouts.

3. This can be implemented very quickly. No need for extensive EIR reports. No need for costly engineering. Caltrans won't even be involved other than to write a proposal and solicit bids. It will be very hard for this to be over budget or completed late.

4. This will not adversely affect traffic along this section of 68 for an extended period of time.

5. THIS PROJECT WILL SAVE OVER $250 MILLION TAX DOLLARS. THIS IS NOT SMALL AMOUNT FOR A STATE THAT IS REPORTED TO BE RUNNING A MILTI BILLION DOLLAR DEFICIT. IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!!!!

6. If synchronized lights don't solve the problem of traffic congestion there is really no harm no foul. Caltrans can continue along with their ill conceived plan for nine roundabouts in eight miles. If the synchronized lights do work it would be a tremendous solution to the congestion problem in not only on HWY 68 to in many other areas as well.

7. Bureaucrats can take the credit for saving the tax payers 250 million dollars and for implementing such a ground breaking innovative solution. That is a win-win!!!

In conclusion, I ask the collective group to present to me the cost and efficiency analysis of installing Synchronized lights vs the nine roundabouts in eight miles. Also I would like to see why other solutions were either not considered or were eliminated in favor of the nine roundabouts in eight miles at a taxpayer cost of over 250 million dollars. I look forward to your response.

Response to Comment I136-2: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI adaptive signal control and a planned pilot project that will implement that technology on State Route 68.

Commenter I137: Nick Locke

Comment I137-1: As a local resident of the Highway 68 corridor and Corral De Tierra, I would like to express my opposition to Caltrans/Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC) joint proposal to install nine roundabouts at the intersections between San Benancio Road and Josselyn Canyon Road in Monterey County.

I oppose this proposal for several reasons but a few are due to the impact it would have on emergency traffic out from the Hwy 68 corridor, traffic delays being increased (rather than decreased), and cost effectiveness.

I would much rather see artificial intelligence (AI) controlled traffic signals installed at a significantly lower price, which would minimize user disturbance and also accomplish a better solution to the problem at hand.

Response to Comment I137-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project because it best accomplishes the purposes of the project for the 20-year design horizon, including reduction of travel time delay (28 percent compared to the No-Build Alternative) and reduction of the rate and

severity of traffic collisions. Refer to Section 1.6 for further discussion. Regarding the suggestion of AI signal controls, refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI adaptive signal control and a planned pilot project that will implement that technology on State Route 68.

Commenter I138 is Fred Meurer. Refer to Comments I85-1 through I85-9, which are duplicate comments.

Commenter I139: Bart Kowalski

Comment I139-1: I am a long time resident of the Monterey Bay Area, I am also a conservation professional, and an avid naturalist and a wildlife tracker. I frequently commute between the Monterey Peninsula and Salinas and I acknowledge the need for improvement of the flow of traffic along Hwy 68. I support Alternative 1 of the Draft EIR for the following reasons:

1. It addresses the need to improve the flow of traffic along Hwy 68 with the smallest environmental footprint.

2. It is unclear to me how Alternative 2 would improve the flow of traffic. Even with the coordinated traffic lights it will still require for the cars to come to a full stop when the lights turn red, which is an identified reason for the traffic buildup, and many of the accidents.

3. Roundabouts have proven very effective in other parts of the County. For example along Inter-Garrison Rd, and Reservation Rd in Marina.

Response to Comment I139-1: Your support for the project roundabouts alternative is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Caltrans has selected the Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project, which will move forward into the final design phase. The roundabouts were selected due, in part, for their combined potential for delay savings and reduced number of potential conflict points, as demonstrated in numerous roundabout development areas, as well as the overall reduced amount and degree of significant environmental impacts.

Comment I139-2: In addition, I support the buildup of the wildlife crossings under Hwy 68, and propose that Caltrans move forward with building/improving the wildlife crossings even if neither Alternative 1 or 2 move forward. It is biologically critical for wildlife to be able to freely move between the Fort Ord National Monument and the areas south to Hwy 68 especially for species with large roaming ranges such as mountain lions and badgers.

Response to Comment I139-2: The improved wildlife crossing culverts will be implemented with the roundabouts (Alternative 1) selected as the preferred alternative. Your support for them is appreciated and is an important part of the decision-making process.

Commenter I140: Rutan & Tucker LLP

Comment I140-1: We write on behalf of our client, the Phelps Family-OMNI Resources, LLC ("Phelps Family"), to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (the "Draft EIR/EA") for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project (the "Project"). The Phelps Family are long-standing owners of commercially-zoned property located immediately southeast of the intersection of State Route ("SR") 68 and Corral de Tierra Road. The Phelps Family is very concerned about the amount of right-of-way acquisition proposed as part of the Project and the adverse impacts that this would have on the approved Corral de Tierra Neighborhood Retail Village Project ("Retail Village Project") and the pending Corral de Tierra Fueling Station Project ("Fueling Station Project"). As such, we write to ask Caltrans to:

(1) provide more details on the proposed Project plans,

(2) design the Project plans to minimize to the greatest extent possible the amount of land needed from the Phelps Family's properties, and

(3) preserve the parking and drainage infrastructure and right-in, right-out access driveway on SR 68 approved as part of the Retail Village Project.

1. The Properties Have Long Been Planned And Entitled For Commercial Development.

The Phelps Family owns three parcels to the southeast of the intersection of SR 68 and Corral de Tierra Road: Assessor's Parcel Numbers ("APN") 161-571-002, 161-571-003, and 161-581-001 (the "Properties"). The Properties have long been planned and zoned for commercial development. Indeed, the Properties' commercial land use designation dates back nearly 50 years and is reflected in both the 1982 and the 2010 Monterey County ("County") General Plan.

The Properties have a General Plan land use designation of Commercial. (General Plan, Figure LU10: Toro Area Plan-Land Use Map.) Commercial sites are to serve the projected population, to accommodate a broad range of uses, and to be developed in a compact manner. (General Plan, Policies LU-4.2, LU-4.3, and LU-4.4.) Specifically, the Light Commercial designation "accommodates and allows a broad range of light commercial uses such as stores, shops, restaurants, service stations and general office uses suitable for the convenience of nearby residential areas." (General Plan, p. LU-18.) The Properties are zoned Light Commercial with Design Review and Building Site Overlay Districts (LC-D-B-8). The purpose of the LC zoning designation is to "accommodate and maintain a broad range of light commercial uses suitable for the convenience of nearby residential areas." (Monterey County Zoning Code § 21.18.010.)

On February 7, 2012, the County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 12-040 approving the Retail Village Project on APNs 161-571-003 and 161-581-002. (County File No. PLN110077 [an appeal of PLN020344].) At build-out, the Retail Village Project will consist of 99,970 square feet of mixed commercial uses spread across multiple structures. The original site plan for the Retail Village Project had two driveway access points on SR 68. In response to Caltrans's comments, the westernmost driveway was eliminated, but the easternmost right-in, right-out driveway was preserved and approved by the County as part of the Retail Village Project. (True and correct copies of the approved Retail Village Project plans and conditions of approval are attached hereto as Exhibit A.)

The remaining parcel, APN 161-571-002, consists of approximately 0.68 acres and was long occupied by an operating service station and convenience market (the "Fueling Station Parcel"). The service station was authorized pursuant to a Use Permit granted by the County Zoning Administrator on November 25, 1966. (County File No. ZA-74.) In 1994, the County Zoning Administrator granted a Combined Development Permit to allow for a real estate office and convenience market on the site. (County File No. ZA94005.)

Subsequently, the-then service station operator was notified by governmental agencies of the need to remediate contaminated soils and replace the service station's underground storage tanks. The service station pumps and tanks were removed sometime in 2002 when remediation work commenced. The service station was closed while the site was remediated, but the real estate office remained open. Notwithstanding the temporary closure of the service station, the land use approvals previously granted by the County for the prior service station and convenience store building were expressly retained/reserved by the Phelps Family in connection with the required site remediation/demolition work and run with the land. [1] The Phelps Family initially applied for the Fueling Station Project in June 2018. (See County File No. PLN180338.) During the scoping proceedings on the Project, representatives of the Phelps Family notified Caltrans of their plans for the Fueling Station Project. Proceedings on the application for the Fueling Station Project were delayed due to the need to obtain certain will serve letters. Once the will serve letters were obtained, a pre-application for the Fueling Station Project was submitted in December 2022 with a formal application following in October 2023. [2] (See County File No. PLN220348.)

[1] See May 6, 2002 letter from Brian Finegan to Luis Osorio, attached hereto as Exhibit B.

[2] In December 2022, Caltrans representatives were again informed of plans for the Fueling Center Project.

The Fueling Station Project proposes to construct a replacement service station and convenience market on the Fueling Station Parcel of a similar

size, nature, and configuration as a service station and convenience market that was formerly located on the site. The proposal consists of an approximately 3,000 square foot convenience market in approximately the same location as the former structure and six dual-sided pumps (12 fueling stations) to replace the six dual-sided pumps (12 fueling stations) that previously existed on the site. (True and correct copies of the plans submitted to the County in connection with the pending application for the Fueling Station Project are attached hereto as Exhibit C.)

A reciprocal access easement will allow for shared access between the Retail Village Project and the Fueling Station Project. And both projects will reduce vehicular trips and add necessary services and convenience shopping to the area consistent with the Properties' longstanding commercial zoning. [3]

[3] (See, e.g., Draft EIR/EA, p. 106 [correctly observing that few businesses or shops on SR 68 offer basic necessities or services, requiring area residents to travel to Monterey or Salinas for commercial needs].)

With this background in mind, we turn now to our client's comments and concerns with respect to the Draft EIR/EA.

Response to Comment I140-1: The comment provides background on the proposed developments on the parcels on the east side of Corral de Tierra and south side of State Route 68, southeast of the intersection, as well as a summary of the comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, that are more fully described in the subsequent comments. Refer to responses to comments I140-2 through I140-8.

Comment I140-2: 2. Detailed Plans Must Be Provided To Allow For A Meaningful Opportunity To Review And Comment On The Draft EIR/EA.

The Project proposes to make improvements along SR 68 which would include modifying nine intersections between Josselyn Canyon Road and San Benancio Road. One of the intersections proposed for improvement is SR 68 and Corral de Tierra Road. Two build alternatives were evaluated in the Draft EIR/EA for potential environmental impacts: Alternative 1 would construct roundabouts in place of the existing signalized intersections and Alternative 2 would include upgraded signalized intersection configurations. Wildlife connectivity improvements are also proposed as part of the Project.

As a preliminary matter, it is very difficult to meaningfully comment on the Draft EIR/EA because no detailed Project plans are included that overlay Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 on the Properties. As such it is not possible to definitively discern the impacts of either alternative on the Properties. The text indicates that the Project is "not anticipated to affect continued use of the properties," but this is not shown or demonstrated by accompanying plans. (Draft EIR/EA, pp. 137-138.) Complicating matters the Draft EIR/EA does not

take into account the approved Retail Village Project plans nor the pending Fueling Station Project plans. We request that detailed intersection plans/drawings be provided in a revised Draft EIR/EA that is recirculated for public review and comment.

Further, the Draft EIR/EA states that land needed on the Properties for the Project would be for drainage improvements (trapezoidal ditch design criteria) between the proposed sidewalk and catch line. (Draft EIR/EA, p. 140.) Please explain the nature and scope of these drainage improvements and why they cannot be accommodated with a less burdensome underground drainage pipeline easement located here or elsewhere on the Properties. In order to understand the proposed drainage improvements and impacts to the Properties, the Location Hydraulics Study and Addendum must also be made available for public review and comment.

Response to Comment I140-2: The Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment included maps (referenced in Appendix H and accessible on the Caltrans project webpage) with key proposed design information that show existing and proposed right-of-way lines at each project intersection. Appendix J includes tables with estimated right-of-way acquisition (temporary and permanent) from adjacent properties to the state highway right-of-way anticipated to be necessary based on the preliminary plans. Tables 2.1.6.16 and 2.1.6.17 in Section 2.1.6, Relocations and Real Property, provide estimated property acquisitions by parcel at the State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road intersection for Alternatives 1 and 2. These data tables provide the estimated percentage of the affected parcels that would be potentially acquired.

In addition, the project design layouts in MicroStation software were presented at the three public hearings held during the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment public review period. Caltrans will coordinate with the County and other applicable jurisdictional land use agencies during the preparation of the final design for the selected preferred alternative of Alternative 1, Roundabouts. The roundabout designs will be refined from the preliminary plans presented in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, and right-of-way impacts will be addressed with the intention to minimize property impacts to the greatest degree feasible.

Table 2.1.1.1 in Section 2.1.1 includes the proposed retail village project. As noted in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, page 62, the proposed development projects in the vicinity that are listed in the table are based on best available information from the jurisdictional agencies at the time. The October 2023 application for the proposed fueling station development is herewith acknowledged. The Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment analyzed the proposed project alternatives on the existing environmental conditions as the baseline for the environmental analysis; the retail village project has an approval but is not constructed; the

fueling station project is in application stage and is not approved. This approach applied to all of the project's area of potential impacts, at each of the nine intersections. Approved but as yet to be constructed projects within the State Route 68 Corridor Improvements project's area of potential impact and adjacent thereto will be addressed as part of the final design and Right of Way phases of the project for the roundabouts as the preferred alternative.

The drainage improvements proposed under Alternative 1, Roundabouts, at Corral de Tierra Road would consist of curb and gutter along the southeast quadrant of the intersection. Roadway runoff would be collected via drainage inlets with minimum heights of 3 feet. To daylight an 18- to 24-inch-diameter pipe into a ditch, the minimum embankment height needed is 5 feet; the proposed embankment/ditch slopes behind the sidewalk are 3 to1 horizontal to vertical forward slopes and back slopes of 2 to1 horizontal to vertical. Per the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit issued to Caltrans, increases of 10,000 square feet of net new impervious surface area will require treatment; direct discharge into a waterway is not allowed. Alternative 2 (which was not selected as the preferred alternative) would have sheet flow as the drainage concept, no inlets, and allows bioswales and bio strips for treatment. The location hydraulic study addresses floodplain areas and impacts and does not address drainage plans; the latter were reviewed and vetted by Caltrans' Hydraulics engineering unit. Technical studies referenced in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment such as the Location Hydraulic study and the Addendum for the study were available during public review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment upon request, as noted in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, Appendix K.

Comment I140-3: 3. The Project Must Minimize Take Of The Properties To The Greatest Extent Possible To Allow For Economically Viable Use.

Based on the information provided in the Draft EIR/EA, Alternative 1 appears to take approximately one-fourth of the 0.68 acre Fueling Station Parcel. (Draft EIR/EA, p. 138) This would not allow for a commercially viable development on that parcel to proceed and would take all economically viable use of the Fueling Station Parcel.

Reviewing the very general plan provided in the Draft EIR/EA, it appears that Alternative 1 would interfere with the placement of the proposed fuel canopy and fuel tanks as part of the Fueling Station Project. (Draft EIR/EA, p. 21; Exhibit C.) Without a fueling canopy and tanks, the Fueling Station Project cannot proceed. The Alternative 1 design will have a significant adverse effect on the physical and financial viability of the Gas Station Project.

The Fueling Station Project was proposed to function in conjunction with the Retail Village Project with shared access and amenities. The Retail Village Project was planned and approved to have a right-in, right-out driveway

access on SR 68. (Exhibit A, pp. 1 and AR 64.) The Draft EIR/EA states that this access will be prohibited. (Draft EIR/EA, p. 140.) The Project also appears to significantly interfere with the required parking and drainage infrastructure for the approved Retail Village Project which constitutes a major deviation from that carefully designed project.

The Project further appears to conflict with Mitigation Measure 4 imposed on the Retail Village Project calling for the installation of perimeter landscaping berms to buffer the visibility of the project from the scenic corridors. (Exhibit A, pp. AR 7, 17-18, 30, and 43.) As such, the Project will have a significant adverse impact on the physical and financial viability of the approved Retail Village Project

The Fueling Station Project and Retail Village Project should be squarely considered and factored into your consideration of Project design and selection of a preferred alternative. While the Retail Village Project is listed a pending project in Table 2.1.1.1, the proposed Fueling Station Project is not and should be. More fundamentally, the Draft EIR/EA does not factor the plans for either of these commercial developments into the analysis of the Project or alternatives. Instead, the Draft EIR/EA states that “right-of-way need for either alternative design can inform potential land development and site planning” of the Properties. (Draft EIR/EA, p. 140.) This is not accurate. Instead, the right-of-way needed for the Project must reflect existing and pending approvals for the Properties. Please revise the analysis to reflect the existing and pending entitlements for the Properties and recirculate the Draft EIR/EA for review and comment.

Response to Comment I140-3: Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project (see Section 1.6). The roundabout design at the Corral de Tierra Road/State Route 68 location and the Laureles Grade and San Benancio Road intersection locations are being modified from a single-lane to a hybrid design (partial single lane and partial dual lane around the roundabout), as discussed in the same section. Preliminary designs for the hybrid roundabout at Corral de Tierra Road have been prepared and have also included modifications to the previously planned drainage infrastructure on the southeast corner proposed fuel station parcel. The planned drainage infrastructure includes inlets carrying runoff to the northeast quadrant of the intersection where a trapezoidal ditch would receive runoff, which would be treated and then released into an existing waterway. This adjustment substantively reduces the necessary right-of-way acquisition on APN 161-571-002 for the roundabout elements, from the previously identified 0.16 acre to 0.051 acre along the corner of the intersection and eastern periphery of the property. The fuel station project CADD (computer-aided design) files would be needed to confirm compatibility or resolve overlapping impacts with the hybrid roundabout design. In addition, the hybrid roundabout as preliminarily designed would not require any permanent right-of-way from APN 161-571-003 (part of the proposed Retail

Village project), a change from the single-lane roundabout design analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, for which an estimated 0.12 acre of the property along Corral de Tierra Road would have been necessary.

Caltrans will continue to coordinate with the County during the project final design phase when the plans for the roundabout will be further refined. Right-of-way for the preferred alternative will be addressed with the intention to minimize property impacts to the degree feasible.

Parcel 161-571-002 at the immediate southeast corner of State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road is prohibited from having entrance/exit driveways onto State Route 68, as provided per Caltrans' previous comments on the proposed development plans. However, the text on page 140 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment has been corrected in this Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact (see Section 2.1.6, discussion under Corral de Tierra Road-Cypress Church Drive after Table 2.1.6.17) to state that access to and from State Route 68 would be permitted onto parcel 161-571-003 (Retail Village project parcel) farther east. That parcel is approved for one right-in/right-out-only driveway, as included in the Retail Village project's conditions of approval.

Comment I140-4: The text on page 137 and Table 2.1.6.16 on page 138 of the Draft EIR/EA refer to APN Nos. 161-571-002 and 161-571-003 as "Undeveloped." Table 2.1.6.17 on page 139 of the Draft EIR/EA refers to APN No. 161-571-002 as "Vacant" and APN No. 161-571-003 as "Undeveloped." This is not accurate and should be revised to reflect the approved/entitled Retail Village Project and the pending Fueling Station Project. The Fueling Station Parcel was formerly improved with a service station and convenience store and those approvals run with the land. (See, e.g., Anza Parking Corp. v. City of Burlingame (1987) 195 Cal.App.3d 855 and Goat Hill Tavern v. City of Costa Mesa (1992) 6 Cal.App.4th 1519.) Moreover, an application has been submitted to the County to redevelop the parcel with a service station and convenience store of a similar size, nature, and configuration as a prior service station facility on the site. This is not raw, unentitled land as the Draft EIR/EA suggests.

Response to Comment I140-4: The existing land uses indicated in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment tables were sourced from LandVision property software and are currently undeveloped with no active, operating land uses. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are aware of the development approval for the Retail Village project, and pending application for the proposed fueling station, both of which have been addressed by Caltrans as part of prior communications with the County of Monterey regarding the potential development of the subject parcels. The existing physical conditions of properties adjacent to the State Route 68 corridor project area, and not future or proposed uses, is the

basis of analysis of potential environmental impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (reference: CEQA Guidelines Sections 15002(g) and 15382). As noted in response to comment I140-3, Caltrans will continue to coordinate with the County during the preparation of the project's final design phase for the proposed intersection improvements for the hybrid roundabout design at Corral de Tierra Road. Right-of-way for the preferred alternative will be addressed with the intention to minimize property impacts to the degree feasible.

Comment I140-5: The Draft EIR/EA refers to the remediation of the Fueling Station Parcel and states that Project design would "result in minimal encroachment upon these properties under Build Alternative 1 and avoid the gas station properties altogether under Build Alternative 2." (Draft EIR/EA, p. 248; see also Draft EIR/EA, p. 382.] As currently presented, Alternative 1 would result in the acquisition of approximately one-fourth of the Gas Station Parcel. This is not a minimal encroachment, as portrayed, and would undoubtedly result in significant adverse, unexamined impacts.

Response to Comment I140-5: The Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment examines the physical and indirect impacts of the proposed project on existing conditions, as noted in response I140-4. As discussed in response I140-3, the design of the roundabout has been modified to hybrid and the design with drainage system modifications has substantively reduced the previously anticipated portion in the corner of the property that would require acquisition, as the drainage facilities would be on the northeast quadrant of the intersection. During the final design phase of the State Route 68 project, Caltrans will coordinate with the County and adjacent property owners that may have property impacts from the highway project to minimize permanent and temporary impacts to offsite properties to the degree feasible.

Comment I140-6: In addition to resulting in substantially less take of the Fueling Station Parcel, Alternative 2 results in far greater delay savings than Alternative 1. (See Draft EIR/EA, pp. ix-x, 161-164) The traffic study prepared for the Fueling Station Project likewise shows that area intersections would operate at Level of Service ("LOS") F under cumulative conditions with Alternative 1 and acceptable LOS D or better conditions under cumulative conditions with Alternative 2. We ask that this information (in addition to consideration of Retail Village Project and Fueling Station Project plans) be considered by Caltrans in its selection of the preferred Project alternative.

Response to Comment I140-6: Section 2.1.9 (Traffic and Transportation) in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment concluded that Build Alternative 2 would have the greatest amount of delay savings through the project corridor compared with the No-Build Alternative and Alternative 1 (Roundabouts). Alternative 1, however, would provide significant delay savings (28 percent by 2045) over the No-Build Alternative in the afternoon peak period

(see Section 2.1.9, discussion under Daily Person Hours of Delay). It would also reduce the rate and severity of traffic collisions through the project corridor, which would be better compared to Alternative 2 as roundabout designs provide fewer potential conflict points than signalized intersections (also discussed in the Traffic and Transportation section).

Delay reduction on the state highway system is not the only performance measure the project team must consider: safety is the highest priority. The State is experiencing an increase in fatalities and serious injuries on the roadways. To reverse the trend, Caltrans is committing to reducing deaths and injuries on the state highway system by adopting the Safe System approach and reaffirms the vision of reaching zero fatalities and serious injuries on state highways by 2050. The project team must weigh operational, safety, and other environmental impacts of all the alternatives.

Senate Bill 743 (SB 743), signed into law in California in 2013, represents a significant shift in how transportation impacts are assessed for development projects. This bill replaces the traditional peak delay and Level of Service (LOS) metric with Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and/or Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay (DVHD) to better align with California's environmental goals. The change aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and traffic-related air pollution, encourage multimodal transportation systems. Therefore, Caltrans' Addendum to the original Traffic Operations Analysis Report for the project uses Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay and Daily Person Hours of Delay metrics for measuring traffic performance rather than the legacy Level of Service calculators.

As noted in responses to comments I140-4 and I140-5, the preferred alternative design (roundabouts) will be refined and adjacent planned developments that are approved will be addressed as part of the design refinements and through continued coordination between Caltrans, the County and property owners.

Comment I140-7: 4. The Approved Retail Village Project Plans Should Be Reflected In The Project Design, Including Access to State Route 68.

The Draft EIR/EA states that driveways to SR 68 to the Properties would be removed upon future property development. (Draft EIR/EA, p. 32; see also p. 140 [stating the Properties "would have access prohibited from State Route 68, and access would be from the east side of Corral de Tierra."].) This is not accurate. The Fueling Station Parcel currently has two driveways on SR 68 and two driveways on Corral de Tierra Road. While the Fueling Station Project is being designed with no access on SR 68, the Retail Village Project has long been planned and approved to have a right-in, right-out access to SR 68. (See Exhibit A, pp. 1 and AR 64.) As previously noted, the Retail Village Project was originally designed to have two driveway access points on SR 68. But in response to Caltrans's July 8, 2010 comment letter on the Retail Village Project EIR, the County conditioned the project to have a single

driveway access point on SR 68. Please revise this statement to reflect the approved Retail Village Project plans.

Along those lines, the two driveways immediately west of the SR 68/Corral de Tierra intersection are being preserved for right-in/right-out movements onto SR 68. [4] (Draft EIR/EA, p. 42.)

[4] Pages 137 and 139 of the Draft EIR/EA refer to an active service station on the southwest corner of SR 68 and Corral de Tierra Road. However, we understand that this service station recently closed.

Thus, it appears that accommodations are being made for that property in connection with the Project, but not for the Properties. (Draft EIR/EA, p. 31.) Please explain the basis for the differential and disparate treatment. And if all traffic from the Retail Village Project and Gas Station Project is being funneled onto Corral de Tierra Road in connection with the Project, the Draft EIR/EA needs to analyze the environmental impacts of a such a major change.

Response to Comment I140-7: The property on the southwest corner of the State Route 68/Corral de Tierra Road intersection has two existing driveways. Under the roundabout alternative (selected as the preferred alternative), the driveway closest to Corral de Tierra Road would be eliminated by the addition of a raised pavement shared bicycle/pedestrian path, retaining the other driveway entrance to the property farther west. On approach to the intersection, vehicles are slowing down; departing the intersection on the southeast side, traffic is accelerating, causing a higher potential for vehicle conflicts at driveway entrances/exits at the state highway. As noted in response to comment I140-4, Caltrans has previously commented on the Retail Village project designs and the County's conditions of approval for the development including the right-in/right-out driveway that would be permitted onto the Retail Village parcel farther east of the intersection.

Under Alternative 2, expanded signalized design, if it were selected, the two driveways at the gas station west of the intersection would have been restricted to right-in/right-out movements.

Comment I140-8: Further, the Retail Village Project approvals required landscape berms along the Project frontage, including SR 68. (See Exhibit A, pp. AR 7, 17-18, 30, and 43.) The Retail Village Project was also approved with required parking and drainage infrastructure along the site's Corral de Tierra and SR 68 frontages. But the Project proposes to acquire this property and install drainage ditches in this location. (Draft EIR/EA, p. 43 [noting that existing drainage culverts would be extended to daylight to the reconstructed ditches, as applicable].)

We also note that the Retail Village Project and the Fueling Station Project will likely include signage within 20 feet from the edge of the eastbound SR

68 roadway. This should be factored into Project plans as appropriate. (Draft EIR/EA, p. 43 [referring to a "clear recovery requirement of 20 feet from the edge of travelled way along the eastbound direction and construction of a 4-to-1 ratio embankment slope to maximum extent possible."].)

Thank you for your consideration of our client's views on this important matter. Please add the undersigned to the list of interested parties to receive notice(s) and updates on any further activity on the EIR/EA or the Project. Also, feel free to contact me or Eric Phelps at (831) 214-5362 with any questions regarding this correspondence.

Response to Comment I140-8: As discussed in response to comment I140-3, for the preferred alternative, hybrid roundabout impacts to the southeast corner property have been substantively reduced by redesigning the highway drainage infrastructure to be relocated to the northeast quadrant of the intersection. The reference in the comment to page 43 of the draft environmental document pertains to a 20-foot clear recovery zone noted in Table 1.7 with elements described for Alternative 2. A clear recovery zone would be required for Alternative 2, which would have speed limits of 55 miles per hour on State Route 68 when the signal phase is green. The roundabout (Alternative 1, preferred alternative) would not require the 20-foot clear recovery area within the planned fueling station parcel; speeds would be lower in the roundabouts (25 to 30 miles per hour) than a signalized intersection, and the alternative includes curb and gutter and sidewalk features with the roundabout that would not require the 20-foot clear recovery area. The highway right-of-way would be able to be set behind the sidewalk. The County may require other setbacks for the proposed development along the highway that would include landscaping, berms, signage and other development features to meet County development standards.

Commenter I141: Dwight Stump

Comment I141-1: Why is Caltrans and TAMC proposing 9 roundabouts as the preferred alternative when the DEIR states on page 7 that "The project proposes to improve bicycle and pedestrian access within the project corridor" , however roundabouts are being removed in the UK due to bicycle safety and operational failure and recent data and reports show clearly that roundabouts are unsafe (40% increase in the number of fatal or serious injuries) for bicyclists?

Recent reports are as follows:

An article from The Guardian in March 2015 titled "Traffic lights are so dictatorial…but are roundabouts on the way out? The UK is quietly replacing roundabouts with traffic lights" states "It's just begun. In the west of the city, the doughnut-shaped Cowgate roundabout is next to go, its "hole" filled with polystyrene blocks so they can build a new road over top with traffic lights.

The same is happening in other UK cities, which have decided that signal junctions are better for traffic flow and safer for cyclists."

An article published in VELO in March 2021 titled "Roundabouts suck for Cyclists" states "A 2008 study of 91 roundabouts in Flanders, Belgium showed that the installation of roundabouts led to a 27% increase in "bicyclist injury collisions" and an increase of more than 40% in the number of fatal or serious injury crashes involving cyclists. Meanwhile, a 2013 study of more than 300 roundabouts in Denmark found that the installation of roundabouts led to a 65% increase in bike crashes and a 40% increase in injuries."

If safety is so important, why is this data not being considered or addressed?

Response to Comment I141-1: According to the article cited, the Newcastle double-roundabout does not adhere to the design principles of modern roundabout design. As the article alluded to, "…the double-roundabout at Haddricks Mill in South Gosforth has achieved notoriety among cyclists for its blind spots, narrow lanes and confusing road markings." The roundabout design process includes checking the stopping sight distance on the approaches, stopping sight distance on circulatory roadway, sight distance to crosswalks, and intersection sight distance to eliminate blind spots for all users.

Also, the State Route 68 roundabouts will include a shared path for pedestrians and bicycles on the outer perimeter for improved safety for cyclists. The VELO article stated that the "Danish researchers found in 2013 that marked lanes within a roundabout increased bike crashes by 33% compared to a roundabout with a separated cycle path reduced crashes by 84% compared to roundabouts with no bike facilities."

Commenter I142: Barry Jones

Comment I142-1: Some of you know that I am a retired Chartered Civil and Chartered Municipal Engineer from the UK with highway design and construction experience relating to Motorways(freeways) and town(city) development, which of course includes roundabouts and signal junction design. In reviewing the proposed roundabout layout for Pasadera/Boots intersection in the DEIR, it is immediately apparent that the design of the main through route East/West is severely challenged and I would like to hear your response to the following design recommendations.

The fundamental issue is that the approach design to the roundabout from the east combines the current 3 lanes of traffic into one lane arriving at approach to the roundabout. Both the traffic wishing to turn left into Boots , which would be waiting at the signals at the same time as the through traffic, and the traffic that would be using the slip road/lane to turn right into the Pasadera Club and community, together with the westbound through traffic itself, is all squeezed into the single lane. Clearly the back up situation is obvious…. just by adding

the volumes..and then of course further back up will be caused by traffic yielding to cross/turning traffic from Pasadera and Boots Rd.

A similar layout needs to be adopted for the Eastbound traffic approaching the intersection during the PM Peak from Monterey. In the UK , if we were looking at a roundabout option, instead of a signal controlled one, for a similar intersection. (55mph, single carriageway, same peak/cross flows and collision data) we would have created 2 approach lanes.. probably 1000 - 1500ft long either side for through traffic. The roundabout itself would be designed for two lane width around the roundabout..by slightly increasing the ICD and reducing the central island diameter somewhat. Suitable exit width would be needed for both east and west sides…but there seems to be space to be able to do that.. We would also reduce the speed limit to 40mph at the 1500 ft points.

In addition, by moving the roundabout by about 100-150 feet east..a much better design can be created to handle the traffic, enable emergency response vehicles to navigate easily and also dramatically reduce the amount of services and utilities that have to be disturbed /rerouted with the current design. This could also potential preserve a lot of the existing landscaping and monuments at the entrance to The Club at Pasadera.

Response to Comment I142-1: The Traffic Operational Analysis Report considered the traffic volumes to determine the size of the roundabout for the 20-year design period. The analysis shows that a single-lane roundabout can accommodate the volume of traffic at this intersection. There will be queuing of traffic, but the roundabouts have the advantage of generating rolling queues where traffic will slow but, in most instances, not come to a complete stop. Required signage and flashing beacons as appropriate will be installed to give advance warning of queued traffic ahead.

Moving the roundabout 100 to 150 feet east will affect known environmental resources both to the north and south of State Route 68. South of State Route 68, a regulated floodway flows west and parallel to State Route 68 and crosses under Boots Road, then flows north under State Route 68 and continues parallel and to the west. The design of the roundabout in that area intends to minimize impacts to this resource.

Micro-simulation analysis of the selected design alternative shows Pasadera having comparable delay during the morning and evening peak periods as the next two single-lane roundabouts at York and Ragsdale. Turning traffic and side street volumes were not found to be high enough to justify expanding the roundabout design.

Comment I142-2: Also as you may know, I am a staunch supporter of an AI Controlled Signal Solution for the entire corridor, but if you have to include roundabout design as an integral part of the next version of EIR, I would be

happy to share my experience, and discuss the ideas/inputs in more detail. I look very much look forward to hearing from your team.

Response to Comment I142-2: Your preference regarding implementing AI signal control technology is appreciated and has been shared with the project team. Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI controlled signals and a pilot project planned for implementation on an interim basis.

Commenter I143: James Hippe

Comment I143-1: I am writing on behalf of Concert Golf Partners the new owners of the The Club At Pasadera ("TCAP") to make our views known regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report - Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvement Plan 0518000061.(DEIR")

TCAP was previously known as Pasadera Golf and Country Club ("PGCC") therefore references to PGCC in the DEIR should be changed to TCAP. The acquisition of TCAP is Concert Golf's entry into the California market, another significant step forward in our mission to preserve and enhance premier private country clubs across the United States. Concert Golf now has 33 private clubs in its portfolio and is committed to maintaining TCAP's unique culture, legacy and presence, furthering its status as one of the world's premier clubs. TCAP is already recognized as a premier destination site for weddings on the Monterey Peninsula, ranking second in the region after Pebble Beach, for ceremonies hosted each year. We rely heavily on Highway 68 corridor for safe and easy access of members, guests, and international visitors.

Entry to TCAP relies exclusively on the front entrance at Pasadera Drive for ingress into and egress from the Club facilities. The proposed project will substantially impact the operations of the front entrance, interfere with TCAP property rights, subject our members, local/out of town/international visitors and service vehicles to potentially severe safety issues all resulting in a major impact on TCAP business. i.

Concert has specific concerns about the project, with respect to both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2, in the following areas: (1) encroachment on private property rights, (2) Wells and water/drainage services not identified in DEIR (3) Impact on Business (4) safety issues, (5) traffic flow, and (6) noise levels.

Response to Comment I143-1: References to the Pasadera Golf and Country Club have been revised in this final environmental document to The Club At Pasadera.

Regarding the concerns raised in the comment about the proposed project impacting the operations of the front entrance of the property, encroachment and private property rights, impacts on water and drainage infrastructure services, business, safety, traffic flow and noise, refer to responses to comments I143-2 through I143-10 below.

Comment I143-2:▪ As outlined on the attached response which includes our issues, our major concerns are:

Encroachment on TCAP property rights. Substantial sums of money have been invested by previous ownership together with the Pasadera HOA in creating and maintaining an efficient and aesthetically pleasing entrance to Pasadera through Pasadera Dr. and also along the southern boundary to our property adjacent to Highway 68. The visual impact of the entrance was a major contributing factor in the decision for Concert to acquire TCAP. If TAMC and Caltrans were to implement either Alternative 1 or Alternative 2 as outlined in the DEIR, they would destroy the signature monument walls, dig up a sizable portion of Pasadera Drive, cause realignment of the Service Vehicle Road, which enables large and oversize trucks and emergency vehicles to enter the Property, plus require repositioning of the road to the Maintenance Facility and Wells. Concert is opposed to the taking of our private property.

Response to Comment I143-2: Encroachment: Neither Build Alternative will impact the service road or require its repositioning. The project will require acquisition of property for either Build Alternative option, but the preferred alternative that was selected for the project moving forward to final design is Alternative 1, roundabouts, as discussed in Section 1.6. The Pasadera entry monuments will be impacted because the roundabout improvements will require their removal and/or relocation. Just compensation for any private developments within the area of right-of-way need for highway improvements will be offered/negotiated with the private landowner during the property acquisition process undertaken in the final design phase.

Comment I143-3: ▪ Wells/services that are not identified in the DEIR. Waterlines and Wells on TCAP property have been identified as missing from the Area of Impact on both alternatives.

The main well and water line is in the Area Of Impact. This water line supplies all the water for the golf course irrigation and water features. It appears that the proximity of the roundabout location and construction activities will be directly on top of the well site. Any resultant disturbance to the wells and/or puncturing or breaking of this main water line would eliminate our ability to water the whole golf course, causing the course to die and an extreme financial cost to regrow the golf course as well as lost business of Membership Sales along with wedding and event sales. Indeed such an incident would cost Concert millions of dollars in repairs and to regrow the course in addition to millions of dollars in lost revenue. In addition if such a situation arose, housing values would reduce substantially. Information regarding the location of these pipelines and wells are in the Comments section.

Response to Comment I143-3: The area of potential impact shown on the Caltrans preliminary plans is an environmental study area and does not

necessarily indicate that the resources within that area are impacted. The permanent physical impacts associated with the project would be contained within the proposed state highway right-of-way. Review of the map provided by the Pasadera Homeowners Association does not reveal impacts to subsurface facilities such as wells and water lines. Standard practice with all roadway improvement projects is the need to positively locate subsurface utilities to determine conflicts and to reconfigure drainage culvert systems to ensure that storm runoff is adequately managed. Refer to response to comment I127-1.

Comment I143-4: ▪ Impact on Business . Concert will be holding more Weddings, functions and much larger events , more often than during TCAP ownership, increasing the frequency of high cross traffic activity at the intersection. This will be exacerbated when our events coincide with those of Laguna Seca Raceway, which too are increasing in number and size, plus of course the significantly higher traffic volumes in the Spring/Summer seasons.

▪ Our Golfing events generally start before 9am and often end late afternoon, so the entry/exit flows will add to the normal commuter volumes during peak AM and PM periods. This will be particularly impactful during the actual work at the Pasadera intersection but also during any construction anywhere along the Highway 68 corridor during what is scheduled to be at least 4 year period

▪ Weddings, Large outside events and Curb appeal will be affected by the construction activities and the removal of entrance landscaping, especially for out of town prospective clients for destination weddings, causing a loss of substantial business. The ability to attract Destination Weddings is a key part of the Concert business model and reason for purchasing TCAP

Response to Comment I143-4: Impact to wedding and golf business: The project will not eliminate access to the wedding venue. During Right of Way negotiations, the grantor will have the opportunity to demonstrate business impacts that have materialized or will materialize.

Comment I143-5: ▪ Alternative 1 Roundabout lacks a Westbound merger lane. TCAP members, and visitors can currently access Highway 68 West with an existing merger lane without safety or traffic flow issues. The proposed plan eliminates this merger lane, making it more difficult and dangerous for drivers from leaving TCAP and the Maintenance Road to gain access to Highway 68 West.

Response to Comment I143-5: Regarding the westbound merger lane, refer to response to comment O4-1b.

Comment I143-6: ▪ Reduction and shortening of exit lanes in the roundabout proposal will cause backup to Pasadera Gatehouse. The reduction from two exit lanes to one exit lane (from the Gatehouse to Highway 68) and

shortening of these lanes by over 80 feet, will require traffic leaving Pasadera and turning East to combine with the West-traveling traffic in a single line. This will cause regular backups reaching the Gatehouse and impede both entry to the Service road and exit from the Maintenance Road. The heavy stream of Highway 68 Westbound traffic, which we fear will not be eager to yield to traffic entering the roundabout, will make it more difficult and dangerous for vehicles to exit the community.

Response to Comment I143-6: Regarding potential impact to the Pasadera community gatehouse, refer to responses to comments O4-1c and O4-3.

Comment I143-7: ▪ Alternative 2 creates a four-way highway. While the alternate option to expand the signalized intersection with two straight through lanes in each direction provides the same entry/exit capabilities to TCAP as the existing configuration, the additional lanes will create a four-lane highway at the intersection, creating an increased number of vehicles speeding through the intersection. This will exacerbate the risk of collisions and substantially increase highway noise. Concert requests that a reduction of the 55-mph speed limit to 40 mph through the four-lane section would help improve safety considerably and also reduce the increase in noise levels compared to two lanes traveling at 55 mph.

Response to Comment I143-7: Regarding Alternative 2 widening and request for reduced speeds, refer to response to comment O4-1f.

Comment I143-8: ▪ Signalized intersection option lacks future AI technology benefits. The plan appears to be short-sighted as it doesn't incorporate currently available or future AI technology-based systems designed for traffic management.

Response to Comment I143-8: Regarding the suggestion of an AI signal control system, refer to response to comment I44-1, which also discusses a planned pilot project to implement AI Traffic Signal Control technology on an interim basis.

Comment I143-9: ▪ Emergency Response Times. Concert are aware of the District Fire Chief's letter 1/2/24 and supports his comments, concerns and recommendations regarding the increases in Emergency Response times that both Alternatives may create.

Response to Comment I143-9: Regarding emergency response times, refer to response to comment A2-1.

Comment I143-10: In conclusion, Concert opposes both Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. Both alternatives are very expensive and entail numerous adverse effects, including the extensive taking of private property, elevated safety risks, increased emissions and noise pollution, and increased traffic impacting TCAP's members, visitors and business. The downsides far outweigh the limited goal of

shaving time off commutes that occur for only a couple hours per day five days a week. We believe that the massive project that TAMC/Caltrans has designed is an over reaction to trying to achieve that goal.

As an alternative approach, Concert urges TAMC and Caltrans to implement AI-controlled adaptive signals at Pasadera Drive and throughout the Highway 68 corridor. We understand they can be installed for a fraction of the cost of the larger project and will produce tangible benefits meeting your goals without unduly burdening TCAP business, members and guests. A trial project makes eminent sense.

Attached comments (Caltrans note: the comments attached to the email from Concert Golf Partners, James Hippe, are duplicated in Comment I127):

Highway 68 Pasadera Drive/Boots Road Intersection.

Wells/Services that are not identified in the DEIR

1. Storm Drainage pipes are present flowing from i) the pond at Hole 10 to the culvert west of the entrance to Pasadera Drive.. and ii) from the east side of the Pasadera Drive entrance. under Pasadera Drive to the culvert.

2. Sewer drainage pipes are also present in the Area of Impact and under Pasadera Drive roadway entrance from the Sewer Plant to sewer pump number 2 located west of the entrance

3. The Old Bishop Ranch well and pumping station is located just east of Pasadera Drive near the entrance. Both are active and in use.

4. The CalAm well is located on the west side of Pasadera Drive.

5.Waterlines run between the 2 wells and under Pasadera Drive which is Pasadera HOA controlled land.

6.Wells are our primary source of water for the golf course and essential to irrigation.

7. Several of the pipes also flow under the Pasadera HOA controlled land which would have to be disturbed during construction of either Alternative.

8. These copies of parts of old diagrammatic drawings and photograph showing the locations of pipes and wells are provided in good faith. Neither TCAP nor Pasadera HOA can verify or be held responsible for their accuracy.

Response to Comment I143-10: Regarding request to implement AI-controlled adaptive signals refer to response to comment I44-1 which also provides information about an interim AI traffic signal control pilot project.

Regarding extensive taking of private property, elevated safety risks, refer to responses to comments referenced herein I143-2 through 9.

Regarding the concerns about the project causing increased emissions, noise pollution, and increased traffic impacting members, visitors and business activities at The Club At Pasadera, the project is not a capacity-increasing project as discussed in Sections 2.1.4, Growth, and 2.1.9, Traffic and Transportation (refer to discussion under Analysis Thresholds: Level of Service and Vehicle Miles Traveled Under Senate Bill 743 in Section 2.1.9). Therefore, the project would not facilitate additional volumes of traffic onto the project corridor or provide additional accessibility to the highway corridor that would otherwise cause additional traffic-related noise and emissions.

Commenter I144: Mike Novo

Comment I144-1: I am writing this letter speaking for myself, not any organization. I have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and am submitting comments based on the project description as well as the requirements for a range of alternatives to the project.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

One of the purposes for this project, stated in the DEIR, is to “improve bicycle and pedestrian access within the project corridor.” I applaud this as a goal and concur that roundabouts, if constructed correctly with bicycle and pedestrian safety in mind, can improve access, and hopefully safety as a result. A reduction in “conflict points” as pointed out in the DEIR is a plus, but alone does not improve safety. What is not quite clear in the project description is whether each roundabout will be designed with that safety concept in mind, and that bicycle and pedestrian safety is being given equal treatment to traffic flow. Have you considered providing an analysis of bicycle and pedestrian safety along the entire project corridor to ensure safe travels for bicyclists not just at project intersections? Also, as Caltrans gets into final design, bicycle and pedestrian safety should be provided equal weight to vehicular travel efficiency.

As pointed out in the DEIR, Highway 68 does not currently meet standards for bicycle safety, with areas of the segment not providing adequate shoulder width to meet Caltrans standards. In addition to lack of clarity on whether the roundabouts will provide adequate design for bicyclist’s safety, why does the project description not include adequate bicycle lanes or shoulder width along the entire corridor? For the roundabouts themselves, placing bicyclists and pedestrians on the same adjacent path for roundabouts is a safety issue. It is not clear that the option for bicyclists using the travel lane will be designed with bicyclist safety in mind, such as adequate width, clear identification of a path of travel for bikes and speed control through proper design.

The reason I raise these issues in the context of a DEIR is that environmental impacts must be analyzed for the project and disclosed to the public and decision makers. If the project needs to be redesigned to meet Caltrans' design standards for pedestrians and bicyclists, that could change the footprint of the project, meaning that the environmental analysis would have missed potential impacts of that adjusted footprint. If final design is in place, is there adequate design in the current Project Description to ensure the safety of bicyclists using the vehicle travel lanes? If not, you should ensure that alternatives and mitigation are provided to reduce or avoid impacts where feasible, and consider providing that level of detail to the public so they can be assured no additional environmental impact will occur from later design changes.

Response to Comment I144-1: Caltrans has adopted Complete Streets analysis for each project that is under development and study. The purpose and need for this particular project study are limited to the intersections along the corridor. As stated in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment, the State Route 68 Scenic Highway Plan (2017) identified corridor concept and associated infrastructure improvements that would best meet both local and regional goals, while providing the highest return on investment of limited regional transportation funding for the next 20 years. Phase 2 of the plan developed and evaluated concepts to determine the most suitable options for affordable mid-term operational improvements.

As future projects along the corridor are developed, the segments of State Route 68 that were not improved by this project are required to provide bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Currently, shoulders are the means by which pedestrians and bicyclists use the project stretch of State Route 68. A separate nonmotorized path is a feature of the roundabouts, though it is limited between crosswalks where pedestrians and bicyclists will use the existing State Route 68 shoulders. Because the project improvements focus on the improving the designs of the nine project intersections for traffic flow as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities, a separate nonmotorized path on the highway segments between intersection locations is not included in the project.

Comment I144-2: Alternatives under the California Environmental Quality Act

If I understand how the DEIR is constructed, the Project is either one of two alternatives presented in the document and analyzed. Case law discusses how this can be done properly. I did not analyze the document for that consistency; however, I did not find an Alternatives Analysis, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). If I missed where that analysis can be found, please let me know.

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.6 requires that a DEIR "describe a range of reasonable alternatives" that attains most of the project objectives "but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project." That

section also requires that such a range of alternatives be analyzed in the DEIR. The current analysis seems to only include a No-Build Alternative. That does not meet the test for a “range of alternatives” meaning the DEIR does not meet the requirements of CEQA on this topic, including Guidelines subsections 15126.6 (c) and (d).

Response to Comment I144-2: On page vii, the table presenting the Summary of Potential Impacts of Alternatives provides a comparison of the environmental impacts of each alternative. The comparison of impacts is also discussed starting in Section 1.5, which provides a comparison of the alternatives developed for analysis based on the project purpose and need, cost, and environmental considerations. More detailed discussion comparing the impacts between the alternatives is provided in Chapter 2 under each specific topic area.

Section 1.5 explains the evaluation and elimination process that was undertaken for the development of the alternatives that were ultimately identified that best met the criteria for evaluation. Section 1.7 describes the alternatives that were discontinued from further consideration and the reasons why. A reasonable range of alternative designs was considered for the proposed corridor improvements, and the two Build Alternatives and the No-Build Alternative were assessed at the same level of detail.

Commenter I145: Dwight Stump

Comments I145-1 a) through k): Why has Caltrans and TAMC not considered and evaluated as a viable alternative for the Hwy 68 project, Artificial Intelligence (AI) controlled signals when:

Comment I145-1a) AI can be installed at all 9 of the intersections for a cost of only $440,000, while the 9 roundabouts will cost over $200 Million.

Comment I145-1b) AI will use the current Opticom system at each intersection which allows the fire departments to turn the lights green in the direction that they are traveling and thus allow the fire trucks to maintain highway speeds through the intersections, while the 9 roundabouts will add at least 5 minutes (32 seconds per roundabout) to their emergency response times according to the Monterey County Regional Fire District, and that is assuming that the roundabouts are not clogged with drivers that are unfamiliar with exiting them in an emergency.

I145-1c) AI can be installed without any traffic disruption and without any impact to the environment or need for an Environmental Impact Report since it can use the existing intersections and the current signal lights, while the 9 roundabouts will require acquisition of land at each intersection, impact the environment significantly and cause years of extreme traffic congestion while the roundabouts are being built and commuters having no other option for travel.

Comment l145-1d) AI has been shown to decrease traffic congestion by 25-40%, while TAMC says that 9 roundabouts will only reduce congestion by 5 minutes (13%) in the PM peak commute but actually increase commute time in the non-peak commute (20 hrs/day) by causing all vehicles to slow to 15 mph, 9 time in 8 miles.

Comment l145-1e) AI has decreased vehicle emissions by 20% by optimizing traffic flow in real time, while 9 roundabouts will increase emissions by forcing all 30,000 vehicles per day to slow to at least 15 mph and then accelerate to 55 mph, 9 times in 8 miles and studies have shown that emissions from vehicle acceleration are 5-10 times more that emissions from idling and the only idling that the roundabouts claim to reduce is the 5 minutes in the PM commute.

Comment l145-1f) AI can monitor actual traffic in real time, communicate between intersections and adjust the signals accordingly to provide efficient flow where and when it is needed most, thus decreasing congestion, while the single lane roundabouts are a permanent physical structure that cannot adapt in any way to changing traffic patterns during the day or adapt to unusual traffic challenges like Laguna Seca events.

Comment l145-1g) AI can adapt and be upgraded as technology evolves and traffic increases and done so without any traffic disruption, while roundabouts are permanent structures that cannot adapt to anything without major construction demolition and rebuild which will cause even more congestion during the process.

Comment l145-1h) AI can adapt better to changes along Hwy 68, such as airport expansion or additional housing being built since it can be programed for those changes including addition of more lanes at an intersection, while roundabouts are physical structures that cannot be changed without major demolition and construction.

Comment l145-1i) AI will move traffic efficiently and not increase the number of times vehicles are required to slow down, thus decreasing the chance of rear end collisions which comprise 70% of the current collisions on this stretch of Hwy 68, while 9 roundabouts will force all vehicles to slow down to 15 mph or stop to yield to cross traffic, 9 times over 8 miles, 24/7, 365 day per year which increases the potential of more rear end collisions.

Comment l145-1j) AI adapts to dominate traffic flows on the main line which is the case on Hwy 68 where that traffic volume is much greater that any side road traffic, while roundabouts work best in situations where traffic volume is balance in all four directions which is definitely not the case on Hwy 68. In non-balanced flows, traffic from the side streets has difficulty in entering the roundabout since needing to yield to the main flow.

Comment I145-1k) AI uses existing signals which are very familiar to the driving public, while roundabouts are very new and challenging to many drivers, both local and out of town, thus they will not operate as the Caltrans computer simulation does and will not function as planned.

Will Caltrans please address each of these comparisons between AI and Roundabouts and show why 9 roundabouts are better than AI controlled signals and explain why Caltrans and TAMC have not even evaluated AI and why it is not logical to hold off on the roundabouts until an evaluation is done?

Responses to Comments I145 a through k: Refer to response to comment I44-1 in addition to the additional responses below.

Response to Comment I145-1a: The cost of alternative methods to achieve the project purpose and need is only one of multiple factors considered in selecting an improvement design to implement; as noted previously in response to comment I44-1, the AI signal control method would not meet all or most of the project objectives for the 20-year design horizon of the project. However, a separate pilot project to install AI is proposed.

Response to Comment I145-1b: Refer to response to comment A2-1 regarding emergency vehicle navigation and response times with roundabouts.

Response to Comment I145-1c: As discussed in responses to comments I44-1 and I44-6, analysis in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report concluded that installation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control technology would also require construction of auxiliary through lanes at the intersections to accommodate traffic volumes under the 20-year horizon (2045) conditions. Therefore, AI signal control alone would not improve intersection operations by reducing traffic delay to meet the 20-year design horizon. The most updated benefit-cost ratios are less for Alternative 2 than for Alternative 1, meaning that Alternative 1 has a greater benefit versus cost than Alternative 2. Also, Alternative 1 was found to better meet the safety improvement component of the project's purpose and need.

Caltrans District 5 Traffic Operations was provided conceptual approval for the pilot use of AI controllers to implement Adaptive Traffic Signal Control, and further discussions took place with regard to potential funding for procurement of the firmware to support Adaptive Traffic Signal Control. Discussions and approval shifted to review of existing traffic data, existing infrastructure, and firmware compatibility to support the pilot project. Regular meetings between TAMC and District 5 Traffic Operations took place for implementation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control at signalized intersections within the State Route 68 project corridor. Implementation at these intersections provides the ability to best implement, make adequate observations, adjustments and learn lessons from an engineering and traffic operations perspective for installation at additional intersections along the

corridor. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are currently moving forward with the pilot project to procure, install, and use Adaptive Traffic Signal Control on the project corridor as an interim solution. The pilot project is currently scheduled to run for 5 years.

Response to Comment I145-1d: As addressed in Section 2.1.9, Tables 2.1.9 .9 and 2.1.9.10, the roundabouts are forecast to reduce delay in the project corridor by 28 percent over the No Build Alternative for 2045. In addition, roundabouts would improve safety at the intersections with fewer conflict points (see Figure 2.1.9.1, and Roundabout Traffic Safety discussion in Section 2.1.9). The roundabouts (preferred alternative) with slower speeds and fewer conflict points than signalized intersections better meets the project purpose of reducing the likelihood and severity of collisions on State Route 68 compared to signalized intersections.

Response to Comment I145-1e: Alternative 1, Roundabouts, will not increase greenhouse gas emissions overall. At signalized intersections, a large percentage of the vehicles would come to a dead stop (red phase during the higher volume periods), idle, then accelerate to full speed from 0 miles per hour. At roundabouts, accelerating after slowing to 15 to 20 miles per hour through the roundabout in most instances not requiring stopping, generally causes less emissions than accelerating from a full stop.

As discussed in Section 2.2.6, Air Quality (Environmental Consequences, Build Alternatives discussion), roundabouts would likely reduce traffic congestion and related vehicle idling so that overall air quality would be improved. Under the No-Build Alternative (retaining the existing signalized intersections without improvements), traffic delays and associated bottlenecks would continue during peak traffic periods, overall average travel speed through the corridor would continue to slow, and vehicles would likely use additional fuel while idling and accelerating in stop-and-go traffic.

Caltrans' analyses in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report and Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum show that constructing roundabouts at specified locations within the project corridor will reduce delay during peak hours when compared to the No-Build Alternative.

Roundabouts are an effective tool for improving traffic flow and minimizing delays. Unlike traditional signalized intersections, roundabouts eliminate the need for vehicles to idle at red lights. By facilitating continuous traffic movement, they substantially reduce unnecessary stops, starts, and idle time, which are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions.

Studies have shown that converting a signalized intersection to a roundabout can lead to a significant decrease in fuel consumption and associated emissions, including carbon dioxide (CO2), a primary greenhouse gas. In

some cases, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions have been estimated at up to 30 percent, depending on traffic volumes and patterns.

The project purpose and needs also include safety improvements. The safety benefit for the Expanded Signalized Intersection option (Alternative 2) was not able to be determined. Roundabouts contribute to broader environmental goals by enhancing operational efficiency and promoting safer, calmer traffic conditions. These factors align with our agency's mission to create a more sustainable and resilient transportation network while addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

References:

https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Impacts_of_Roundabouts_on_Passenger_Vehicle_Use_and_Greenhouse_Gas_Emissions_Policy_Brief_0.pdf

https://www.dot.ny.gov/main/roundabouts/files/Emissions_Reduction.pdf

Response to Comment l145-1f through h: Alternative 1 is projected to reduce daily vehicle hours of delay by 28 percent compared to the No-Build Alternative. Alternative 1 was also chosen because the safety benefits of roundabouts addressed the safety improvement components of the project's purpose and need, as roundabouts reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions compared to signalized intersections.

The analysis of the Expanded Signalized Intersection option (Alternative 2) in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report showed that the Adaptive System Traffic Control alone did not improve operations at the signalized intersections and are expected to increase delay and queuing for the 20-year horizon conditions without the construction of auxiliary through lanes. Caltrans has examined Alternative 2, and the benefit-cost ratios using the most updated information show that Alternative 2 has a lower benefit-cost ratio than Alternative 1.

Response to Comment l145i: By design, roundabouts promote continuous traffic flow by compelling each vehicle to slow every time it enters the roundabout. This consistency with needing to slow down, along with advance warning signs, helps drivers anticipate the need to reduce speed as they approach the roundabout. This expectation of needing to reduce speed can help mitigate the conditions that lead to frequent rear-end collisions such as reducing instances of sudden stops caused by red lights at signalized intersections. The reduction in speed required to safely traverse the roundabout also helps to lower the risk of high-speed rear-end collisions, which tend to be more severe.

Alternative 2 with advanced adaptive signal control and enhanced lane configurations would have greater daily hours of vehicle delay savings than Alternative 1. However, the updated Alternative 1 will still reduce daily hours

of vehicle delay by approximately 28 percent compared to the No-Build for the 20-year horizon design conditions and have the added advantage of better meeting the second purpose of the project to reduce the rate and severity of collisions in the corridor. Also, the most updated benefit-cost ratios are less for Alternative 2 than for Alternative 1, meaning that Alternative 1 has a greater benefit versus cost than Alternative 2.

Response to Comment I145-1j: Traffic from cross-streets that intersect State Route 68 will enter the roundabouts (the selected preferred alternative) by merging into gaps in circulating traffic in the roundabout circle. Vehicle speeds entering and rounding through the circle are low by design (15 to 20 miles per hour for single-lane roundabouts), which provides a higher degree of safety by reducing the frequency and severity of collisions compared with cross-traffic signalized intersections.

Regarding less expensive options for improving traffic operations in the project corridor, the suggestion by commenters for installation of AI controlled signal system technology as an alternative to roundabouts or expanded signalized intersections is addressed in response to comment I44-1.

Response to Comment I145k: Regarding how to drive through roundabouts, refer to responses to comments I24-1, I50-1, I54-1, and I123-1. Roundabouts may cause initial confusion when they are first opened to traffic as would be the case of any intersection control changes (i.e., two-way stop-control to all-way stop or traffic signal). However, they are a significant advancement in traffic management and safety. Roundabouts are designed to facilitate a continuous flow of traffic, reducing the stop-and-go situations common at traditional intersections. This not only minimizes congestion but also substantially lowers the risk of severe accidents. By requiring vehicles to enter at reduced speeds and travel in one direction, roundabouts effectively eliminate the chances of high-speed, right-angle, and head-on collisions, making them a safer alternative for both drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians when designed properly.

The analysis of the Expanded Signalized Intersection option (Alternative 2) in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report showed that the Adaptive System Traffic Control alone did not improve operations at the signalized intersections and are expected to increase delay and queuing for the 20-year horizon conditions without the construction of auxiliary through lanes. Caltrans has examined Alternative 2, and the benefit-cost ratios using the most updated information show that Alternative 2 has a lower benefit-cost ratio than Alternative 1.

Commenter I146: Sheri Hauswirth

Comment I146-1: We feel you should stop the installation of the 9 roundabouts on Hwy. 68 & install AI Signal Controllers instead. It will be more cost effective & can be completed in a much shorter time frame. We have

lived in Toro Park for 35 years & back up to Hwy. 68. Our community has had an ongoing traffic issue on Portola Drive for 15+ years that will probably not get fixed until the Hwy. 68 problem gets fixed. Why are you not even considering the AI signal light controllers? We need something done now not in 8-10 years!!! Please distribute this to each of the 17 voting members.

Bob & Sheri Hauswirth

Response to Comment I146-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI signal control and the proposed pilot program. Refer to response to comment O2-2 regarding the pilot program implemented to prevent cut-through traffic in the Toro Park/Portola neighborhood.

Commenter I147: Warren Lyons

Comment I147-1: I am a resident of Monterey who lives near Highway 68. It has come to my intention that there are preliminary plans to build more than 1300 units across Highway 68 from the airport.

I believe that any such construction would contradict the conclusions reached in the report to improve Highway 68. Not only would it significantly increase traffic on the highway but the construction would also reduce the open space which, I believe, it was the desire of the Highway 68 Committee to preserve.

I would like to be included on any emails or other communications with respect to your involvement with this proposed project.

Response to Comment I147-1: Refer to response to comment I36-1 regarding potential land use development near the Olmsted Road intersection with State Route 68.

Commenter I148: Dwight Stump on behalf of Diane Gibeau, Myrna (no last name provided), Thomas R. Lukes, Audry (no last name provided), Norm Yop, Jerry Wilkinson, Elisabeth M. Billingsley, Vida Vescera, Les Hamilton, Diane Tibbs, Beth Mazerik, and Bev (no last name provided)

Comment I148-1: Please add these comments to the Questions and Comments to address since they were sent in as comments to the website, 9roundabouts.com and should really be addressed by Caltrans. Thank you.

My vote is no roundabouts !

This is an outrageous expense and possibly dangerous to emergency response. Listen to the public since we are the ones having to pay. You may set yourself up for a lawsuit besides by endangering the public. Just can't believe this is being promoted for such a small amount of miles. Caltrans would be helping the public much more with many more needed projects

Thank you,

Diane Gibeau

Response to Comment I148-1: Your opposition to Alternative 1, Roundabouts, is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project because it best accomplishes the purposes of the project including reduction of travel time delay and frequency and severity of traffic collisions. Refer to Section 1.6 of this document for further discussion. The No-Build Alternative (no action taken) would see no improvements to traffic operations in the 20-year design horizon (i.e., the No-Build Alternative would not yield any reduction in travel delay along the 9-mile segment of State Route 68 in the project limits), whereas roundabouts are projected to reduce delay by 28 percent by year 2045 as discussed in Section 2.1.9. The roundabouts would also reduce the number of potential traffic conflict points compared to signalized intersections.

Regarding emergency response through roundabouts, refer to response to comment A2-1. Caltrans acknowledges that emergency vehicles will need to slow down to navigate each roundabout, which could increase response times. It should be noted that, based on field observations, emergency vehicles have been known to slow to pass through signalized intersections to ensure that vehicles on cross streets yield.

Comment I148-2: Good points. The AI solution seems a very reasonable alternative – without even considering that it will cost much less and can be altered if needed. Roundabouts are extremely expensive with no option to make corrections after the fact. Plus AI could be installed in much less time with much less disruption to traffic during the installation process. I can't even imagine the delays and disruptions to traffic flow that roundabout construction would cause during the construction period. Roundabouts should NOT be constructed on Hwy 68.

Myrna

Response to Comment I148-2: Refer to response to comment I44-1 and other responses to comments herein pertaining to suggested AI signal controls instead of roundabouts, and the planned interim AI pilot project.

Comment I148-3: In reply to Vida Vescera.

Greetings,

I see that you are considering roundabouts in nine locations. In addition, some are suggesting Ai controlled intersections for a quarter of the cost and the roundabout construction would not start until 2028.

My suggestion:

1. Install AI controlled lights at San Benancio and Corral de Tierra
2. If it is successful, do the same at Laureles Rd.
3. This alone should solve the congestion proble.

Note: do not wait until 2028. If the delay is because of financing, the use of AI lights are much cheaper and should allow you to start immediately.

Once the two intersections (item 1) are completed, you will know how to proceed. But, more importantly, you can take action this year not in 2028.

Thomas R. Lukes
Retired architect

Response to Comment I148-3: Refer to response to comment I44-1 and other responses to comments herein pertaining to suggested AI signal controls instead of roundabouts, and the planned interim AI pilot project.

Comment I148-4: I do have concerns about how exiting our church property after a service will be impacted. Having to wait for a thoughtful driver to let you merge could take several minutes, then multiply that by over 100 cars waiting. Secondly, this is a lot of money to spend when less expensive options are available . Why can they not try the less expensive options first on a few of the areas and get a proper feel for how it will help our traffic problem in general. Again a lot of money for no guarantee it will even work.

Audry

Response to Comment I148-4: Traffic from cross-streets that intersect State Route 68 will enter the roundabouts (the selected preferred alternative) by merging into gaps in circulating traffic in the roundabout circle. Vehicle speeds entering and rounding through the circle are low by design (15 to 20 miles per hour for single-lane roundabouts), which provides a higher degree of safety by reducing the frequency and severity of collisions compared with cross-traffic signalized intersections.

Regarding less expensive options for improving traffic operations in the project corridor, the suggestion by commenters for installation of AI controlled signal system technology as an alternative to roundabouts or expanded signalized intersections is addressed in response to comment I44-1.

Comment I148-5: This crazy proposed project is just another ill-conceived bureaucrat boondoggle that is the result of consultant group-think..Exactly how the California High Speed Train to NOWHERE got started..CalTrans and TAMC members do not do their homework and rely on false data, or worse, don’t seek accurate data on alternatives..They’re not doing their jobs..Thanks

to Mr Dwight Stump for his tireless work on the AI alternative and shining light on this silly waste of money.

Norm Yop

Response to Comment I148-5: Refer to response to comment I44-1 and other responses to comments herein pertaining to suggested AI signal controls instead of roundabouts, and the planned interim pilot project.

Comment I148-6: At peak traffic periods vehicles wanting to get onto route 68 from san benancio and other roads will have to wait for a courteous driver to let them in. the traffic on 68 will be bumper to bumper on roundabouts and difficult for sub road traffic to get on the merry ground. i have suggested controlling the signals ever since the mention of roundabouts. the signal management works well on hwy 111 in palm desert, rancho mirage. it makes since to at least give a trial run before tearing up existing structures and landscape for a project that may make things worse.

Jerry Wilkinson

Response to Comment I148-6: While it is true that vehicles within the roundabout have the right-of-way, roundabouts typically create consistent gaps in traffic for vehicles from arterial roads to merge. Traffic from cross-streets that intersect State Route 68 will enter the roundabouts (the selected preferred alternative) by merging into gaps in circulating traffic in the roundabout circle. During peak traffic periods, vehicles may need to wait until gaps in traffic are available. However, vehicle speeds entering and rounding through the circle are low by design (15 to 20 miles per hour for single-lane roundabouts), which provides a higher degree of safety by reducing the frequency and severity of collisions compared with cross-traffic signalized intersections.

Regarding AI controlled signal system technology as an alternative to roundabouts or expanded signalized intersections, refer to response to comment I44-1, which also provides information on a pilot project to implement AI signal control technology on an interim basis. Caltrans District 5 Traffic Operations was provided conceptual approval for the pilot use of AI controllers to implement Adaptive Traffic Signal Control technology, and further discussions took place with regard to potential funding for procurement of the firmware to support Adaptive Traffic Signal Control. Discussions and approval shifted to review of existing traffic data, existing infrastructure, and firmware compatibility to support the pilot project. Regular meetings between the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and District 5 Traffic Operations took place for implementation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control technology at signalized intersections within the State Route 68 project corridor. Implementation at these intersections provides the ability to best implement, make adequate observations, make adjustments and learn lessons from an engineering and traffic operations perspective for installation

at additional intersections along the corridor. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are currently moving forward with the pilot project to procure, install, and use Adaptive Traffic Signal Control on the project corridor as an interim solution. The pilot project is currently scheduled to run for 5 years. It should be noted that traffic analysis in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report concluded that installation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control would also require construction of auxiliary through lanes to accommodate traffic volumes under the 20-year horizon conditions.

Comment I148-7: I do not agree with the roundabouts, signal light would be much better and more cost effective . why spend taxpayers money on things that will cause more accidents than stop lights.

Elisabeth M. Billingsley

Response to Comment I148-7: Regarding retaining a traffic signal system on the project corridor rather than constructing roundabouts or expanded signalized intersections, refer to response to comment I44-1, which addresses concerns about roundabouts and also provides information on a pilot project to implement AI signal control technology on the existing signal system on an interim basis.

Regarding the number of accidents in roundabouts versus signalized intersections, there is a substantial body of research and data that demonstrates the safety benefits of roundabouts over traditional signalized intersections. Studies have consistently shown that roundabouts significantly reduce the frequency and severity of crashes. For example, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) reports that converting traditional intersections to roundabouts can lead to a 62 to 67 percent reduction in overall collisions and an 85 to 87 percent decrease in injury-related crashes. This is largely due to the design of roundabouts, which reduces the number of conflict points where vehicles can collide—from 32 at a traditional intersection to just 8 in a roundabout. Refer to response to comment I44-4 for additional details and references.

Comment I148-8: To whom it concerns:

I have read regarding AI controlled signaling and find myself very in favor of this approach for several reasons.

#1. It is a cost-effective method even if only as a trial at $500,000 in lieu of the 100 million dollars or more for the roundabouts. Even if cost for the AI signaling system increases in price (which many public works projects do) it makes a great deal of sense to explore the benefits instead of charging forward to the tune of hundreds of millions for the dubious roundabouts.

2. With the budget of Calif short fall in the billions, and also at the federal level, a $500,000 AI signaling project makes absolute sense.

3. 100 + millions for the roundabout is a cost we simply cannot afford, although Highway 68 is congested, repairs at $100 million + is out of the question.

4. Highway projects always exceed in cost and time; this project will be no different, it will impact traffic for several years and adversely affect the driving community. The results will be controversial at best and there will always be the question, why did we not try the AI signaling system?

5. Although roundabouts in small communities worked fairly well, I am not in favor of roundabouts in these highly trafficked areas and high speed areas.

6. I am extremely favorable regarding the use of AI signaling systems, and strongly support the implementation of AI signaling.

7. If the roundabouts go forward, there will always be a dark cloud on those that made that decision knowing that our bank account cannot afford it. Many people do not support the roundabouts but many do support AI signaling.

8. AI signaling should not only be investigated but utilized to set a new and higher standard for highway traffic flow for now and the future.

WE HATE ALL ROUNDABOUTS!!! They are an accident waiting to happen!!!

Vida Vescera

Response to Comment I148-8: Refer to response to comment I44-1 and other responses to comments herein pertaining to suggested AI signal controls instead of roundabouts, and the planned interim pilot project.

Comment I148-9: Hello

As an expat Brit where roundabouts of all sizes are standard, I have watched this discussion for some time but feel prompted to add my 2 pennies now. I drove many miles in the UK before we immigrated to the USA and generally loved roundabouts. Over the years I had reason to travel back and drive in the UK for family reasons and for work activities. I noticed over the years that roundabouts on most of the busiest roads now have part time traffic signals installed to regulate traffic in busy traffic hours. These traffic signals are necessary because the primary route through the roundabout will dominate and there are no gaps for traffic on side roads to enter if the rule of yielding to traffic already on the roundabout is obeyed.

I believe that if the costs of installing a synchronized traffic signal solution is indeed less than $1million then this should be trailed before a major investment for roundabouts is made. If a roundabout solution is installed, then the planner should include provision for rush hour traffic signals.

Les Hamilton

Response to Comment I148-9: Regarding the suggestion to try a synchronized traffic signal system, response to comment I44-1 discusses a pilot project that Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are implementing on an interim basis. However, as analyzed in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report for the project, an Adaptive Signal Control Technology, or "AI" system software by itself is not anticipated to meet the traffic operations improvement objectives for the 20-year horizon (i.e., year 2045), which would also require intersection design modifications either with roundabouts or the addition of auxiliary through lanes. See also responses to comments I44-1 and I44-8.

The project roundabouts are being designed for the 20-year horizon conditions (2045) and are expected to have capacity to handle traffic until the end of the project's design life.

Comment I148-10: Having lived all my long life in the Salinas area and traveling back and forth on Highway 68 probably 50,000 times or more, I would be very much opposed to having all the Roundabouts built. Not only is it an enormous expense to our county and state, but the traffic control would be more efficient using the AI light controls on all of the intersection, It would be a nightmare to try to safely merge on to #68 from Los Laurels Grade, Corral de Tierra Road and San Benancio Road.

These are but three of our major intersections that have many, many homes in their areas. I sincerely hope others friends will oppose the roundabouts being built on our scenic Highway 68.

Thank you.

Diane Tibbs

Response to Comment I148-10: Refer to response to comment I44-1 and other responses to comments herein pertaining to suggested AI signal controls instead of roundabouts, and the planned interim pilot project.

Comment I148-11: I agree on the AI lights solution- STRONGLY OPPOSED to roundabout project. I can't help but think there is something janky going on behind closed doors with this proposal. I'm praying for exposure of all that.

Beth Mazerik

Response to Comment I148-11: Refer to response to comment I44-1 and other responses to comments herein pertaining to suggested AI signal controls instead of roundabouts, and the planned interim pilot project.

Comment I148-12: Brilliant points and position, I have driven that stretch and can't imagine the torture of building such a labyrinth, ridiculous. Your AI

solution is the only sensible path forward. I hope everyone does their best to prevent a roundabout nightmare.

Bev

Response to Comments I148-12: Refer to response to comment I44-1 and other responses to comments herein pertaining to suggested AI signal controls instead of roundabouts and the planned interim pilot project.

Comments I149 through I154 below were posted on the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's webpage and raise concerns about a purported potential high-density housing development near the intersection of Olmsted Road and State Route 68. These comments were not submitted to the Caltrans Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project draft environmental document email address for public comments but were forwarded to Caltrans by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County to consider in regard to the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project. Response to comment I36-1 addresses this subject as noted in the responses to comments I149-1 through I154-1 below.

Commenter I149: C. Michael Hogan

Comment I149-1: Our family lives in the area of the potential low income housing project on Olmsted Road. First of all we were shocked to learn of a massive development, which apparently is far along in the study process, without there having been no notice to nearby residents. I have spoken to over fifty people in this area within the last week and not one had even heard of the proposal. There have been no hearing notices or signs posted on the subject property. I am an environmental scientist and physicist. My professional background is CEO of a major national environmental science company, where i have supervised over 2500 studies of environmental impact for residential and airport projects, including producing some of the first major analyses of airport noise and air quality impact studies for San Francisco International, San Jose International Airport and 19 other major US airports as well as numerous regional airports. In summary I have also served on the National Academy of Sciences, where I was an advisor to US Presidents and Congress, where i and my colleagues played a significant role in the original creation of the Clean Air Act and first national Noise Control Act of 1972. I was also a Founding Director of the California Association of Environmental Professionals (AEP), and played a role with the California Legislature in formulating the original California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) In summary, I have never seen a proposal for residential development of such massive and significant negative environmental, social and economic impact than the contemplated Olmsted high density residential concept. I shall present a few aspects of these adverse environmental impacts in the following. 1. . Traffic impacts would be severe, especially to Olmstead Road, Olmstead/Hwy 68 intersection and Hwy 68 within 2000 ft of the intersection.

There are already notable backups on Hwy 68 approaching this intersection. Enormous costs of widening Hwy 68 would be paid for by taxpayers. The added traffic from 3000 new residents emanating from a small area on Olmstead would totally undermine your roundabout project design. No traffic study has even been done on this massive project.

Additionally the sequencing of this project would likely cause successive years of construction disruption on hwy 68, since the initiial roundabouts would not support the huge addtional traffice, and would likely require multiple roundabout lanes as well as widening to four lanes on much of hwy 68. The public has not even been notified of a zoning change (in violation of CEQA) that has already been effected by county staff.. please phone me at once to acknowledge your timely receipt of this missive and discuss this matter in more detail 2. Most importantly: Violation of the California Environmental Quality Act. The County has produced a zoning change for the subject parcels without public notification, public hearing, or EIR, in violation of CEQA. Please respond at once how you can undue this zoning change and revert to compliance with CEQA, so that the environmental, social and economic impacts of a zone change can be rationally analyzed and understood by the public. There are further points I shall address in subsequent missives, I look forward to your timely response the the questions i have posed herein. I am also available to discuss this matter with you. Sincerely, C. Michael Hogan PhD P O Box 221158 Carmel CA. 93922 415 4201029 (The above is my preferred mailing address; however, I do reside in the project vicinity and use this section of Olmstead Road to access Hwy 68 multiple times each day)

Response to Comment I149-1: Refer to response to comment I36-1 regarding potential land use development near the Olmsted Road intersection with State Route 68.

Commenter I150: Bob and Laurie Cochran

Comment I150-1: My wife and I are concerned about the planned traffic circle at the intersection of Olmstead Road and Highway 68. While traffic circles make sense in many situations, it appears that there are two potential residential developments adjacent to this particular circle: a 1300 unit residential development on the other side of 68 from the airport, and an 800 until residential development on nearby Garden Road. It is estimated that the increased traffic from these developments will amount to approximately 3000 and 5000 car trips every day, for a total of 8000 additional car trips, almost all of which will (must) pass through the planned traffic circle. The intersection at present is manageable, though congested at times. Has the impact of the planned developments been taken into account in planning for the new traffic circle? Is the Agency satisfied that a traffic circle is the best way to handle the increased traffic, and, if not, has the Agency consulted with the various agencies involved in approving the new residential developments? Thank you

for your time and attention to this. We look forward to receiving your response to these concerns.

Sincerely, Bob and Laurie Cochran

Response to Comment I150-1: Refer to response to comment I36-1 regarding potential land use development near the Olmsted Road intersection with State Route 68.

Commenter I151: Stuart Jacobs

Comment I151-1: I am a local Monterey resident. This is a letter of concern regarding the proposed housing development at Highway 68 and Olmsted Rd. This development is planning a densely populated community of over 1300 housing units on just a small parcel of land which would add an estimated 5000. car trips per day at this intersection. In addition, another housing development of 800 units on Garden Road would add another 3000 car trips per day to this intersection. This intersection is the main thoroughfare to our regional airport. I would appreciate receiving a response to this letter of concern.

Sincerely Stuart Jacobs

Response to Comment I151-1: Refer to response to comment I36-1 regarding potential land use development near the Olmsted Road intersection with State Route 68.

Commenter I152: Beth Weinstein

Comment I152-1: In response to the request for feedback from neighbors, I wanted to raise my strong concern with the proposed large housing development off Olmstead Road. It can be estimated this development could generate up to 3250 extra cars (2.5 per unit, 1300 units with roughly 2x trips per car per day) that would directly impact an already heavily traveled intersection. The already approved expansion of the airport and new apartments on Garden Rd will likely create even greater traffic, which will threaten pedestrian, car and bicycle safety in the area, Please support rejecting the proposed Olmstead development.

Response to Comment I152-1: Refer to response to comment I36-1 regarding potential land use development near the Olmsted Road intersection with State Route 68.

Commenter I153: Bruce Wilbur

Comment I153-1: Plans for one thousand three hundred (1,300) low income housing units are being proposed for the environmental corridor on the south side of Hwy 68 and east side of Olmsted Road. The TAMC should be aware

that this will increase traffic by at least 5,000 trips per day. This would result in a marked increase in traffic congestion in the Hwy 68corridor, already hampered by overuse. This proposal is extremely poorly thought out and, as far as I know, has not been evaluated by the appropriate police departments (Monterey, Seaside) as well as fire. Various organizations that might have alternate points of view were not notified in a timely fashion, if at all, of actions regarding this development. On the basis of overall planning for the community, this proposal for development is one of the worst thought out, shoddiest and deceitful that I have ever com across. I think the TAMC, amongst many other involved bodies, needs to scrutinize the effects of this potential development on traffic flow and other functions, as well as the disingenuous and secretive manner in which various actions have been done.

Response to Comment I153-1: Refer to response to comment I36-1 regarding potential land use development near the Olmsted Road intersection with State Route 68.

Commenter I154: Warren Ray Lyons

Comment I154-1: I am concerned that there has not been adequate analysis of the impact proposed developments on Garden Road and adjacent to Olmsted Road. What steps are being taken to ensure that any such development is consistent with the overall plan for Highway 68?

Response to Comment I154-1: Refer to response to comment I36-1 regarding potential land use development near the Olmsted Road intersection with State Route 68.

Commenter I155 and I156: Barry Jones

Comment I155-1: In the Tables and content of Chapter 2….The Daily Person Hours of Delay Savings and Daily Vehicle Hours Delay Savings tables show enormous savings implementing Alt 2 ..signals vs implementing roundabouts. This of course would be very well received by all!

This mammoth saving of time for commuters and visitors alike, makes for a clear decision to implement Alt 2 ….Signals..even if they are not AI controlled..when the savings would be even more!

I feel that the savings are " politely dismissed" as the "safety" of roundabouts is declared in the same Chapter.

Whilst the following declaration from EIR Chapter 2, is probably true of some specific traffic signal to roundabout conversions… it is definitely not the case in many instances. Comparisons should be done with "like layout and traffic flow intersections", rather than taking the highest percentage reductions to tempt high expectations , and thus be indicative of what will more likely happen at each of the Intersections on highway 68….

excerpt from Chapter 2

"Following intersection conversion to roundabout, crash frequencies at converted intersections have been shown to be reduced by up to 29 percent at multilane intersections and 51 percent at single-lane intersections. Studies also show that collisions resulting in severe, debilitating injuries and fatalities in roundabout intersections are rare.."

As you are aware…..studies and reports are available that will dispute those claims with data…both in the USA and around the world.

I request that TAMC/Caltrans provide predictions based on calculations of historical collision data of similar flows at similar roundabout layouts to each of the roundabouts on Highway 68, to establish how their collision frequency claims will compare to the 29 and 51 per cent figures.

Response to Comment I155-1: Section 2.1.9 concludes that Build Alternative 2 would have the greatest amount of delay savings through the project corridor compared with the No-Build Alternative and Alternative 1 (Roundabouts). Alternative 1, however, would provide significant delay savings of 28 percent compared to the No-Build Alternative in the afternoon peak period and would also reduce the rate and severity of traffic collisions through the project corridor better than Alternative 2 as roundabout designs provide fewer potential conflict points than signalized intersections.

Caltrans used Crash Modification Factors (CMFs) from the Federal Highway Administration in the analysis of roundabout alternatives. Crash Modification Factors from the Federal Highway Administration Crash Modification Factor Clearinghouse are developed from research papers in which researchers gather before and after data and aggregated data based on intersection characteristics to develop collision reduction metrics based on statistical analysis.

The 29 percent collision reduction at multilane intersections and 51 percent collision reduction at single-lane intersections cited in the comment from Chapter 2 of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment represent the highest expected reduction in collisions for each roundabout configuration, based on the Crash Modification Factors study data from the Federal Highway Administration researched by Caltrans. As stated in the Roundabout Traffic Safety discussion in Section 2.1.9: “Following intersection conversion to roundabout, crash frequencies at converted intersections have been shown to be reduced by **up to** 29 percent at multilane intersections and 51 percent at single-lane intersections.” Therefore, the collision reduction data cited does not guarantee that the collision rates would be reduced by these percentages as the traffic patterns of each roundabout are unique. However, it is a reasonable representation from studies collected by the Federal Highway Administration.

Comment I155-2: In addition….Would TAMC/Caltrans therefore answer the question…"Why does the EIR proposal have to be all roundabouts or all Signal controlled intersections?". Please explain why there is not a Alternate proposal for a hybrid solution of some signal controlled and some roundabouts.. where each intersection has had a solution created to match it's specific needs and rural impact.

Response to Comment I155-2: Roundabouts work most efficiently with a consistent flow of traffic. If a queue from a downstream signalized intersection backs up into an upstream roundabout, the roundabout will gridlock, which has a cascading effect for intersections farther upstream. Since traffic signals must stop mainline traffic to service traffic on the side street, having a continuous flowing roundabout upstream would continuously increase the queue length at the traffic signal until the next green cycle. With high traffic flows and closely spaced intersections, both of which the State Route 68 corridor has, mixing traffic signals with roundabouts is not advised for improving traffic flow and operations, which is a key part of the purpose of the project.

Comment I156-1: You are probably aware that I have been involved in trying to get TAMC/Caltrans to consider implementing an Artificial Intelligence (AI) controlled signals solution instead of either of the total $200+m Alternates.

I am aware of the various discussions ongoing between TAMC/Caltrans and Miovision regarding this..and the possibility of a trial implementation to gather some real details…which indeed would be very prudent and well received.

The fact that the trial could be carried out very soon and then a full installation along the whole route implemented within 12 withs is very exciting to our community here at Pasadera…both the HOA and the New owners, Concert, of The Club at Pasadera.witness their individual comprehensive submissions.

Following the Town Hall meeting that Doug Bilse kindly attended on 4th Jan 2024 the feedback from the attendees has been virtually 100 % that the community favors the AI Signal Solution approach

Clearly for around $500k ,significant improvements would be realized over the existing situation and masses of valuable up to date data collected for analysis before embarking on decisions to commit a $200m+ project that is perceived by many in the County to be not a prudent decision at all..

So rather than me ask questions relating to the AI Solution…I have attached below the submission fm Dwight Stump that I fully support and ask you to answer the questions that he poses.

Response to Comment I156-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1 and other responses to comments herein pertaining to suggested AI signal controls instead of roundabouts and the planned interim pilot project.

Commenter I157: Steve Bean

Comment I157-1: I am in favor of the AI controlled signals rather than the roundabouts. Less expensive, less destructive environmentally, less delays for emergency traffic. Try the AI alternative at a fraction of the cost of roundabouts. If AI doesn't work out, then reconsider. At least research the AI technology before committing to roundabouts.

Response to Comment I157-1: Refer to response to comment I44-1, which discusses a planned interim pilot project using AI signal control technology. Your preference for an alternative to the roundabout intersection improvements is acknowledged and has been shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project. Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project because it best accomplishes the purposes of the project, including reduction of travel time delay and frequency and severity of traffic collisions for the 20-year design horizon. Refer to Section 1.6 of this document for further discussion.

Commenter I158: Melanie Corliss

The following comment was not submitted to Caltrans as a specific comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for the proposed Corridor Improvements project, but was posted on the Transportation Agency for Monterey County's webpage and forwarded by Transportation Agency for Monterey County staff because the comment pertains to potential development near the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project near Olmsted Road.

Comment I158-1: Directors, We recently became aware of a proposal to construct 1300+ high density housing units on the land contiguous to Hwy 68 and Olmsted Road. As you know this land is/has been zoned as Agricultural and has served as natural setting along the "Highway 68 Scenic Highway" designation by the State of CA. Our concerns are numerous and include the following items that require your attention: 1. ZONING CHANGE.. Has the Zoning been changed from Agricultural to Residential? If so, what notices/hearings if any have taken place giving the existing communities ample opportunity to understand and respond? 2. TRAFFIC.. What, if any plan is there to handle in excess of 5000 ADDITIONAL TRIPS/DAY through this already congested intersection? The discussion related to the MRY Airport Expansion includes construction plans for a Roundabout but DOES NOT contemplate this proposed aggressive over development. 3. WATER. QUANTITY AND QUALITY CONCERNS/SOLUTIONS. Recent Test Wells on the property reported plenty of water at 80". Even if that is accurate what sort of testing of quality has been conducted? Can you make all of these details available to the public, if available. 4. PUBLIC SERVICES. Police, Fire, Public Transportation, Water Treatment, Education (recently closed Public Primary

school on Olmsted Road?) 5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT. What IMPACT STUDIES have been completed and where can the Public access if completed? This proposal would have SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT and no possible remedy if executed. Thank you in advance for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully, Melanie Corliss

Response to Comment I158-1: Response to comment I36-1 addresses comments concerning a potential multi-family residential development under County of Monterey jurisdiction near State Route 68 and Olmsted Road.

Commenter I159: Alissa Malakan

Comment I159-1: Subject: Development at Olmsted and 68

Hello, I am a resident living near this proposed project. I would like to voice my concerns about the increased traffic at an already busy intersection. I would like to hear the plans to mitigate this situation. This would be a major change to a rural road making it less safe for pedestrians and wildlife, including endangered mountain lions.

Response to Comment I159-1: Refer to response to comment I36-1 regarding potential land use development near the Olmsted Road intersection with State Route 68.

Commenter I160: Rina Kempton

The following comment was submitted to Doug Bilse of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and he shared it with Caltrans since it is related to the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements project:

Comment I160-1: Thank you for having Public Hearings. I am unable to attend. The following is a dangerous situation that I hope will be changed simply and cheaply with paint. Coming from Monterey toward Salinas on Hwy 68. Turning left at the light at Canyon Del Rey. The first time I turned left, I turned into the lane where cars would be waiting to turn onto Hwy 68. Lucky no cars were there. I experienced this again when someone else was driving. All it needs are white lines delineating how one should turn. There are lines going from Canyon Del Rey left on onto Hwy 68. Looking forward to this intersection being safer.

Response to Comment I160-1: Your comment is appreciated regarding left-turn lane striping for intersection safety at State Route 68 at Canyon del Rey. Caltrans' Traffic Safety unit has been notified of this concern and will evaluate the condition to determine which measures may be implemented at this location. The preferred alternative of the proposed project (Alternative 1) will include a new roundabout with updated lane geometry and striping.

Commenter I161: Frank Darabont

The following comment is a letter addressed to the Monterey County Board of Supervisors regarding a potential multi-family residential development near State Route 68 and Olmsted Road and shared with Caltrans by County staff. Traffic at the State Route 68/Olmsted Road intersection is raised in Section 2 of the comment letter and is therefore addressed herein.

Comment I161-1: To: Monterey County Board of Supervisors

PO Box 1728
Salinas, CA 93902

Dear Mary Adams,

My name is Frank Darabont, and I am a current resident of the Monterra neighborhood in Monterey, CA. About a week ago it came to our attention that there is a land overlay bordering Hwy 68/Olmsted Rd/Via Malpaso that is being considered by the county for just under 1,400 units of state-mandated low-income housing development. I have to tell you I'm very disappointed that we were not made aware of this much earlier so that we as neighbors to the development could have had input from the start of the planning process. While I agree whole-heartedly that affordable housing is needed, and am not opposed to additional residential development in our county, I believe this is a catastrophic location for a housing project of this density. I'm writing to you with the following concerns:

1. Availability/quality of water:

It's my understanding that there is no "new" or additional water available in Monterey county for residential development and that there is a moratorium on drilling wells in the county for this purpose. So, what would be the source of water for this development? And if you are planning to use wells, have you confirmed that this site has sufficient ground water to support over 2,500 (estimated) new residents without being a detriment to the current ground water supply?

It is well established that there are a number of carcinogenic and toxic chemicals in the groundwater emanating from Fort Ord. It's also known that this subsurface water plume is presently moving in the direction of the proposed rezoning parcel, if not already present beneath the subject parcel. This is a serious threat to residents of subject parcels, particularly to children. How will this situation be managed and controlled in the future?

What is the cost to the county to mitigate these carcinogens for residential living?

Further, the development would generate significant polluted storm water runoff. How would you mitigate this pollution and prevent it from getting into our ground water or to the ocean?

2. Traffic on Olmsted Rd and Hwy 68:

Each unit could be estimated to have 10 trips per day (this includes multiple house members and the frequency of Amazon and other deliveries). An added 13,000 trips per day would add a catastrophic impact to the one-lane highway that services our airport (which is expanding), and provides the only artery for the many commuters who work on the Monterey Peninsula from Salinas and other areas east of here. There is no mass transit in the area to help alleviate this burden.

With the high danger of wildfires in this area, how will Hwy 68 be able to stand in the instance of mass evacuations, or provide clear access for first responders?

How do you plan to mitigate the impact of all this extra traffic? This plan would turn this area from a quiet rural road into a very busy urban road. What is your plan for pedestrian and cyclist safety if you have a considerably high volume of cars in this area?

The city has objected to the development of this area before because of the need for a highway expansion to make it feasible, among other reasons.

What is your plan for expanding the highway and creating more lanes to this area?

Who will pay for infrastructure development of this magnitude?

3. Environmental impact: The area we're discussing is currently home to a significant amount of wildlife, some of them presently endangered (mountain lions, for example). It is also home to a significant number of heritage oak trees.

With a project of this density, how are you proposing to mitigate the impact on this sensitive area?

4. Air quality: The additional traffic, especially considering the projected congestion and car idling, will cause significant deterioration in local air quality, both to onsite residents of the new development to nearby existing populations.

How will this air pollution be mitigated and what is the cost to the county for these measures?

5. Loss of scenic and rural character of the Hwy 68 corridor: The current residential zoning in this area is one home per 10 acres of land in order to preserve the rural character and wildlife preservation of this area. How does such a high density (10-15 units per acre) fit into this environment without

destroying its character? Once it's built, this area will be changed permanently! It cannot be undone!

The removal of this greenbelt is a significant adverse impact aesthetically and visually, as well as being a devastating loss of habitat for many keystone animal species that can be observed on the subject parcel.

6. Sewage: How will the sewer be managed? Will it be a closed septic system? This is a very expensive system, who will be paying for it on an ongoing basis?

7. Increased requirements for Fire and Police Services: This area is currently rural and development of 1,300+ units would require a dramatic increase in fire and police availability. How would that be managed, and again, who is paying for it on an ongoing basis?

8. Airport proximity: With the planned expansion of the airport, flight noise will be increasing. Given this project's proximity to the airport, flight noise will be a constant problem for the occupants of this new development. The EPA states that noise levels above 75 dB are harmful and these levels will be exceeded at the site. How will this be mitigated and have you discussed this with the airport authority yet?

In 2021, we experienced a tragic plane crash in the neighborhood of Monterra, devastating one home and causing several fatalities. There is a potential danger of airplane crashes in this area, and this danger would be increased exponentially given the project's density. What is your plan for protecting these (endangered) species?

Also, with the land being converted into concrete slabs and housing structures, you are removing the natural cushioning that the green belt provides to absorb the noise pollution coming from the airport. With the impending expansion of the airport, this noise pollution will only increase. What is your plan for mitigating the increased noise pollution from the expanding airport, if the green belt is converted into concrete and housing?

I look forward to receiving your answers to the many questions and concerns I've raised above.

Response to Comment I161-1: The comment was not submitted as an official comment on the project Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment but rather was addressed to the County Board of Supervisors and also posted on the Transportation Agency for Monterey County’s webpage for general public comments. The Transportation Agency for Monterey County shared the comment with Caltrans. Responses to comments A1-2 and I36-1 address the matter of future development near the intersection of Olmsted Road and State Route 68 in the county jurisdiction.

Commenter I162: Keith Slama

Comment I162-1: As a citizen who lives off of Corral de Tierra and am directly impacted by the decisions being made at the state level, I desire to let you know of my concerns for the proposed roundabouts.

In reviewing the environmental report and discussing the proposal with local residences and first alarm respondences, I am concerned that the desire to move forward is for personal and “fad” type reasons. With the slow down at each intersection the roundabouts will cause and with no way around the congestion that it will cause, fire trucks and ambulances with have to slow down more than would be reasonable. Yes, it is bad now, but if we are spending millions of dollars, why not make the flow better for all especially those whose life is on the line.

The current problem is not only signals, but the amount of traffic for 2 lanes. Every time the signal goes green, only a certain number of cars can go through that intersection as they wait in line. I feel there is a better solution which has been brought up among some of us local people. Widen the area from 2 lanes to 4 lanes from the current 4 lanes near Portola exit down to York Road, or to Canyon Del Rey if possible. That means that more people will be able to pass through each signal than what current timing allows. Install AI signals to review and adjust signals to maximize efficiencies on traffic flow. Currently, it is frustrating to be stopped at the signal waiting while no one is passing through the intersections. Here is a list on my thoughts:

Response to Comment I162-1: Your opposition to the roundabouts alternative is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Response to comment A2-1 addresses emergency vehicle response time and those vehicles and personnel negotiating roundabouts.

Responses to comments I5-1 and I18-1 address the suggestion of widening State Route 68 to four lanes.

Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project because it best accomplishes the purposes of the project, including reduction of travel time delay and frequency and severity of traffic collisions for the 20-year design horizon. Refer to Section 1.6 of this document for further discussion.

As discussed in responses to comments I44-1 and I44-6, analysis in the Traffic Operations Analysis Report concluded that installation of Adaptive Signal Control Technology or AI signal control would also require construction of auxiliary through lanes at the intersections to accommodate traffic volumes under the 20-year horizon (2045) conditions. Therefore, AI signal control alone would not improve intersection operations by reducing traffic delay to

meet the 20-year design horizon. Caltrans District 5 Traffic Operations was provided conceptual approval for the pilot use of AI controllers to implement Adaptive Traffic Signal Control, and further discussions took place with regard to potential funding for procurement of the firmware to support Adaptive Traffic Signal Control. Discussions and approval shifted to review of existing traffic data, existing infrastructure, and firmware compatibility to support the pilot project. Regular meetings between the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and District 5 Traffic Operations took place for implementation of Adaptive Traffic Signal Control at signalized intersections within the State Route 68 project corridor. Implementation at these intersections provides the ability to best implement, make adequate observations, make adjustments and learn lessons from an engineering and traffic operations perspective for installation at additional intersections along the corridor. Caltrans and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are currently moving forward with the pilot project to procure, install, and use Adaptive Traffic Signal Control on the project corridor as an interim solution. The pilot project is currently scheduled to run for 5 years.

Comment I162-2: 1) With the roundabouts, the road will no longer support 55 miles per hour that is currently the law which means the congestion will get worse as more cars are on the road at any given time.

Response to Comment I162-2: The highway between intersections will continue to support a 55-mile-per-hour speed limit. By design, roundabouts promote continuous traffic flow by compelling each vehicle to slow every time it enters the roundabout. Vehicles will accelerate to free flow speeds from a lower speed as they exit the roundabout rather than from a full stop, which is common at signalized intersections. The proposed intersection improvements are intended to have more efficient traffic flow through the project corridor and also reduce the amount and severity of potential collisions.

Comment I162-3: 2) Every vehicle will have to slow down to 25 miles an hour or less to make it around the roundabout.

Response to Comment I162-3: Refer to response to comment I24-1 regarding roundabout safety and design.

Comment I162-4: 3) Vehicles coming onto highway 68 will have to merge with the highway 68 traffic. Many drivers are unable to do that as many currently wait for the signal to turn green to merge on. Will the onramps be as long as a freeway onramp? If they are, the road is being widened enough to allow for more lanes with no roundabouts.

Response to Comment I162-4: The design of the roundabout at Corral de Tierra Road has been updated (refer to Section 1.6 of this document) to include two through lanes on State Route 68. These additional lanes are

shorter than on-ramps and are expected to further increase flows and reduce congestion through the intersection.

Comment I162-5: 4) How many accidents are on highway 68 currently compared to roundabouts that people are not accustom to and fearful of?

Response to Comment I162-5: Accident data are included in Section 2.1.9 of this document. Roundabouts have proven to reduce fatal and injury collisions substantially in the long term. While there can be a short-term increase in property damage-only collisions after roundabouts are installed, once drivers adjust to entering and going through the roundabout, these less severe collisions generally reduce in frequency.

Comment I162-6: 5) Ambulances and fire trucks will be hindered and that should be seen in the environmental report and looked more closely at than other areas of concern. Life is the number one concern!!

Response to Comment I162-6: Refer to response to comment A2-1 regarding emergency vehicles negotiating roundabouts.

Comment I162-7: 6)AI signals with a wider road is preferred by my household and we feel it is the most logical. Roundabouts may be great for roads with less traffic, but highway 68 is not the place to put them. Let the local residences determine what is best here and no people that don't live in the area and are not used to the concerns that are here in our community. If they had a grandparent living here, which there are many, the topic of roundabouts would be shelved.

Response to Comment I162-7: Refer to response to comment I44-1 regarding AI signal controls and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Caltrans' proposed pilot project.

Comment I162-8: We lost the best option years ago which was a freeway through Fort Ord area that would have decreased the pass through traffic from Salinas to Monterey and Monterey to Salinas. Why not reopen that plan and divert pass through traffic to the freeways in Salinas and on the Monterey Peninsula. If the state continues to use this small road for so much traffic, please listen to us local people. The road must be widened for safety issues. Smart decisions reduce the possibility of legal actions later

Response to Comment I162-8: Refer to responses to comments I18-1, I18-2, and I5-1.

Commenter I163: Stephen Tackett

Comment I163-1: I attended the open house on 6 Dec 2023. Thank you for organizing and all the wonderful exhibits and staff. I want to strongly endorse Alternative 2, expanded signalized intersections. The "Summary of Potential

Impacts" seems to show similar impacts but I notice that Alt 2 improves emergency access. Daily Vehicle hours of delay savings are much higher with Alt 2, which I think is good although the term does confuse me. The "Average Intersection Delay" handout also shows significant time savings with Alt 2. So please go with Alt 2.

Thank you, Stephen Tackett

Response to Comment I163-1: Your preference for Alternative 2 is acknowledged and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

Caltrans has selected Alternative 1, Roundabouts, as the preferred alternative for the project because it best accomplishes the purposes of the project, including reduction of travel time delay and frequency and severity of traffic collisions for the 20-year design horizon. Refer to Section 1.6 of this document for further discussion.

Commenter I164: Rick Verbanec

Comment I164-1: 9 ROUNDABOUTS VERSUS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TRAFFIC SIGNALS

After reading the TAMC info sheets and the website above, I offer the following perspective as an approach I hope the county and state can adopt.

Smart signals seem to be a short term no-brainer to do first. If the result is not satisfactory, roundabouts should be considered, one at a time, and on a pay-as-you-go basis, responding to the actual residual congestion. I would expect roundabouts at Del Rey and Laureles might be useful since those are through-route junctions and subject to much greater use during track events. There is room to make them big enough to not cause a problem for trucks and emergency equipment.

If the bottlenecks in the middle are smoothed out, the two ends should become easier as well. The entrances to the airport and Ryan Ranch industrial park don't seem to be enough of a problem at this time to warrant more than adjustability for the signals. That may change in the future, or it may not.

Wildlife passages are a good idea whenever they can be worked in.

All this should be viewed in perspective - anyone used to commuting in the Bay Area would view the Hwy 68 delays as minor. We do get spoiled.

Response to Comment I164-1: Your input regarding smart signals and roundabout location prioritization is appreciated and was shared with the project team. Your input is an important part of the decision-making process for the project.

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County and Caltrans are planning to implement AI signal control technology as a short-term pilot project, as explained in response to comment I44-1. The trial project is not anticipated to replace either Build Alternative 1 (roundabouts), which was selected as the project preferred alternative after the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment was circulated for public review, or Alterative 2, because AI signal control by itself would not meet the full purpose and need stated for the project in Chapter 1.

Appendix M List of Technical Studies

The following studies and/or technical reports have been prepared and are incorporated by reference into this Final Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact. The information below has been amended since circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment.

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Technical Memorandum, dated July 28, 2023

Air Quality, Noise and Water Quality Addendum Memo, dated June 18, 2024

Biological Species Status Lists from California Department of Fish and Wildlife (California Natural Diversity Database), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, and National Marine Fisheries Service, dated December 12, 2024

Community Impact Assessment, dated September 2023

Cumulative Impacts Analysis Technical Report, dated October 2023

Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment, dated September 26, 2023

Addendum to ISA; Design Modifications for Hybrid Roundabouts, dated August 28, 2024

Induced Traffic Demand Memorandum, dated September 25, 2020

Location Hydraulic Study, dated December 21, 2020

Location Hydraulic Study Addendum, dated September 28, 2023

Natural Environment Study, dated October 2023/ Jurisdictional Delineation Report, dated September 2023

Addendum to the Natural Environment Study; Design Modifications for Hybrid Roundabouts for the Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project, dated December 31, 2024

Noise Abatement Decision Report, dated July 2023

Noise Study Report, dated June 2023

Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report, dated July 2023

Addendum to Joint Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report; Design Modifications for Hybrid Roundabouts, dated August 28, 2024

Traffic Operations Analysis Report, dated September 30, 2020, revised December 3, 2020

Traffic Operations Analysis Report Addendum, dated August 2023

Traffic Operations Analysis of Updated Alternative 1 for Scenic Route 68 Corridor Improvements Project, dated January 22, 2025

Visual Impact Assessment, dated October 2, 2023

Re-evaluation and Visual Assessment Update, dated July 16, 2024

Water Quality Technical Memorandum, dated July 27, 2023

To obtain a copy of one or more of the above reports, please send your request to:

Matt Fowler, Senior Environmental Planner at 805-779-0793 or by email at matt.c.fowler@dot.ca.gov

Please indicate the project name and project identifying code (under the project name on the cover of this document) and specify the technical report or document you would like. Provide your name and email address or U.S. Postal Service mailing address (street address, city, state, and zip code).

The following reports were also prepared for the project to document cultural resources. Note: Many state and federal laws limit the disclosure of sensitive cultural and tribal resource information to the public. Additional information regarding confidentiality of these resources can be found in the Standard Environmental Reference Volume 2 in Section 3.4.13 and Section 5.3.6.

Historical Property Survey Report, dated July 2023

Historic Resource Evaluation Report, dated August 2020

Archaeological Survey Report, dated March 2020

Supplemental Archaeological Survey, Extended Phase I and Phase II Testing Report, dated December 2021

Addendum to Archaeological Identification Report/Archaeological Evaluation Report; Design Modifications for Hybrid Roundabouts for the SR 68 Safety Improvement Project (EA:05-1J790), Monterey County, dated October 29, 2024

Finding of Effect, Draft Programmatic Agreement, and Cultural Resources Management Plan for the Route 68 Corridor Operational Improvements Project, Monterey County, California. 05-MNT-68, Post Miles 5.2 to 13.7 (EA 05-1J790; FHWA_2023_0718_001;CATRA_2023_0718_001), dated January 17, 2025