Toro Creek Southbound Bridge Replacement Project

Bridge replacement project on State Route 1 in San Luis Obispo County
05-SLO-01-PM 32.6
Project ID Number 0523000125
Project EA: 05-1R100
State Clearinghouse Number 2024030292

Initial Study
with Mitigated Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2

Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

June 2024

General Information About This Document

Document prepared by: Geramaldi, Senior Environmental Scientist, and Michael Hollier, Associate Environmental Planner

The Initial Study circulated to the public for 31 days between March 8, 2024, and April 8, 2024. Comments received during this period are included in Appendix G. Elsewhere, language has been added throughout the document to indicate where a change has been made since the circulation of the draft environmental document. Minor editorial changes and clarifications have not been so indicated.

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State Clearinghouse Number 2024030292
05-SLO-01-PM 32.6
Project ID Number 0523000125
Project EA: 05-1R100

Replace the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge structure located on State Route 1 at post mile 32.6 in San Luis Obispo County

INITIAL STUDY
with Mitigated Negative Declaration

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

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation
and
Responsible Agency: California Transportation Commission

Jason Wilkinson

Jason Wilkinson
Environmental Deputy District Director, District 5
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

6/11/24

Date

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Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: 2024030292

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 05-SLO-01-PM 32.6

EA/Project Number: EA 05-1R100 and Project ID Number 0523000125

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to replace the existing southbound bridge (bridge number 49-0068L) at Toro Creek on State Route 1 in San Luis Obispo County at post mile 32.6. This portion of State Route 1 is an expressway that runs along the California coast, having two lanes of travel in each direction with the occasional at-grade intersections, turn pockets, and pullouts. The project site is next to the beach, within the city of Morro Bay, and just south of the town of Cayucos. The project proposes to remove the existing southbound bridge structure and construct a new bridge structure in its place. Project activities will involve vegetation clearing, vegetation replanting, pavement removal, pavement repaving, pavement restriping, bridge aesthetic treatments, grading, slope stabilization, erosion control, temporary water diversion, temporary construction access, temporary construction staging sites, and temporary traffic control.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans District 5. On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action with the incorporation of the identified mitigation measures will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The project will have no effect on agriculture and forest resources, cultural resources, energy, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, or wildfire.

The project will have less than significant effects on aesthetics, air quality, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, and utilities and service systems.

With the following mitigation measures incorporated, the project will have less than significant effects on biological resources:

- Compensatory mitigation will be included as part of the project for natural communities and regional habitats of concern impacted by the project. Compensatory mitigation is proposed at a ratio of 1 to 1 (acreage) for temporary impacts and a ratio of 3 to 1 (acreage) for permanent impacts. Replacement

plantings will include appropriate native plant species, a one-year plant establishment period, and monitoring to ensure success.

- Project sites shall be revegetated with native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area. This measure shall be implemented in all areas disturbed by project activities.

Jason Wilkinson

Jason Wilkinson
Environmental Deputy District Director, District 5
California Department of Transportation

6/11/24

Date

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Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), as assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, is the lead agency for this project under the National Environmental Policy Act (known as NEPA). Caltrans is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (known as CEQA).

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. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, also known as 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, Caltrans entered into a Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to 23 U.S. Code 327 (NEPA Assignment Memorandum of Understanding) with the Federal Highway Administration. The NEPA Assignment Memorandum of Understanding 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 of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary's responsibilities under NEPA. This assignment includes projects on the State Highway System and Local Assistance projects off of the State Highway System within the State of California, except for certain categorical exclusions that Federal Highway Administration assigned to Caltrans under the 23 U.S. Code 326 CE Assignment Memorandum of Understanding, projects excluded by definition, and specific project exclusions.

The project is in San Luis Obispo County, within the city of Morro Bay and just south of the town of Cayucos. The project is located on a portion of State Route 1 that runs along the California coast, and the project site is next to the beach as Toro Creek flows directly to the Pacific Ocean. State Route 1 at the project location is an expressway with two lanes of travel in each direction, with occasional grade crossings, turn pockets, and pullouts. The project location and project limits are shown in Figures 1-1 and 1-2. A more detailed map of the project site is presented in Appendix B, Preliminary Project Layouts.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

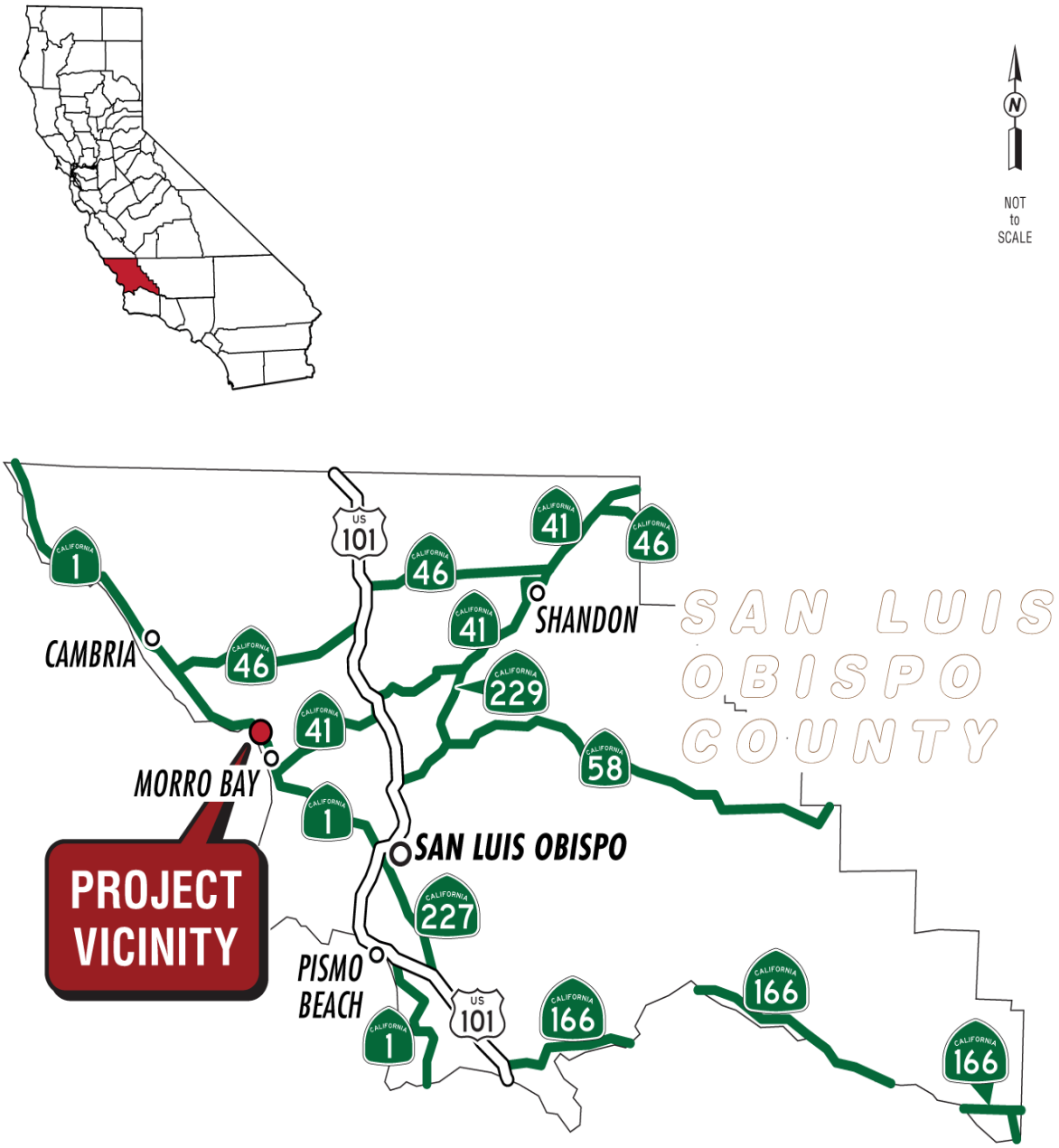
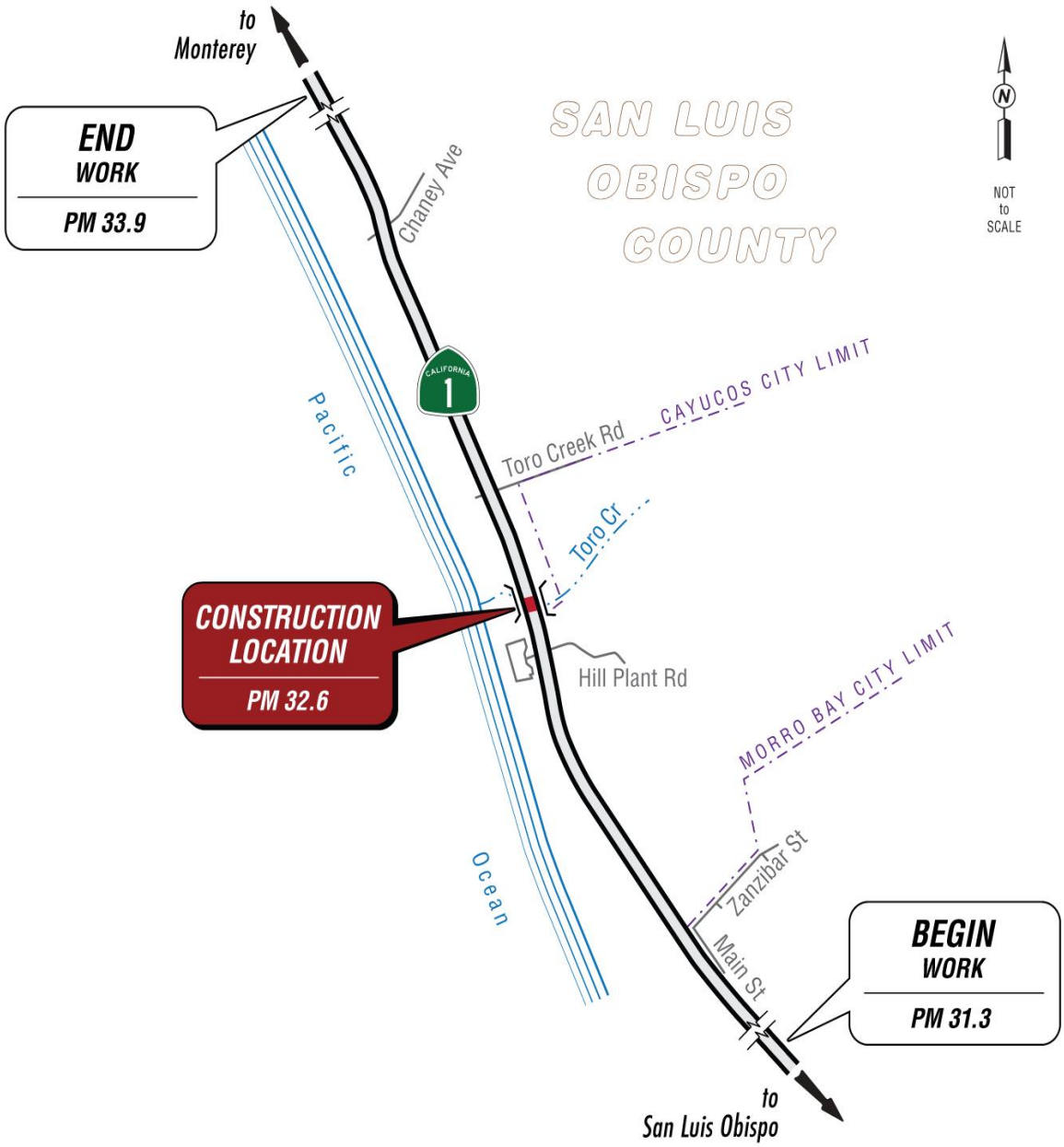


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



Caltrans proposes to replace the existing southbound bridge (bridge number 49-0068L) at Toro Creek on State Route 1 in San Luis Obispo County at post mile 32.6. The existing southbound bridge was built in 1962, and it is about 116 feet long and about 32.5 feet wide. The existing bridge consists of two abutments with wing walls, a four-span bridge deck, three-column supports, and 15 columns. The bridge structure is made from reinforced concrete, with the bridge rails made from concrete and steel. However, recent structural maintenance investigations have found the structure to be in poor condition. The existing southbound bridge shows evidence of nonrecoverable corrosion, concrete spalling, and decades of weathering. In addition, the existing bridge has nonstandard bridge railings and no longer meets current Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware standards. The existing bridge structure also has nonstandard 8-foot-wide outside shoulders (ocean side) and standard 5-foot-wide inside shoulders (inland side).

Caltrans proposes to remove the existing southbound bridge at post mile 32.6 and build a new bridge in its place. The new bridge structure will comply with current seismic, hydraulic, and design standards. The new bridge will include bridge rails designed to meet current Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware standards. The new bridge will include outside shoulders and inside shoulders. Project activities will involve vegetation clearing, vegetation replanting, pavement removal, pavement repaving, pavement restriping, bridge aesthetic treatments, grading, slope stabilization, erosion control, temporary water diversion, temporary construction access, temporary construction staging sites, and temporary traffic control. Project activities will occur between post mile 31.3 and post mile 33.9; bridge construction will occur at post mile 32.6.

The project is programmed under the 2024 State Highway Operation and Protection Program and is eligible for federal aid funding. The total cost of the project is currently estimated at about $20,400,000, with an estimated future cost of about $23,250,000 due to inflation. Project construction is anticipated to start sometime in April 2026, with construction completion anticipated around April 2027.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the project is to address the poor health of the southbound Toro Creek Bridge (bridge number 49-0068L) and upgrade nonstandard bridge railings, nonstandard geometric features, and associated roadway approaches.

1.2.2 Need

The existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge has poor bridge health due to nonrecoverable corrosion on the columns, abutments, and superstructure, and replacement of the structure is needed to resolve the issue. The existing bridge has nonstandard bridge railings that need to be replaced with bridge railings that meet current Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware standards. The existing nonstandard outside shoulders need to be widened to decrease off-tracking vehicle collisions and facilitate the passage of bicycle traffic.

1.3 Project Description

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 alternatives are under consideration for this project: a Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative. Project alternatives are further discussed in Section 1.4, Project Alternatives.

The project is in San Luis Obispo County on State Route 1, between the city of Morro Bay and the town of Cayucos. The location of the southbound Toro Creek Bridge is at post mile 32.6, and the project area is within Caltrans' existing right-of-way between post mile 31.3 and post mile 33.9. Preliminary layouts showing the project site and all project-related work are presented in Appendix B, Preliminary Project Layout.

The project proposes to replace the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge with a new bridge structure to address the poor health condition of the existing bridge structure. The poor bridge health deficiency is associated with nonrecoverable corrosion of the steel reinforcement in the columns, abutments, and superstructure. Cracks and spalls have formed in these concrete elements, further deteriorating the bridge’s health. A picture of the existing bridge structure showing cracked concrete, exposed rebar, and corrosion is Presented in Appendix C, Existing Toro Creek Bridge. A more detailed picture showing cracked concrete, exposed rebar, and corrosion on a portion of the existing bridge rail and bridge deck is presented in Appendix D, Existing Bridge Condition.

All elements of the existing bridge will be removed prior to the construction of the new southbound bridge structure. The existing bridge abutments, wing walls, superstructure, supports, and railings will all be removed and then replaced with the construction of the new southbound bridge structure. Construction of the new southbound bridge will occur at the same location over Toro Creek as the existing bridge. The new bridge structure will be designed to comply with current seismic, hydraulic, and design standards. The proposed new southbound bridge will maintain the existing two 12-foot-wide lanes. The standard inside shoulder width will be maintained, and the

nonstandard outside shoulder will be widened. The bridge approaches will be adjusted to match the new bridge structure with the existing roadway.

The project will involve pavement installation, restoration, and restriping associated with bridge construction and a temporary detour. Construction of the new bridge structure will require temporary construction access and temporary access to the creek. Project construction will involve vegetation clearing, vegetation replanting, grading, slope stabilization, and erosion control. The project will also temporarily remove or relocate fencing, utility lines, and guardrails that may be in the way of construction activities. At the end of project construction, all sites temporarily disturbed by project construction activities will be restored and improved.

[The following paragraph has been added since the public circulation of this document.] Public Resources Code Section 42703, and following, requires specified usage of crumb rubber modifier in asphalt pavement. However, due to the environmental sensitivity of the site, Caltrans policy allows for an exception approval to use conventional asphalt. A crumb rubber usage exception memo was approved and processed on April 29, 2024. Pavement for this project will be constructed from conventional asphalt.

On the beach next to the existing southbound bridge and partially within the state right-of-way is a dilapidated wooden sea wall structure. Current information suggests that Chevron built the sea wall structure to protect its assets when it owned the beach property. Although Chevron has relinquished ownership of the beach property, there are no records to confirm the current ownership of the sea wall. The sea wall has been left unmaintained and is no longer functioning as intended. It is anticipated that the existing sea wall structure will not conflict with the new southbound bridge structure and will be left as is. Caltrans is interested in the removal of the sea wall structure to improve the viewscape around the project area and to remove the dilapidating structure from the state right-of-way. However, the current owner(s) of the sea wall structure will need to be identified in order to coordinate and develop the appropriate plans. The project has no plans to remove or modify the existing sea wall structure.

This project contains a number of standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project. These measures are listed in Section 1.5, Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives.

1.4 Project Alternatives

Two alternatives were considered for the proposed project: a Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative.

The Build Alternative was developed by an interdisciplinary team. Several criteria were considered when evaluating the potential alternatives of the project, including the project's purpose and need, cost, design, construction strategies, and environmental impacts.

1.4.1 Build Alternative

The Build Alternative will meet the purpose and need of the project by addressing the poor condition of the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge while also providing additional improvements to existing highway features.

The proposed new southbound bridge structure will be 131 feet long and 43 feet wide. The new southbound bridge structure will be composed of a three-span deck with two column bents and eight columns in the creek. The new bridge railings will be a metal "see-through" railing, type ST-75. New bridge abutments and wing walls will also be constructed. The new southbound bridge structure will accommodate the standard 5-foot-wide inside shoulder, two 12-foot-wide lanes, and the standard 10-foot-wide outside shoulder. The new southbound bridge structure will be raised by about 2.3 feet to ensure there is sufficient clearance to meet the 100-year flood and storm events and potential tidal influences associated with sea level rise.

[The following paragraph has been revised since the public circulation of this document.] The new bridge deck will be constructed using precast and prestressed (known as PCPS) concrete elements to minimize the use of falsework over the creek and potentially reduce the project's construction time. The new bridge columns will be reinforced concrete piles cast in drilled holes. The new bridge abutments and wing walls will be made of concrete and constructed using the cast-in-place method. A vibratory hammer will be used to install the permanent casings for the columns. Rock slope protection (known as RSP) will also be installed around the new bridge abutments to help prevent erosion and scour on the slopes. Pavements at the bridge approaches and the nearby roadways will be adjusted to connect them to the new bridge structure. The existing guardrails within the project limits will be upgraded with the Midwest Guardrail System, which consists of metal rails elevated on a series of posts. The project will remove and replace existing chain link fencing that is in the way of project construction. Existing utilities within the project footprint will be relocated or avoided as necessary to allow for project construction. Existing drainage systems within the project footprint will be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the new southbound bridge structure. The project will require nighttime work to set up temporary traffic control.

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, no work would occur on the project. The No-Build Alternative would not address the purpose and need of the project. With

the No-Build Alternative, the existing poor health of the southbound Toro Creek Bridge would not be addressed, and the condition of the existing southbound bridge structure would continue to worsen over time.

1.5 Identification of a Preferred Alternative

A Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative were the only alternatives considered for this Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration. After the public circulation of the Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration, the two alternatives were further evaluated. Caltrans identified the Build Alternative as the preferred alternative after consideration of the project's purpose and need, funding, schedule, construction methods, and potential to impact environmental resources. Under the California Environmental Quality Act, no unmitigable significant adverse impacts were identified for the preferred alternative, so Caltrans has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration.

The preferred alternative meets the purpose and need of the project because it will address the poor health of the southbound Toro Creek Bridge by replacing the existing bridge with a new one. The new bridge will include new bridge railings, geometric features, and associated roadway approaches that conform with current highway design standards.

The preferred alternative will result in temporary and permanent impacts on environmental resources. Temporary impacts due to construction disturbances will be offset by construction restrictions, monitoring, and postconstruction restoration. The preferred alternative will result in minor permanent impacts to natural communities from the construction of a longer and wider bridge structure and the placement of other new project features in previously undisturbed areas. The preferred alternative will include Caltrans' standard plans and measures that apply to the project to address any temporary and permanent impacts associated with the project.

Caltrans determined that the No-Build Alternative does not satisfy the project's purpose and need because it does not address the poor health of the southbound Toro Creek Bridge. The No-Build Alternative would not upgrade nonstandard bridge railings, replace nonstandard geometric features, or improve associated roadway approaches.

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

The project will include standard measures typically used on all Caltrans projects. Caltrans standard measures are considered features of the project and are evaluated as part of the project. Caltrans standard measures are not

implemented to address any specific effects, impacts, or circumstances associated with the project but are instead implemented as part of the project's design to address common issues encountered on projects. Caltrans standard measures are implemented with strict guidelines, just like other Caltrans standard requirements. The measures listed below are related to environmental resources and are applicable to the project. These measures can be found in the latest Caltrans Standard Specifications document. A copy of the full document can be found at the following link: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/ccs-standard-plans-and-standard-specifications

- 7-1 Legal Relations and Responsibility to the Public
- 10-4 Water Usage
- 10-5 Dust Control
- 10-6 Watering
- 12-1 Temporary Traffic Control
- 12-3 Temporary Traffic Control Devices
- 12-4 Traffic Control Systems
- 13-1 Water Pollution Control
- 13-2 Water Pollution Control Program
- 13-3 Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- 13-4 Job Site Management
- 13-6 Temporary Sediment Control
- 13-7 Temporary Tracking Control
- 13-10 Temporary Linear Sediment Barriers
- 14-1 Environmental Stewardship
- 14-2 Cultural Resources
- 14-6 Biological Resources
- 14-8 Noise and Vibration
- 14-9 Air Quality

- 14-10 Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling
- 14-11 Hazardous Waste and Contamination
- 14-12 Other Agency Regulatory Requirements
- 17-2 Clearing and Grubbing
- 18-1 Dust Palliatives
- 20-1 Landscape
- 20-3 Planting
- 20-4 Plant Establishment Work
- 21-2 Erosion Control Work
- 36-4 Residue Containing Lead from Paint and Thermoplastics
- 84-9 Removing Existing Marking

Prior to project construction, the project will also prepare the following plans, which may include additional project-specific measures:

- Transportation Management Plan
- Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

Additional measures could be added to the project as necessary or as appropriate until the project is completed.

1.7 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

This document contains information regarding compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and other state laws and regulations. Separate environmental documentation, supporting a Categorical Exclusion determination, has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. When needed for clarity, or as required by CEQA, this document may contain references to federal laws and/or regulations (CEQA, for example, requires consideration of adverse effects on species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species by the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—that is, species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act).

1.8 Permits and Approvals Needed

The following permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications are required for the project. These applications will be submitted after the project has been approved, and Caltrans will obtain the permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications prior to the start of project construction. All permit terms and conditions will be incorporated and implemented into the project after they have been approved:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Section 404 Nationwide Permit.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Programmatic Biological Opinion for the California red-legged frog.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion for the southwestern pond turtle.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion for the tidewater goby.
- National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinion for steelhead (South-Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment).
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife for Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement.
- Regional Water Quality Control Board for Section 401 Water Quality Certification.
- San Luis Obispo County for the Coastal Development Permit.
- City of Morro Bay for the Coastal Development Permit.

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Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. Potential impact determinations include Significant and Unavoidable Impact, Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, and No Impact. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with a project would indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A "No Impact" answer reflects this determination. The questions in this checklist are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

Project features, which can include both design elements of the project and standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects, such as Best Management Practices and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below.

"No Impact" determinations in each section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project as well as the appropriate technical report (bound separately in Volume 2), and no further discussion is included in this document.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the Visual Impact Assessment dated September 13, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	**No Impact**
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
c) In nonurbanized 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?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The project is located on State Route 1 between Morro Bay and Cayucos in San Luis Obispo County. At the project location, State Route 1 runs along the California coast and sits on a marine terrace with the Pacific Ocean on the west and low foothills on the east. Within the project limits, State Route 1 is a four-lane divided highway with 12-foot lanes and variable shoulder widths. The existing bridge rail is a low concrete stem wall with a round horizontal metal beam that sits on top. The existing bridge is next to the northbound Toro Creek Bridge, which was built in 2023 and features a more modern bridge design and elements.

The most notable visual resources from the project area are Morro Rock in Morro Bay in the south, valleys and hills to the east, and sweeping, unobstructed views of the Pacific Ocean and its beaches. The vegetation within the project limits has minimal to moderate cover, consisting mostly of scattered trees, coastal shrubs, and naturalized grasses.

State Route 1 is designated as a State Scenic Highway, an All-American Road, and a National Scenic Byway. State Route 1 is located within the coastal zone and is subject to the California Coastal Act. State Route 1 has long been recognized for its scenic qualities, having a heightened degree of sensitivity concerning potential changes to its aesthetic character. State Route 1 has long been a tourist attraction, and the route's scenic value is important for the local economies and further underscores the concern and sensitivity regarding aesthetic issues along the route.

Environmental Consequences

The project proposes a new bridge with features and elements that will be similar to the existing southbound bridge structure. The design of the new

southbound bridge structure will still be consistent with the existing viewshed and will look similar to the recently constructed northbound Toro Creek Bridge. The project will not include the installation of any new bridge features or roadway features that will block or visually impact views of the surrounding highway corridor. None of the proposed new bridge features and/or elements for the southbound structure will degrade the views of the surrounding ocean, hillside, or highway corridor.

The most noticeable aspects of the project will be the widened outside shoulder, the change in bridge rail type, and the temporary loss of vegetation. Four trees within the project footprint may need to be removed for project construction. However, the project will include a replanting plan to replace any vegetation and trees removed as a result of the project.

The project is not expected to negatively impact the existing visual character of State Route 1. However, the project will include measures to ensure all potential visual-related impacts are minimized.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

With the implementation of the following minimization measures, the project will be consistent with the aesthetic and visual protection goals defined by the State Scenic Highway and National Scenic Byway system, as well as by existing Coastal Act policies:

VIS 1: Staging and storage for construction, including parking and equipment, must consider ocean views and be located on the inland side if possible. Reduce the impact to views and public access to the maximum extent possible.

VIS 2: Following construction, regrade and recontour any temporary construction access roads, staging and storage areas, and other temporary use areas as necessary to match the surrounding natural topography along State Route 1. Avoid unnatural-appearing remnant landforms where possible.

VIS 3: Preserve existing vegetation to the maximum extent feasible.

VIS 4: Bridge rails shall be a "see-through" railing, type ST-75, matching the existing northbound bridge structure.

VIS 5: All new and replacement guardrail vertical posts shall be colored with a stain such as Natina, as directed by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture staff.

VIS 6: If vegetation control treatment is required under the new guardrail, pervious surface treatment or colored concrete should blend with nearby soils, as directed by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture staff.

VIS 7: Any retaining walls or concrete features shall be aesthetically treated per District 5 Landscape Architecture staff.

VIS 8: Any conduits proposed to be attached to the exterior of the bridge shall be integrated with the design of the bridge overhang and rail to minimize their visibility. The conduit design shall be coordinated with and approved by District 5 Landscape Architecture staff.

VIS 9: Disturbed areas shall be revegetated and treated with erosion control using native plants and seeds per District 5 Landscape Architecture staff recommendations.

VIS 10: Replacement planting, as designed and implemented by District 5 Landscape Architecture staff, will balance preservation of view with resource agency permitting requirements and will be maintained and established.

VIS 11: Rock slope protection shall be backfilled with soil and revegetated if feasible.

VIS 12: If utility relocation is a project component, compliance with resource agency regulations is required. Overhead utilities disturbed by the project shall be undergrounded per California Public Utilities Commission requirements under Public Utilities Code 320.

2.1.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

Based on the San Luis Obispo County Land Use View online map tool, there are properties zoned for agricultural use next to the eastern side of State Route 1. However, the project is on the western side of State Route 1, and all project activities are anticipated to occur within the existing state right-of-way next to the coastal side.

Based on the city of Morro Bay Zoning Map, there are no properties zoned for agricultural or forestry use near the project limits.

The project is not expected to affect properties designated for agricultural and forestry use. Therefore, the project will not impact agricultural or forestry resources.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use?	**No Impact**
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	**No Impact**
c) Conflict with existing zoning, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	**No Impact**
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to nonforest use?	**No Impact**
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to nonforest use?	**No Impact**

2.1.3 Air Quality

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

Considering the information in the Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Noise Technical Memorandum dated September 25, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	**No Impact**
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	**No Impact**
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

San Luis Obispo County is located in the South-Central Coast Air Basin, and air quality in the region is regulated by the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District.

The county is nonattainment for the California Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone and airborne particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter. The county is in attainment for all federal standards except for the eastern portion of the county, where it is nonattainment for the Federal 8-hour ozone standard. This project is located on the western portion of San Luis Obispo County, and no conformity requirements are applicable to the project.

The project is in a semirural portion of State Route 1, between the city of Morro Bay and the town of Cayucos. The project is next to a beach that is used by the locals as a dog beach.

Environmental Consequences

The project will not result in long-term impacts on air quality because it will not alter the existing capacity or alignment of State Route 1.

Temporary construction-related activities are expected to generate air pollutants that can be noticeable or cause inconvenience to people in proximity to the work location. The operation of construction equipment will generate exhaust, emissions, and/or odors. Dust will be generated during bridge demolition, excavation, grading, hauling, and various other activities that will disturb soil and sand. Levels of air pollutants will vary each day as construction progresses. It is expected that the air pollutants will have the

potential to cause occasional annoyance and inconvenience for nearby residents and beach visitors.

Temporary construction-related activities and the operation of construction equipment are not anticipated to cause long-term substantial or adverse impacts on air quality because these actions will occur intermittently, for a relatively short duration, and on a relatively small scale. In addition, the project is expected to help reduce future vehicle and equipment emissions by reducing the frequency of preventive maintenance and scheduled maintenance operations that will be needed to ensure the continued use of the existing bridge.

The potential for the project to result in impacts on air quality will be less than significant. In addition, the project will include Caltrans standard measures and strategies to minimize and control air pollutants generated by construction activities. All applicable Caltrans standard measures and strategies for Air Quality, Emission Reduction, Dust Control, and Dust Palliatives will be implemented during project construction.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The project will include Caltrans standard measures and strategies to minimize impacts on air quality. Therefore, no additional project measures are required.

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the Natural Environment Study, dated November 6, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries?	**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated**
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 Impact**
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**
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	**No Impact**
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**

Affected Environment

The Biological Study Area encompasses the entire project area and is defined as the area that may be directly, indirectly, temporarily, or permanently impacted by construction-related activities and includes a buffer around the project site. The Biological Study Area includes riparian habitats, upstream areas, and downstream areas next to the project footprint. Within the Biological Study Area, there are sand dunes on the western edges, a stream crossing under the bridges on State Route 1, and scrub habitat on the eastern edges. The northern and southern portions of the Biological Study Area consist of paved roadways and disturbed habitats with some non-native grasslands.

Toro Creek originates about 7 miles northeast of the project site and ends at the Pacific Ocean. The creek runs east to west through the project location and can be about 25 to 100 feet wide at some locations. The wet portions of

the creek channel support potential habitat for steelhead, tidewater goby, and other fish species.

Natural Communities

The following natural communities were identified within the project area: coastal brackish marsh, central coast scrub, central coast riparian scrub, non-native grasslands, southern foredunes, sandy beaches, ruderal and disturbed. The dominant communities within the Biological Study Area are southern foredunes, ruderal and disturbed.

Migration and Travel Corridors

Toro Creek supports a migration for amphibians, birds, and mammals. Fish and amphibian migration is occasionally possible along Toro Creek, from the creek mouth at the Pacific Ocean to about 4.6 miles upstream. The riparian habitat along the creek provides foraging and nesting habitats for various animal species. However, there are no known wildlife corridors within the project area, and the project is not anticipated to impact any wildlife corridors. Therefore, no project-specific measures are required, and no further discussions are presented in this document.

Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters

Potential jurisdictional waters and riparian habitat are present within the Biological Study Area. There is about 0.34 acre of potential U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdictional other waters and about 277 square feet of potential U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdictional wetlands. These areas are also regulated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California Coastal Commission. There is about 0.6 acre of California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Coastal Commission jurisdictional areas along the riparian corridor of Toro Creek.

Designated Critical Habitat

Within the project area, there are federally designated critical habitats for steelhead (South-Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment) (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus pop. 9)* and for tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*). Conditions in Toro Creek have the potential to support the life cycles of these fish species.

The project area is also next to a federally designated critical habitat for the western snowy plover *(Charadrius nivosus nivosus*). The beaches provide potential wintering and breeding sites for the species. However, no project activities are anticipated to occur within western snowy plover-designated critical habitat; therefore, the project is not anticipated to result in permanent or temporary impacts on species-designated critical habitat. Therefore, no specific measures for western snowy plovers are required, and no further discussions are presented in this document.

Invasive Plant Species

There are a total of 20 invasive plant species observed within the project area. Of all the invasive plant species observed, one had an invasive rating of "high," 10 had an invasive rating of “moderate,” and nine had an invasive rating of "limited." The distribution of invasive plant species is scattered around the project area, with most being concentrated within the ruderal and disturbed areas along State Route 1.

The following invasive plant species were seen in the Biological Study Area: cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*), slim oat *(Avena barbata),* black mustard *(Brassica nigra),* ripgut brome *(Bromus diandrus),* Italian thistle *(Carduus pycnocephalus),* sea fig *(Carpobrotus chilensis),* bull thistle *(Cirsium vulgare),* Italian ryegrass *(Festuca perennis),* sweet fennel *(Foeniculum vulgare),* Ngaio tree *(Myoporum laetum),* Bermuda buttercup *(Oxalis pes-caprae),* soft brome *(Bromus hordeaceus),* sea rocket *(Cakile maritima),* sweet alyssum, *(Lobularia maritima),* hyssop loosestrife *(Lythrum hyssopifolia),* bur clover *(Medicago polymorpha),* rabbitsfoot grass *(Polypogon monspeliensis),* wild radish *(Raphanus sativus),* milk thistle *(Silybum marianum),* and New Zealand spinach *(Tetragonia tetragonioides)*.

Regional Plant Species of Concern

Within the project area, there are 43 documented special-status plant species, which include state and federally listed plants.

The following 31 state and federally listed special-status plants are not expected to be found within the Biological Study Area due to a lack of potential habitats and are not discussed further in this document: Hoover’s bent grass *(Agrostis hooveri),* Arroyo de la Cruz manzanita *(Arctostaphylos cruzensis),* Morro manzanita *(Arctostaphylos morroensis),* Oso manzanita (*Arctostaphylos osoensis*), Pecho manzanita *(Arctostaphylos pechoensis),* dacite manzanita *(Arctostaphylos tomentosa ssp. daciticola),* Miles’ milk-vetch *(Astragalus didymocarpus var. milesianus),* Cambria morning-glory *(Calystegia subacaulis ssp. episcopalis),* Hardham’s evening-primrose *(Camissoniopsis hardhamiae),* California Jewelflower *(Caulanthus californicus),* San Luis Obispo owl’s-clover *(Castilleja densiflora ssp. obispoensis),* Chorro Creek bog thistle *(Cirsium fontinale var. obispoense),* dwarf soaproot *(Chlorogalum pomeridianum var. minus),* Brewer’s spineflower *(Chorizanthe breweri),* Cuesta Ridge thistle *(Cirsium occidentale var. lucianum),* Eastwood’s larkspur *(Delphinium parryi ssp. eastwoodiae),* umbrella larkspur *(Delphinium umbraculorum),* Betty’s Dudleya *(Dudleya abramsii ssp. bettinae),* mouse-gray Dudleya *(Dudleya abramsii ssp. murina),* Indian Knob mountainbalm *(Eriodictyon altissimum),* San Joaquin spearscale *(Extriplex joaquinana),* Ojai fritillary *(Fritillaria ojaiensis),* Coulter’s goldfields *(Lasthenia glabrata ssp. coulteri),* Jones’

layia *(Layia jonesii),* Santa Lucia bush-mallow *(Malacothamnus palmeri var. palmeri),* Palmer's Monardella *(Monardella palmeri),* spreading navarretia *(Navarretia fossalis),* Diablo Canyon blue grass *(Poa diaboli),* adobe sanicle *(Sanicula maritima),* chaparral ragwort *(Senecio aphanactis),* and most beautiful Jewelflower *(Streptanthus albidus ssp. peramoenus).*

The following 12 state and federally listed special-status plants have potential habitats present within the Biological Study Area but were not seen during appropriately timed surveys. These special-status plant species are not expected to be seen during project construction, are not anticipated to be affected by the project, and are not discussed further in this document: Coulter's saltbush *(Atriplex coulteri),* marsh sandwort *(Arenaria paludicola),* coastal goosefoot *(Chenopodium littoreum),* salt marsh bird's-beak *(Chloropyron maritimum ssp. maritimum),* compact cobwebby thistle *(Cirsium occidentale var. compactum),* dune larkspur *(Delphinium parryi ssp. blochmaniae),* beach spectaclepod *(Dithyrea maritima),* Blochman's dudleyi *(Dudleya blochmaniae ssp. blochmaniae),* Blochman's leafy daisy *(Erigeron blochmaniae),* Kellogg's horkelia *(Horkelia cuneata var. sericea),* coast woolly-heads *(Nemacaulis denudata var. denudata),* and California seablite *(Suaeda californica).*

Regional Animal Species of Concern

The following 23 state and federally listed special-status species are not expected to be present within the Biological Study Area due to a lack of potential habitats and are not discussed further in this document: vernal pool fairy shrimp *(Branchinecta lynchi),* monarch *(Danaus plexippus pop. 1),* Morro shoulderband snail *(Helminthoglypta walkeriana),* California tiger salamander *(Ambystoma californiense),* lesser slender salamander *(Batrachoseps minor),* foothill yellow-legged frog *(Rana boylii),* Northern California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra),* Coast horned lizard *(Phrynosoma blainvillii),* Morro Bay kangaroo rat *(Dipodomys heermanni moranensis),* giant kangaroo rat *(Dipodomys ingens),* southern sea otter *(Enhydra lutris nereis),* big free-tailed bat *(Nyctinomops macrotis),* San Joaquin kit fox *(Vulpes macrotis mutica),* marbled murrelet *(Brachyramphus marmoratus),* western snowy plover *(Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus),* northern harrier *(Circus hudsonius),* yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus),* California condor *(Gymnogyps californianus),* California black rail *(Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus),* California clapper rail *(Rallus longirostris obsoletus),* California Ridgway's rail *(Rallus obsoletus obsoletus),* and California least tern *(Sterna antillarum browni).*

There are 11 state and federally listed special-status animal species that have suitable habitat present within the Biological Study Area and have the potential to be present during project construction. Additional discussion of these special-status animal species is found in this section: steelhead (South-

Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment) *(Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus pop. 9),* tidewater goby *(Eucyclogobius newberryi)*, southwestern pond turtle *(Actinemys pallida),* Coast Range newt *(Taricha torosa),* California red-legged frog *(Rana draytonii),* least Bell's vireo *(Vireo bellii pusillus)*, southwestern willow flycatcher *(Empidonax traillii extimus)*, Cooper's hawk *(Accipiter cooperii)*, tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), pallid bat *(Antrozous pallidus)*, and Townsend's big-eared bat *(Corynorhinus townsendii)*.

Steelhead (South-Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment)

Steelhead is a federally listed threatened species and a state-listed species of special concern. Steelhead is the oceangoing form of rainbow trout. Adults spawn in freshwater, and juveniles rear in freshwater before migrating out to the ocean to mature and then returning to freshwater as adults to reproduce. Optimal instream habitat for steelhead throughout its entire range on the Pacific Coast can generally be characterized by clear, cool water with abundant cover, well-vegetated stream margins, relatively stable water flow, and the presence of deep, slow water conditions and shallow, fast water conditions in the stream. Toro Creek is occasionally connected to the Pacific Ocean when the sandbars are absent and does support conditions that are suitable for steelhead freshwater rearing and migration. No intensive surveys were conducted for steelhead, and none were encountered during biological surveys. However, the presence of steelhead has been recorded at Toro Creek. Toro Creek is a federally designated critical habitat area for steelhead because it contains suitable habitat conditions that can support the species, so their presence in the creek is inferred.

Tidewater Goby

The tidewater goby is a federally endangered species and a state-listed species of special concern. The tidewater goby is a small fish that is endemic to coastal lagoons, estuaries, and backwater marshes in California. They are often found isolated along the coast by the open ocean, but they are rarely found in the open ocean. The tidewater goby is typically found in estuaries that are part of coastal streams. Common features of tidewater goby habitat include shallow water with little or no flow and fine sediment such as sand, mud, or muddy gravel. Conditions in Toro Creek provide suitable habitat for the tidewater goby, with little or no flows and a muddy creek bed. In addition, Toro Creek has been federally designated as a critical habitat area for tidewater goby. Toro Creek has been recorded to support tidewater goby populations, and the tidewater goby has been found in the creek as recently as 2022.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

The southwestern pond turtle is a federally proposed threatened species and a state-listed species of special concern. Southwestern pond turtles are restricted to the central coast of California, between San Francisco Bay, the

Mojave River, and Baja California. Southwestern pond turtles live in year-round ponds along foothill streams or in broad washes near the coast. Southwestern pond turtles are mostly aquatic, leaving their aquatic sites only to reproduce and hibernate. In warmer areas, turtles may be active year-round. Southwestern pond turtles were not seen in the project area during the appropriate timed surveys. However, suitable aquatic habitat is present within the project area, and the presence of the turtles is inferred.

California Red-Legged Frog

The California red-legged frog is a federally threatened species and a state-listed species of special concern. The California red-legged frog has historically ranged from Marin County southward to northern Baja California. Presently, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties support the largest remaining populations. California red-legged frogs use a variety of areas, including aquatic, riparian, and upland habitats. The California red-legged frog uses aquatic habitats for reproduction and uses both riparian and upland habitats for foraging, shelter, cover, and nondispersal movement. Riparian habitat degradation, urbanization, and predation by invasive animal species have contributed to the decline of the species. No protocol surveys were conducted for the California red-legged frog, and the species was not encountered during the appropriate timed surveys. However, the project area does contain suitable aquatic and upland habitats, and there are known occurrence records of California red-legged frogs at Toro Creek, so their presence in the project area is inferred.

Coast Range Newt

The Coast Range newt is a state-listed species of special concern and has no federal conservation status. The species occurs primarily along the Coast Ranges and migrates from upland refuge areas to aquatic breeding locations on a yearly cycle. Loss and degradation of riparian habitats and predation by invasive animal species have threatened the species. Coast Range newts were not seen in the project area. However, suitable aquatic habitat is present in the project area, and there are known occurrence records of Coast Range newts at Toro Creek, so their presence in the project area is inferred.

Nesting Birds

Nesting bird species are addressed as a group because they have similar habitat requirements, project-related impacts, and avoidance and minimization measures. The least Bell’s vireo and southern willow flycatcher are federal and state endangered species. The Cooper’s hawk is included in the state’s species watch list. The tricolored blackbird is a state-listed threatened species. These bird species, along with numerous other migratory birds, are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Section 3503. Numerous other nesting bird species have the potential to enter the region and nest in habitats within the project area.

Potential nesting habitats for nesting birds within the project area can be found in the riparian areas, trees, shrubs, and on the bridge structure.

Roosting Bats

Roosting bat species are addressed as a group because they have similar habitat requirements, project-related impacts, and avoidance and minimization measures. The pallid bat and Townsend's big-eared bat are considered state species of special concern. The Toro Creek Bridges have the potential to provide roosting habitat for bats, but their proximity to the coast, the presence of coastal winds, and disturbances from beachgoers are likely to deter bats from roosting in the project area.

Regional Habitats of Concern

Within the region, six habitats of concern are considered sensitive: central dune scrub, central maritime chaparral, coastal and valley freshwater marsh, coastal brackish marsh, northern coastal salt marsh, and valley needlegrass grassland. However, these habitats are either not found within the project area or their presence is so minimal that they are not anticipated to be affected by the project and are not discussed further in this document.

Environmental Consequences

Natural Communities

The project will result in permanent and temporary impacts on natural communities around the project area. Permanent impacts will result from bridge widening and other new project features placed in previously undisturbed areas. Temporary impacts will result from construction operations, excavation, stream diversion, vegetation removal, use of construction equipment, and worker foot traffic. Project-specific measures will be implemented to avoid and minimize project impacts on natural communities.

Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters

The project is not expected to permanently impact jurisdictional wetlands and other waters. Although the project will install new rock slope protection and new bridge piers, they will be placed in similar locations as existing ones. Project activities will temporarily impact jurisdictional wetlands and other waters as a result of temporary access to the creek, temporary creek diversion, vegetation removal, and grading operations. Project-specific measures will be implemented to avoid, minimize, and mitigate project impacts on wetlands and other waters.

Designated Critical Habitat

The project will temporarily impact about 0.4 acre of designated critical habitat for steelhead and tidewater goby. The project is not expected to permanently impact designated critical habitat for either steelhead or tidewater goby. Temporary impacts will result from construction access in the creek and

stream diversion and/or dewatering plans within the construction site. Project-specific measures will be implemented to avoid and minimize potential impacts on critical habitats for steelhead and tidewater goby.

The preliminary Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the project may affect and is likely to adversely affect steelhead and tidewater goby critical habitat.

Invasive Plant Species

Project activities and ground disturbances have the potential to spread or introduce invasive plant species into the project area. Measures will be implemented to avoid and minimize the spread and introduction of invasive species.

Steelhead and Tidewater Goby

Steelhead and tidewater goby are addressed as a group here because they have the potential to occupy Toro Creek, project activities in the creek have the potential to result in similar impacts for both species, and project measures will be applicable to both species.

[This paragraph has been revised since the publication of the draft environmental document.] The project will require stream diversion and/or dewatering plans during construction, which will temporarily alter the quality of aquatic habitats and result in a temporary loss of use for steelhead and tidewater goby. Construction activities in and around the creek have the potential to injure or kill steelhead and tidewater goby that may be present. Soil disturbance in the project area could lead to erosion and sedimentation in the creek, which could directly or indirectly impact steelhead and tidewater goby. The project will not use pile driving because it generates shock waves that travel through the water and could injure or kill steelhead and tidewater goby. Any steelhead and/or tidewater goby found in the creek during construction will need to be relocated away from the construction site. Project activities in the creek are expected to result in relatively minor impacts on steelhead and tidewater goby species and their associated critical habitat. Project-specific measures will be implemented to avoid and minimize potential impacts on steelhead and tidewater goby species and their associated critical habitats.

The preliminary Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the project may affect and is likely to adversely affect steelhead and tidewater goby species and their associated critical habitat. The basis for this determination is that the presence of the two species has been inferred for Toro Creek because the creek contains critical habitat conditions that will support the two species, and there is the potential for take for both species during stream diversion and dewatering activities.

Southwestern Pond Turtle, California Red-Legged Frog, and Coast Range Newt

Southwestern pond turtle, California red-legged frog, and Coast Range newt are addressed as a group here because they have the potential to occupy similar habitats within the project area, project activities could result in similar impacts to these species, and project measures will be shared to protect these species and their habitats. These three species are collectively referred to as “these species” in the discussion in this section.

If any of these species are present within the project area, construction activities in and around Toro Creek could injure or kill them. Operation of construction equipment or worker foot traffic could crush or trample these species, which could injure or kill them. Disturbances in the project area could cause erosion and sedimentation in the creek, which could directly or indirectly affect water quality in the creek and impact aquatic habitats for these species. If any of these species are found in the project area during construction, they will need to be relocated away from the construction site. The capture and relocation of these species could negatively affect them. Based on available evidence and records, the presence of these species in the project area is expected to be relatively low. These species are currently not anticipated to be found within the project area during project construction. However, this could change over time because there is the potential for these species to enter the project area from elsewhere and settle in the habitats that are within the project area. Project-specific measures for these species will be implemented to avoid and minimize potential impacts on them and their associated habitats.

There are no designated critical habitats for southwestern pond turtles, California red-legged frogs, or Coast Range newts within the project area.

The preliminary Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the project may affect and is likely to adversely affect the southwestern pond turtle and the California red-legged frog. The basis for this determination is that potential habitat for the species exists within the project area, and there is potential for species take during project construction. The project will require a Biological Opinion under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act for the southwestern pond turtle. The project is expected to qualify for a Federal Endangered Species Act incidental take coverage under the Programmatic Biological Opinion for the California red-legged frog.

Nesting Birds

Nesting bird species are addressed as a group because they have similar habitat requirements, project-related impacts, and avoidance and minimization measures.

Project activities will include vegetation removal, which could directly impact an active bird nest and any eggs or young living in the nest. Noise and disturbances generated by project construction could indirectly impact nesting birds by altering their perching, foraging, and/or nesting behaviors. The project will include project-specific measures to avoid and minimize potential impacts on nesting bird species.

Roosting Bats

Roosting bat species are addressed as a group because they have similar habitat requirements, project-related impacts, and avoidance and minimization measures.

Project activities will involve the demolition and removal of an existing bridge structure. The existing bridge structure could provide roosting sites for bats. If bats are roosting on the existing bridge structure, the removal of the existing bridge could injure or kill bats and could also harass and alter roosting behavior. Project construction activities will generate noise and disturbances that could also alter roosting behaviors. However, it is anticipated that there is a relatively low chance for roosting bats to be present during project construction because the conditions around the existing bridge are not ideal for roosting bats. The project will include project-specific measures to avoid and minimize potential impacts on roosting bats.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The project will include Caltrans Standard Specifications and Best Management Practices during project construction. The following project-specific measures will be implemented to avoid and minimize potential impacts on biological resources. The project will require replacement plantings and site restoration to mitigate project impacts on biological resources to less than significant levels.

Natural Communities

NC 1: Environmentally sensitive area fencing will be installed along the maximum disturbance limits to minimize construction disturbances to nearby natural communities and habitats. Before the start of construction activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing will be delineated on project plans and installed in the field as approved by Caltrans District 5 staff.

Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters

WW 1: Before the start of ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing shall be installed around jurisdictional waters, environmentally sensitive habitat areas, and the dripline of trees to be protected within the project limits. Caltrans-defined environmentally sensitive areas shall be noted on design plans and delineated in the field before the start of construction activities.

WW 2: The temporary stream diversion shall be timed to occur between June 1 and October 31 in any given year or as otherwise directed by the regulatory agencies when the surface water is likely to be dry or at a seasonal minimum. Deviations from this work window will only be made with permission from the relevant regulatory agencies.

WW 3: During construction, erosion control measures shall be implemented. Fiber rolls and barriers shall be installed as needed between the project site and jurisdictional other waters and riparian habitat. At a minimum, erosion controls shall be maintained by the contractor on a daily basis throughout the construction period.

WW 4: During construction, the staging areas shall conform to Best Management Practices applicable to attaining zero discharge of stormwater runoff. At a minimum, all equipment and vehicles shall be checked and maintained by the contractor on a daily basis to ensure proper operation and avoid potential leaks or spills.

WW 5: During construction, all project-related hazardous materials spills within the project site shall be cleaned up immediately. Readily accessible spill prevention and clean-up materials will be kept by the contractor on-site at all times during construction.

WW 6: Stream contours shall be restored as close as possible to their original condition at the end of project construction.

WW 7: A portion of the project area overlaps with the compensatory mitigation areas from the Northbound Toro Creek Bridge Replacement Project. Impacts on this newly installed vegetation will be avoided to the maximum extent practical. A minimum 1-to-1 ratio (acreage) for restoration and a 3-to-1 ratio (acreage) for compensatory mitigation, or as determined by the appropriate agency, will apply to any temporary or permanent impacts to the mitigation planting area from the Northbound Toro Creek Bridge Replacement Project.

WW 8: Compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts is required to prevent a net loss of natural environments. Restoration of temporary impacts is proposed at a minimum 1-to-1 ratio (acreage), and compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts is proposed at a minimum 3-to-1 ratio (acreage), or as determined by the appropriate agency. Replacement planting will include appropriate native plant species, a one-year plant establishment period, and monitoring to ensure success. Replacement planting strategies will be detailed in the Caltrans Landscape Planting Plan and Caltrans Mitigation and Monitoring Plan. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will include details for mitigation commitments and will be consistent with standards and mitigation commitments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The

Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will be prepared after the project has been approved and a full set of construction plans are prepared, and it will be finalized through the permit review process with regulatory agencies.

Designated Critical Habitat

Measures proposed for jurisdictional waters and other waters (WW 1–8), a measure proposed for steelhead and tidewater goby (FIS 5), measures proposed for California red-legged frogs (TFN 6–9), and a measure proposed for nesting birds (NB 3) are applicable and appropriate as measures for designated critical habitats present within the project area. No additional specific measures are required for designated critical habitats.

Invasive Plant Species

INV 1: During construction, Caltrans will ensure that the spread or introduction of invasive exotic plant species will be avoided to the maximum extent possible.

INV 2: Only clean fill will be imported. When practicable, invasive exotic plants on the project site shall be removed and properly disposed of. All invasive vegetation removed from the construction site shall be taken to a landfill to prevent the spread of invasive species. If the soil from weedy areas must be removed off-site, the top 6 inches containing the seed layer in areas with weedy species shall be disposed of at a landfill. The inclusion of any species that occurs on the California Invasive Plant Council Invasive Plant Inventory in the Caltrans erosion control seed mix or landscaping plans for the project shall be avoided.

INV 3: To minimize the introduction of invasive plant species, all vehicles, machinery, and equipment shall be in a clean, soil-free condition before entering the project limits. Construction equipment shall be certified as “weed-free” by Caltrans before entering the construction site.

Steelhead and Tidewater Goby

FIS 1: Before the start of stream diversion or dewatering, a qualified biologist shall conduct an informal worker environmental training program, including a description of steelhead, its legal or protected status, proximity to the project site, avoidance or minimization measures to be implemented during the project, and the implications of violating the Federal Endangered Species Act and permit conditions.

FIS 2: During construction, in-stream work shall take place between June 1 and October 31 in any given year when the surface water within drainages is likely to be dry or at a seasonal minimum. Deviations from this work window will only be made with permission from Caltrans and the relevant regulatory and resource agencies.

FIS 3: During in-stream work, a Caltrans-approved biologist shall be retained with experience in steelhead biology and ecology, aquatic habitats, biological monitoring (including diversion and dewatering), and capturing, handling, and relocating fish species. During in-stream work, the biological monitor(s) shall continuously monitor the placement and removal of any required stream diversions to capture stranded steelheads and other native fish species and relocate them to suitable habitats as appropriate. The biologist(s) shall capture steelheads that are stranded as a result of diversion or dewatering and relocate them to suitable instream habitat outside of the work area using methods approved by the appropriate regulatory agencies, which may include providing aerated water in buckets for transport and ensuring adequate water temperatures during transport. The biologist shall note the number of steelheads observed in the affected area, the number of steelheads relocated, and the date and time of the collection and relocation.

FIS 4: During in-stream work, if pumps are incorporated to assist in temporarily dewatering the site, intakes shall be completely screened with no larger than 3/32-inch (2.38 mm) wire mesh to prevent steelhead and other sensitive aquatic species from entering the pump system. Pumps shall release the collected water to a settling basin or tank, allowing the suspended sediment to settle out before reentering the stream(s) outside of the isolated area. The form and function of all pumps used during the dewatering activities shall be checked daily to ensure a dry work environment and minimize adverse effects on aquatic species and habitats.

FIS 5: The biological monitor shall monitor erosion and sediment controls to identify and correct any conditions that could adversely affect steelhead or steelhead habitat. The biological monitor shall be granted the authority to stop work activity as necessary and to recommend measures to avoid or minimize adverse effects on steelhead and steelhead habitat.

[The following measure has been revised since the publication of the draft environmental document.] FIS 6: Dewatering and use of vibratory hammers, casing twisters, and oscillators shall be limited to the low-flow period between June 1 and October 31, thus avoiding adult steelhead spawning migration and peak smolt emigration.

[The following measure has been revised since the publication of the draft environmental document.] FIS 7: The contractor shall be prohibited from using pile driving as a method of construction.

[The following measure has been revised since the publication of the draft environmental document.] FIS 8: Hydroacoustic attenuating devices shall be used, as needed.

FIS 9: Prior to the initiation of stream diversion or dewatering, a qualified biologist shall conduct an informal worker environmental training program,

including a description of tidewater goby, its legal or protected status, proximity to the project site, avoidance or minimization measures to be implemented during the project, and the implications of violating the Federal Endangered Species Act and permit conditions.

FIS 10: Prior to the initiation of stream diversion or dewatering, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist(s) shall install 1/8-inch block nets outside the impact areas and across the stream, a minimum of 20 feet above and below the locations proposed for stream diversion or dewatering. If widely separated sites are involved, more than one set of block nets shall be placed to protect the work area. The nets shall be installed on the first day of work and monitored thereafter for the duration of the work.

FIS 11: Once the block nets are secured, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist(s) shall remove all tidewater gobies found between the block nets using 1/8-inch seine and dip nets and relocate tidewater gobies to suitable habitat outside of the project site.

FIS 12: Should dewatering occur, any pumps used shall be fitted with anti-entrapment device(s) to prevent tidewater gobies from being drawn into the pump or impinged on intake screening. As dewatering proceeds, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist(s) shall remove by hand or net all tidewater gobies found and relocate them to suitable habitat downstream of the proposed project site.

FIS 13: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall remain onsite and observe for tidewater gobies and turbidity levels within the work areas during all creek dewatering activities and shall capture and relocate tidewater gobies to suitable habitat as necessary.

FIS 14: Caltrans shall provide the National Marine Fisheries Service with a written summary of work performed (including biological survey and monitoring results), Best Management Practices implemented (i.e., use of biological monitors, flagging of project areas, and erosion and sedimentation controls), and supporting photographs. Furthermore, the documentation describing listed species surveys and relocation efforts (if appropriate) shall include the name(s) of the Caltrans-approved biologist(s), the location and description of the area surveyed, the time and date of the survey, all survey methods used, a list and tally of all sensitive animal species observed during the survey, a description of the instructions and recommendations given to the applicant during the project, and a detailed discussion of capture and relocation efforts (if appropriate).

FIS 15: Caltrans shall provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with a written summary of work performed (including biological survey and monitoring results), Best Management Practices implemented (i.e., use of biological monitors, flagging of project areas, and erosion and sedimentation controls),

and supporting photographs. Furthermore, the documentation describing listed species surveys and relocation efforts (if appropriate) shall include the name(s) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist(s), location and description of the area surveyed, time and date of the survey, all survey methods used, a list and tally of all sensitive animal species observed during the survey, a description of the instructions and recommendations given to the applicant during the project, and a detailed discussion of capture and relocation efforts (if appropriate).

Southwestern Pond Turtle, California Red-Legged Frog, and Coast Range Newt

The measures recommended for California red-legged frogs will be applicable for southwestern pond turtles and Coast Range newts. Additional avoidance and minimization measures may be added during consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

TFN 1: Prior to construction, a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans shall survey the project area and, if present, capture and relocate any Coast Range newts to suitable habitat downstream of the project area. Observations of species of special concern or other special-status species shall be documented on California Natural Diversity Database forms and submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife upon project completion. If these species or other aquatic species of special concern are seen during construction, they will likewise be relocated to suitable upstream habitat by a qualified biologist.

The following measures are the applicable measures from the Programmatic Biological Opinion for California Red-Legged Frogs that will be implemented for this project:

TFN 2: Ground disturbance shall not begin until written approval is received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the biologist is qualified to conduct the work. Only U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologists shall participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California red-legged frogs.

TFN 3: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall survey the project area no more than 48 hours before the start 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 shall be allowed sufficient time to move them from the site before work begins. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall relocate the California red-legged frogs to the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by project activities. The relocation site shall be in the same drainage to the extent practicable. Caltrans shall coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the relocation site prior to the capture of any California red-legged frogs.

TFN 4: Before any activities begin on a project, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of the California red-legged frog and its habitat, the specific measures that are being implemented to conserve the California red-legged frog for the current project, and the boundaries within which the project may be accomplished. Brochures, books, and briefings may be used in the training session, provided that a qualified person is on hand to answer any questions.

TFN 5: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall be present at the work site until all California red-legged frogs have been removed, workers have been instructed, and disturbance of the habitat has been completed. After this time, Caltrans shall designate a person to monitor on-site compliance with all minimization measures. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall ensure that this monitor receives 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 will 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 shall notify the resident engineer immediately. The resident engineer shall resolve the situation by requiring that all actions that are causing these effects be stopped. When work is stopped, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be notified as soon as possible.

TFN 6: During project activities, all trash that may attract predators or scavengers shall be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, all trash and construction debris shall be removed from work areas.

TFN 7: Without express permission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, all refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles shall occur at least 60 feet from the riparian habitat or water bodies and not in a location from which a spill will drain directly toward aquatic habitat. The monitor shall ensure contamination of habitat does not occur during such operations. Prior to the start of work, Caltrans shall ensure that a plan is in place for prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. All workers shall be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.

TFN 8: Habitat contours shall be returned to a natural configuration at the end of project activities. This measure shall be implemented in all areas disturbed by project activities unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible or that modification of the original contours will benefit the California red-legged frog.

TFN 9: The number of access routes, the size of staging areas, and the total area of activity shall be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project. Environmentally sensitive areas shall be established to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete construction and minimize the impact on 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.

TFN 10: Caltrans shall attempt to schedule work for times of the year when impacts on the California red-legged frog will be minimal. For example, work that will affect large pools that may support breeding will 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 will 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 project planning shall be used to assist in scheduling work activities to avoid sensitive habitats during key times of the year.

TFN 11: To control sedimentation during and after project construction, Caltrans shall implement Best Management Practices as outlined in any authorizations or permits issued under the authority of the Clean Water Act received for the project. If Best Management Practices are ineffective, Caltrans shall attempt to remedy the situation immediately, in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

TFN 12: If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes shall be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.2 inch to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water shall be released or pumped downstream at an appropriate rate to maintain downstream flows during construction. Upon completion of construction activities, any diversions or barriers to flow shall be removed in a manner that will allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate. Alteration of the streambed shall be minimized to the maximum extent possible; any imported material shall be removed from the streambed upon project completion.

TFN 13: Unless approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, water shall not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.

TFN 14: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall permanently remove any individuals of exotic species, such as American bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*), signal and red swamp crayfish *(Pacifastacus leniusculus*; *Procambarus clarkii*), and centrarchid fishes, from the project area to the maximum extent possible. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-

approved biologist shall be responsible for ensuring his or her activities comply with the California Fish and Game Code.

TFN 15: 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 total amount of permanently disturbed habitat.

TFN 16: To ensure that diseases are not transported 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 shall be followed at all times.

TFN 17: Project sites shall be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area. Locally collected plant materials shall be used to the extent practicable. Invasive exotic plants shall be controlled to the maximum extent practicable. This measure shall be implemented in all areas disturbed by project activities unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible or practical.

TFN 18: Caltrans shall not use herbicides as the primary method to control invasive, exotic plants. However, if it is determined that the use of herbicides is the only feasible method for controlling invasive plants at a specific project site, it will implement the following additional protective measures for the California red-legged frog:

a. Caltrans shall not use herbicides during the breeding season for the California red-legged frog.

b. Caltrans shall conduct surveys for the California red-legged frog immediately before the start of herbicide use. If found, California red-legged frogs shall be relocated to a suitable habitat far enough from the project area that no direct contact with herbicides will occur.

c. Giant reed and other invasive plants shall 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 shall use a hand-held sprayer for foliar application of AquaMaster® or Rodeo® where large monoculture stands occur at an individual project site.

e. All precautions shall be taken to ensure that no herbicide is applied to native vegetation.

f. Herbicides shall not be applied to or near open water surfaces (no closer than 60 feet from open water).

g. Foliar applications of herbicides shall not occur when wind speeds are in excess of 3 miles per hour.

h. No herbicides shall be applied within 24 hours of forecasted rain.

i. Application of all herbicides shall be done by qualified Caltrans staff or contractors to ensure that overspray is minimized, that all applications are made in accordance with the label recommendations, and with the implementation of all required and reasonable safety measures. A safe dye shall be added to the mixture to visually denote the treated sites. Application of herbicides shall 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 shall be stored, poured, or refilled at least 60 feet from riparian habitat or water bodies in a location where a spill will not drain directly toward aquatic habitat. Before the start of work, Caltrans shall ensure that a plan is in place for a prompt and effective response to accidental spills. All workers shall be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.

Nesting Birds

The following measures apply to all birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife requires preconstruction nesting bird surveys and the avoidance of impacts on active bird nests.

NB 1: Prior to construction, vegetation removal shall be scheduled to occur from October 1 to January 31, outside of the typical nesting bird season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts on nesting birds. If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the nesting season (February 1 to September 30), a nesting bird survey shall be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans no more than three days before construction. If an active nest is found, Caltrans shall coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to 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 juveniles have fledged (permanently left the nest).

NB 2: During construction, active bird nests shall not be disturbed, and eggs or young of birds covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code shall not be killed, destroyed, injured, or harassed at any time. Readily visible exclusion zones where nests must be avoided within 100

feet of disturbance shall be established by a qualified biologist using environmentally sensitive area fencing. Work in exclusion zones shall be avoided until young birds have fledged or a qualified biologist has determined that nesting activity has otherwise stopped.

NB 3: All clearing, grubbing, and vegetation removal shall be monitored and documented by the biological monitor(s), regardless of the time of year.

NB 4: If least Bell's vireo and/or a southwestern willow flycatcher are seen within 100 feet of the project area during the course of construction, a qualified biologist shall implement an exclusion zone, and work shall be avoided within the exclusion zone until the least Bell's vireo and/or the southwestern willow flycatcher is located greater than 100 feet from project-related disturbance. If an active least Bell's vireo and/or southwestern willow flycatcher nest is seen within 100 feet of the project area, all project activities shall immediately stop, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans shall be contacted within 48 hours. Caltrans shall then reinitiate Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for least Bell's vireo and/or southwestern willow flycatcher and implement additional measures as necessary.

NB 5: It is recommended that birds be excluded from the existing bridge prior to its demolition. Nesting bird exclusion methods may include the installation of exclusion materials or other methods approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Installation of exclusion materials shall occur outside of the typical nesting season (i.e., implement exclusion methods from October 1 to January 31).

NB 6: Trees to be removed shall be noted on the design plans. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing shall be installed around the dripline of trees to be protected within the project limits.

NB 7: If a western snowy plover is seen within 100 feet of the project area during the course of construction, a qualified biologist shall implement an exclusion zone, and work shall be avoided within the exclusion zone until the western snowy plover is located greater than 100 feet from the project-related disturbance. If an active western snowy plover nest is seen within 100 feet of the project area, all project activities shall immediately stop, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans shall be contacted within 48 hours. Caltrans shall then reinitiate Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the western snowy plover and implement additional avoidance and/or minimization measures as necessary.

Roosting Bats

Due to the presence of potential roosting habitat within the project area, the following measures will be applied to completely avoid adverse effects on roosting bats:

RB 1: Prior to construction, vegetation removal shall be scheduled to occur from September 2 to January 31, outside of the typical maternity roosting season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts on roosting bats. If tree removal, bridge deconstruction, or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the nesting season (February 1 to September 1), a roosting bat survey shall be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans within 14 days before construction. If an active roost is found, a qualified Caltrans biologist will 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 stopped.

RB 2: During construction, active roost sites shall not be disturbed or destroyed. Readily visible exclusion zones where roost sites are present shall be established by a qualified biologist using environmentally sensitive area fencing. The size of the exclusion zone(s) shall be determined by a qualified biologist.

RB 3: If bats are found by a qualified biologist to be maternity roosting, active bat maternity roosts shall not be disturbed until pups are volant (capable of flight).

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated October 13, 2023, the following significance determination has been made:

The existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge is listed in the Caltrans Historic Bridge Inventory as a Category 5 bridge, meaning it is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The existing bridge has undergone several modifications and repairs during its lifetime. The existing bridge is not considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

The project will not affect or impact any cultural resources because project activities will be limited to areas that have been previously disturbed. Although a cultural site has been identified within the project limits, the cultural site is highly disturbed due to past human activities and has been well documented by past site investigations. Project-related activities will occur on portions of the cultural site that do not contribute to the quality of the site, and it is anticipated that the project will have no adverse effects on the cultural site. In addition, an environmentally sensitive area will be established and

enforced during project planning and construction to avoid unintended impacts on the cultural site.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	**No Impact**
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	**No Impact**
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	**No Impact**

2.1.6 Energy

Caltrans incorporates energy efficiency, conservation, and climate change measures into transportation planning, project development, design, operations, maintenance, facilities, fleets, equipment, and buildings to minimize the use of fuel supplies and energy resources and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The project will not alter existing vehicle capacity or the existing alignment of State Route 1 and, therefore, will not alter existing energy use on the State Highway System. Some energy use will be required for project construction but will be minimized whenever possible through the implementation of greenhouse gas reduction strategies during project construction. The relatively small amount of energy that will be used on project construction is anticipated to help reduce future energy use by minimizing the frequency of preventive and scheduled maintenance operations on the new southbound bridge.

The project will not alter or conflict with existing local, regional, or state plans for energy management.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation?	**No Impact**
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	**No Impact**

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

The southbound Toro Creek Bridge is next to the northbound Toro Creek Bridge; both bridges share the same geologic and soil conditions. Therefore, the project engineers have determined that the geologic and soil reports prepared for the Northbound Toro Creek Bridge Replacement Project (05-0L721) will apply to the Toro Creek Southbound Bridge Replacement Project (05-1R100). In addition, it is anticipated that the existing geologic and soil conditions within the project area have remained unchanged since investigations were conducted for 05-0L721.

Considering the information in the Preliminary Seismic Recommendation for 05-0L721, dated March 28, 2014, the Preliminary Foundation Report for 05-0L721, dated January 17, 2017, the Infiltration Report for 05-0L721, dated December 11, 2018, and the Paleontological Investigation Report for 05-1R100, dated November 16, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: 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.	**No Impact**
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	**No Impact**
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
iv) Landslides?	**No Impact**
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	**No Impact**
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	**No Impact**
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**
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

Based on the geotechnical investigations conducted for the project area, soil liquefaction could occur on the project site in the event of an earthquake. The potential for liquefaction is higher where groundwater is present and the subsurface geology has become saturated.

Site investigations have confirmed the presence of groundwater within the project area. The groundwater elevation was determined to be approximately the same level as the water surface elevation of the creek. The elevation of the surface water in the creek is influenced by creek flows, tidal levels, and the occasional presence of a beach berm that blocks creek discharges into the ocean. At times when the water level in the creek is declining, the groundwater elevation may be higher than the surface water elevation.

Site investigations suggest that soils from the highest anticipated groundwater elevation to approximately 15 feet below sea level may be liquefiable. There is also a potential that liquefiable layers are present between approximately 39 feet below sea level and approximately 9 feet above sea level.

Environmental Consequences

The existing southbound bridge will be removed and replaced with a new bridge that will be designed to meet current seismic standards. The new bridge structure will use more robust support elements (piles, columns, abutments, etc.) that will minimize the potential risk associated with seismic events and strong ground shaking that could result in liquefaction.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The new bridge structure will incorporate the most current Caltrans Seismic Design Standards and will be built to address all potential geologic issues

identified within the project site. Therefore, no additional project measures are anticipated.

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Climate Change Report dated October 2, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for documenting greenhouse gas emissions nationwide; the California Air Resources Board does so for the state.

The project area is located within the Regional Transportation Plan prepared by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments. The Regional Transportation Plan identifies plans and strategies to increase alternative forms of travel such as biking, walking, and public transportation to help meet greenhouse gas emission reduction goals as well as improve public accessibility, safety, and health.

The project is located on State Route 1, which is a major north-south route that connects the various communities and towns located along the central coast region. Traffic in the region consists primarily of local residents and local business operations, with tourist traffic typically at its highest during the weekends and holidays. Tourist visitation is particularly high during the summer months. The region can be described as semirural, with a mix of open spaces used for recreation and residential areas. The project is located on the north end of Morro Bay and is just south of Cayucos. Within the project limits, State Route 1 is an expressway with two lanes of travel in each direction, along with the occasional at-grade intersections, turn pockets, and pullouts.

Environmental Consequences

The purpose of the project is to replace the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge with a new bridge structure. The project will not alter the existing

highway capacity or alignment and will not alter current vehicle miles traveled on State Route 1. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to alter existing operational greenhouse gas emissions for the region or conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the region.

The total estimated greenhouse gas emissions for project construction are about 280 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions over a period of approximately 250 working days. This estimate is based on assumptions made during the environmental planning phase of the project and is considered a “ballpark” estimate of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions based on limited data inputs and default modeling values for a bridge construction and preservation project.

While the project will generate greenhouse gas emissions as a result of construction activities, it is not anticipated to substantially contribute to the regional emission level. In addition, the construction of a new bridge will help offset emissions that would otherwise have been generated by maintenance and rehabilitation efforts to keep the existing bridge functioning. The project includes Caltrans Standard Specifications that will help limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated during project construction, as mentioned in Section 1.5, *Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives*.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following project-specific measures will be implemented to further reduce and minimize greenhouse gas emissions generated by project construction activities:

GHG 1: Limit idling to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment not used in active operations.

GHG 2: Reduce the need for transport of earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.

GHG 3: Use accelerated bridge construction methods, when feasible, to reduce construction duration.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment dated November 28, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
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?	**No Impact**
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school?	**No Impact**
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?	**No Impact**
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	**No Impact**
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The project is on State Route 1 in San Luis Obispo County and on the northern end of the city of Morro Bay. The area around the project is considered semirural, and there are no homes or businesses within 1,000 feet of the project site. The project location is next to the beach and within a riparian area, with minimal vegetation present.

The project will replace the existing southbound bridge, which was built in 1962. The bridge structure is made from reinforced concrete, and the bridge rails are made from concrete and steel. The existing southbound bridge shows evidence of nonrecoverable corrosion, concrete spalling, exposed rebars, and decades of weathering.

The area surrounding the project was previously the site of the Estero Bay Chevron Marine Terminal. There are two known records of contaminated sites within 1,000 feet of the project location. Both contaminated sites are associated with past operations of the Estero Bay Chevron Marine Terminal and the Texaco Estero Bay Tank Farm. Both contaminated sites have been remediated, and their cases are closed.

The historical use of leaded gasoline in automobiles has resulted in elevated concentrations of aerially deposited lead in the soils along California's roadways. Investigations conducted during the Northbound Toro Creek Bridge Replacement Project identified the presence of aerially deposited lead in the soils along the highway shoulders, and it is anticipated that lead-containing soils will also be encountered on this project.

Environmental Consequences

Project construction activities could encounter aerially deposited lead, lead-containing paint, asbestos-containing materials, and treated wood waste.

Aerially Deposited Lead

The extent to which lead-containing soils will be disturbed during construction and whether soils will be exported from the project site or reused onsite will be determined during the project's design phase. A site-specific assessment that includes soil sampling will be performed to document lead concentrations and determine the proper handling and management of any contaminated soils. The project will include Caltrans standards and special measures for soil management, which will be incorporated into the project plan before construction.

Lead-Containing Paint and Asbestos-Containing Materials

Lead-containing paint and asbestos-containing materials may be present on the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge based on the age of the bridge. During the demolition of the existing bridge structure, the project will likely disturb lead-containing materials and asbestos-containing materials. To confirm the presence and determine the concentrations of lead-containing paint and asbestos-containing materials, the project will conduct additional testing and assessments before project construction. The project will implement Caltrans standard measures to detect, monitor, and address lead-containing paint and asbestos-containing materials.

Treated Wood Waste

Most of the guardrails and signposts on State Route 1 are made of wood that has been treated with chemical preservatives to prevent rot or infestation. These treated woods are considered to be hazardous materials. The project will replace existing wooden guardrails and signposts, which will generate treated wood waste. The project will implement Caltrans standard measures to collect and address treated wood waste.

While the project does anticipate encountering routine hazardous waste issues during construction, it will implement Caltrans standard measures to ensure that all potentially hazardous waste and materials are appropriately handled, treated, and addressed during project construction.

Project construction will require temporary traffic control and will involve a detour for the southbound traffic, which could affect emergency vehicle response times or emergency evacuation plans in the area. However, the proposed detour will be contained within the state right-of-way and is not anticipated to result in considerable delays to emergency responses and/or evacuations. In addition, the project will coordinate with emergency services and planners and implement Caltrans standard measures to minimize delays in emergency response and emergency evacuation plans during project construction.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The project will include Caltrans standard measures and strategies to detect, monitor, and address hazardous waste and materials that could be encountered on the project. The project will include Caltrans standard measures and strategies to minimize potential delays in emergency response times and evacuation plans during project construction. Therefore, no additional project-specific measures are required.

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information in the Location Hydraulic Study dated October 2, 2023, and the Water Quality Technical Memo dated September 25, 2023, the following determinations have been made.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and 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**
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 onsite or offsite;	**No Impact**
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite;	**No Impact**
(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	**No Impact**
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	**No Impact**
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	**No Impact**
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

Hydrology

Based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Map, Toro Creek is designated as Zone AE and Zone A, which are both special flood hazard areas. Zone AE has a defined Base Flood Elevation, while Zone A does not. The southbound Toro Creek Bridge is located within Zone AE and could be exposed to a 100-year flood event. The existing southbound bridge structure and creek can accommodate a 100-year flood event with no effect on flood flows.

Water Quality

The project is within the Estero Bay Hydrologic Unit and the Cambria Hydrologic Area and is also in the Toro Hydraulic Sub-Area. Toro Creek and the Pacific Ocean are the receiving water bodies within the project limits. Toro Creek is listed as being impaired by the presence of copper. However, there are currently no total maximum daily loads established for copper on Toro Creek. There are no drinking water reservoirs and/or recharge facilities within the project limits. There are also no existing treatment Best Management Practices to prevent or reduce water pollution within the project limits.

Environmental Consequences

Hydrology

The new southbound Toro Creek Bridge will be located in the same location over Toro Creek as the existing bridge. The new bridge will be slightly wider and longer when compared to the existing bridge. The dimensions of the new bridge will increase the cross-sectional area over Toro Creek and will reduce the potential for the new bridge to impede high water flows under the bridge. The design of the new southbound bridge is not anticipated to affect existing floodplain conditions, and the location of the new bridge will not encroach on existing floodplains. In addition, there have been no major hydraulic concerns or channel degradation at this location within the past several decades, and the proposed new southbound bridge will be able to accommodate the 100-year flood flow and meet all current hydraulic standards.

Water Quality

During construction, it is anticipated that ground disturbance in and around the creek could result in sedimentation and erosion. The project will include a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan to manage erosion from disturbed soil areas and to help reduce sedimentation in the creek. Project construction also has the potential to discharge stormwater within the project limits to Toro Creek and the Pacific Ocean. However, the project will incorporate appropriate engineering design and robust stormwater Best Management Practices during construction. The project is anticipated to result in minimal short-term water quality impacts as a result of construction activities, but it is not anticipated to result in long-term impacts on water quality.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measures will be implemented to minimize potential impacts on water quality as a result of temporary construction-related activities:

WQ 1: Minimize active disturbed soil areas during the rainy season.

WQ 2: Implement temporary protective cover and erosion control on all nonactive disturbed soil areas and soil stockpiles.

WQ 3: Control the erosive forces of stormwater runoff with effective storm flow management and strategies such as earthen dikes, drainage swales, and velocity dissipation devices as determined feasible.

WQ 4: Implement linear sediment control on all active and nonactive disturbed soil areas during the rainy season.

WQ 5: Minimize sediment discharge by stabilizing construction site entrances, installing temporary drainage inlet protection, and conducting street sweeping and/or vacuuming as necessary.

WQ 6: Implement appropriate wind erosion controls year-round during construction.

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning
a) Physically divide an established community?	**No Impact**
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

The southbound Toro Creek Bridge is located within the coastal zone and is subject to the California Coastal Act. Toro Creek is considered an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area as defined by the California Coastal Act.

State Route 1 crosses over Toro Creek and sits between the beach side of Toro Creek to the west and the inland side of Toro Creek to the east. Toro Creek flows east to west, originating from the inland hills and draining directly to the Pacific Ocean. The inland portion of Toro Creek east of the bridge is considered a high-quality undisturbed riparian area in a somewhat natural state, containing dense vegetation. The beach side of Toro Creek west of the bridge is actively used by the public for recreation and has historically been disturbed by operations associated with the Estero Bay Chevron Marine Terminal, which is located less than 200 feet south from Toro Creek. The edges of State Route 1 are regularly maintained and vegetated by ruderal plant species. The presence of water in the creek is dependent on seasonal rainfall for the region.

City of Morro Bay Local Coastal Plan

The project is located within the city of Morro Bay and is subject to its Local Coastal Program policies. The Local Coastal Program is part of the city's general plan, which was approved in 2021.

County of San Luis Obispo Local Coastal Plan

The project is located within the county of San Luis Obispo and is subject to its Local Coastal Program policies, which were revised in 2007, and the county's Estero Area Plan, which was revised in 2009.

California Coastal Commission Jurisdiction

A portion of Toro Creek extending approximately 1,000 feet west from the Pacific Ocean is within California Coastal Commission jurisdiction. A map of the California Coastal Commission jurisdictional areas around the project site is presented in Appendix E, Toro Creek Area Jurisdiction. The California Coastal Commission jurisdiction encompasses the coastal Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas as it extends to the top banks along the creek and/or the other edges of nearby riparian vegetation. The project will be subject to California Coastal Act policies.

[The following paragraph has been added since the public circulation of this document.] An Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (also known by the acronym ESHA) is defined in California Coastal Act Section 30107.5 as "any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments."

Environmental Consequences

The project will result in temporary and permanent impacts in the Coastal Zone and on Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas within Toro Creek. Temporary impacts will result from construction-related activities, and permanent impacts will result from new bridge elements and features that will be constructed.

The project will replace the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge with a new bridge structure. The new southbound bridge will be located at the same location as the existing bridge. The new southbound bridge will be approximately 2 feet wider than the existing bridge in order to accommodate widening of the outside shoulders from 8 feet to 10 feet. The new southbound bridge will maintain the existing 12-foot-wide travel lanes and 5-foot-wide inside shoulders. The new southbound bridge will be approximately 15 feet longer, with a new bridge length of approximately 131 feet. The new southbound bridge will be longer as a result of raising the bridge profile by approximately 2 feet to address potential sea level rise conditions at Toro Creek. The new bridge will be fitted with California ST-75 Bridge Rail, which is

a metal, see-through rail commonly found along California's coast that meets current Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware standards. The new southbound bridge will be located within the existing state right-of-way. Project construction will require temporary construction access to the creek but will not require any permanent easements or new right-of-way to complete the project.

Local Coastal Plans

Based on reviews of existing local coastal plans and policies, the project is not anticipated to conflict with existing coastal policies set by the city of Morro Bay or the county of San Luis Obispo.

The project's design is anticipated to preserve and protect existing scenic vistas and visual character by constructing the new southbound bridge in the same location as the existing southbound bridge and by including design features, such as bridge rails, guardrails, and aesthetic treatments, that will help blend the new southbound bridge with the existing visual context of the area. The project's design is anticipated to avoid and minimize potential impacts on biological and coastal resources where practicable and to mitigate anticipated impacts on biological and coastal habitats by enhancing existing habitat conditions. Widening the outside shoulders on the new southbound bridge will improve conditions for bicyclists traveling on State Route 1 through the area. Project construction will require temporary traffic control for southbound traffic on State Route 1. However, temporary traffic control will be designed to allow southbound travelers to use the northbound State Route 1 during project construction. It is anticipated that project construction will require temporary occupation of the southbound shoulders along State Route 1 for construction storage and staging. Temporary occupation of the southbound shoulders will be limited to locations next to Toro Creek Bridge. It is anticipated that coastal access next to Toro Creek Bridge will be temporarily limited in order to maintain appropriate working conditions for construction operations.

California Coastal Commission Jurisdiction

The existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge is located approximately 250 feet east from the Pacific Ocean and is within the limits of the California Coastal Commission jurisdictional area and within the Toro Creek coastal Environmental Sensitive Habitat Area. Construction of the new southbound Toro Creek Bridge will result in temporary and permanent impacts within California Coastal Commission jurisdictional areas and within the Toro Creek coastal Environmental Sensitive Habitat Area.

Since the project is located within California Coastal Commission jurisdiction, as well as within the Local Coastal Program jurisdiction for the city of Morro Bay and the county of San Luis Obispo, there is the potential that the project may process a consolidated Coastal Development Permit in order to simplify

the Coastal Development Permit process by eliminating the need to prepare and process multiple Coastal Development Permits through the different jurisdictions.

Although project activities will occur within the mapped Toro Creek coastal Environmental Sensitive Habitat Area, there is little or no riparian vegetation at the southbound bridge. The southbound bridge is located over the outlet of the creek, where it drains directly to the ocean. The riparian condition at the southbound bridge constantly changes because it is highly influenced by tidal flows and storm events and is susceptible to changing beach conditions. When compared to the high-quality undisturbed riparian habitats that are found farther upstream on Toro Creek, the riparian habitat around the southbound bridge is less stable, is less likely to establish riparian vegetation, and will be considered a lower-quality riparian habitat. Currently, there are no biological communities located around the southbound bridge, and none are anticipated to be affected by project activities. Project activities are not anticipated to extend eastward past the existing northbound Toro Creek Bridge, and the project is not anticipated to disturb high-quality riparian habitats that are found upstream on Toro Creek. The project may require temporary dewatering plans during construction if water is present in the creek, but these plans will be developed to ensure that riparian habitats within the project area are protected.

[The following paragraph has been added since the public circulation of this document.] Biological Avoidance and Minimization Measure WW 1 has been included to require delineation of project work limits and exclusion of environmentally sensitive habitat areas from the work area through installation of environmentally sensitive area fencing. Caltrans-defined environmentally sensitive areas shall be noted on design plans and delineated in the field before the start of construction activities.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No project measures specific to land use or planning are anticipated. The project is anticipated to be consistent with existing city, county, and California Coastal Commission policies. The project is not anticipated to conflict with existing land use plans, policies, or regulations and is not anticipated to require changes to existing land use plans, policies, or regulations.

It is anticipated that the visual measures presented in Section 2.1.1, Aesthetics, will be sufficient to minimize anticipated visual impacts within the coastal zone.

It is anticipated that the biological measures presented in Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources, will be sufficient to avoid and minimize anticipated project impacts on Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas around Toro Creek.

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

The project will replace the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge with a new bridge structure located on State Route 1. The project will have no involvement in the removal or extraction of mineral resources.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	**No Impact**
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	**No Impact**

2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Noise Technical Memo dated September 25, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made.

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The project is on State Route 1, along the coast between Morro Bay and Cayucos. The land surrounding the project limits is mostly undeveloped, with

the beach on the west and hills on the east. No potentially sensitive noise receptors were identified in proximity to the project area.

Environmental Consequences

The project will not alter the capacity or alignment of State Route 1, and it is anticipated that local noise levels will be similar to existing conditions. Therefore, no long-term noise abatement measures will be required for the project.

Project construction activities will result in a temporary and intermittent increase in noise levels within the project vicinity. The amount of construction noise will vary with the particular activities and the types of equipment used. It is anticipated that bridge demolition and the installation of new bridge piles will create the most construction noise. It is anticipated that the project will use drilling or vibrating methods to install new bridge piles. The project will not use impact methods to install new bridge piles because it has the potential to affect fish that may be present in the creek. The project will require nighttime work for setting up temporary traffic control, and Caltrans policy states that normal construction equipment should not emit noise greater than 86 decibels at 50 feet from the source during the hours of 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. The project will include Caltrans standard measures pertaining to the reduction and control of construction-generated noise. Although the project is not anticipated to result in noticeable noise impacts, it will include measures to minimize noise disturbances from construction activities.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Noise Abatement Measures

The project will implement the following minimization measures to reduce potential impacts associated with temporary construction-related noise:

NOI 1: Notify the public in advance of the construction schedule when construction noise and upcoming construction activities are likely to produce considerably higher noise levels than expected. This notice shall be given two weeks in advance of the proposed work. A notice should be published in local news media and include the dates and duration of the proposed construction activity. The District 5 Public Information Office will post notice of the proposed construction and potential community impacts after receiving the notice from the resident engineer.

NOI 2: Shield loud pieces of stationary construction equipment if complaints are received.

NOI 3: Place portable generators, air compressors, etc., as far away from sensitive noise receptors as possible.

NOI 4: Limit grouping major pieces of equipment operating in one area to the greatest extent possible.

NOI 5: Use newer equipment that is quieter and ensure that all equipment items have the manufacturer's recommended noise abatement measures, such as mufflers, engine covers, and engine vibration isolators, intact and operational. Internal combustion engines used for any purpose on or related to the job shall be equipped with a muffler or baffle of a type recommended by the manufacturer.

NOI 6: Consult District 5 noise staff if complaints are received during the construction process.

2.1.14 Population and Housing

The project will replace the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge with a new bridge structure. The new bridge will be located at the same location as the existing bridge on State Route 1. The project is not anticipated to have any effect on existing population or housing conditions in the region.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	**No Impact**
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	**No Impact**

2.1.15 Public Services

The project will replace the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge with a new bridge structure. The new bridge will be located on State Route 1 at the same location as the existing bridge. The project will not be involved with any planned or existing governmental facilities or public services, and it is not anticipated to have any effect on any planned or existing governmental facilities in the vicinity of the project. The project will maintain access on State Route 1 during project construction. Access to any existing governmental facilities in the vicinity of the project will be maintained during and after project construction. Response times for emergency vehicles entering the project area will remain the same during and after project construction.

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: Fire protection?	**No Impact**
Police protection?	**No Impact**
Schools?	**No Impact**
Parks?	**No Impact**
Other public facilities?	**No Impact**

2.1.16 Recreation

The project will replace the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge with a new bridge structure. The new bridge will be located on State Route 1 at the same location as the existing bridge. The project will not result in an increase in park use in the area or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

The project is next to a beach that is well visited. Beachgoers typically use the highway shoulders and pullouts near the southbound bridge for vehicle parking. During project construction, highway shoulders and pullouts within the project limits will be temporarily closed for public use in order to provide a safe working space for construction activities. Although shoulders and pullouts will be temporarily unavailable during project construction, beach access will still be open. Beachgoers will still be able to access the beach from multiple nearby locations outside of the project limits.

Bicycle lanes on State Route 1 going through the project area will be maintained and will remain accessible during project construction. Bicycle lanes will be temporarily detoured over the northbound Toro Creek Bridge during the construction of the new southbound bridge. The southbound and northbound bicycle access will be restored to their respective directional lanes once construction of the new southbound bridge is completed.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	**No Impact**
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**

2.1.17 Transportation

The project will replace the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge with a new bridge structure. The new bridge will be located on State Route 1 at the same location as the existing bridge. Project activities are anticipated to occur within the existing state right-of-way. State Route 1 will remain accessible for vehicle and bicycle traffic during project construction.

There are proposals for a multiuse trail to connect Morro Bay with Cayucos. The multiuse trail will connect Toro Lane in Morro Bay with Studio Drive in Cayucos. The proposed connector trail will be located west of State Route 1 and along the beach berm. Preliminary layouts for the proposed connector trail show the southern portion of the trail between Toro Lane in Morro Bay and Toro Creek Bridge, located within the existing state right-of-way. The proposed connector trail will include the construction of a new multiuse bridge spanning over Toro Creek next to the southbound Toro Creek Bridge on State Route 1. The proposed connector trail is still in development, and information on the project is still preliminary, with no approved design or construction plans. Caltrans is coordinating with Morro Bay and Cayucos to ensure that both the new southbound Toro Creek Bridge and the proposed connector trail can be built with minimal conflicts. The Toro Creek Southbound Bridge Replacement Project is not anticipated to prevent the development of the Morro Bay and Cayucos connector trails.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	**No Impact**
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**
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

The project is located directly on State Route 1 in San Luis Obispo County, between the city of Morro Bay and the community of Cayucos. State Route 1 is the primary north-south access in the region. The only alternative north-south access to the region requires travelers to take either State Route 41 or State Route 46 and connect with U.S. Route 101 for north-south travel. This alternative north-south access requires traveling approximately 10 to 20 miles east to U.S. Route 101. There are no locally available routes (surface streets) to bypass the project's construction site on State Route 1.

Environmental Consequences

The project will require the demolition of the existing southbound bridge and the construction of a new bridge in the same location. During project construction, the southbound lanes of State Route 1 within the construction site will be closed. Prior to project construction, temporary traffic control will be implemented to detour southbound travelers to the existing northbound bridge to cross over Toro Creek. Southbound travelers will share the northbound bridge with northbound travelers on State Route 1 until construction of the southbound bridge is completed. After construction of the southbound bridge is completed, the southbound lanes on State Route 1 within the construction site will be reopened, temporary traffic controls will be removed, southbound travelers will be diverted back to the new southbound bridge to cross over Toro Creek, and the northbound lanes on State Route 1 will be restored for northbound travelers.

During project construction, southbound and northbound travel on State Route 1 will be maintained with temporary traffic controls. This will allow existing and emergency access to and from the region to remain open with minimal disruptions. The proposed temporary traffic control and detour over the northbound bridge will be contained within the state right-of-way and is not anticipated to result in considerable delays to emergency response and/or

evacuations in the region. In addition, the project will coordinate with emergency services and planners and implement Caltrans standard measures to minimize delays in emergency response and emergency evacuation plans during project construction.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The project will include Caltrans standard measures and strategies to minimize potential delays in emergency response times and evacuation plans during project construction. No additional project-specific measures are required.

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated October 13, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

The project will not affect or impact any tribal cultural resources because project activities are limited to areas that have been previously disturbed. Although a tribal cultural site has been identified within the project limits, the site is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources due to a lack of integrity. The site is highly disturbed due to past human activities and has been well documented by past site investigations. Project-related activities will occur on portions of the site that do not contribute to the quality of the site, and it is anticipated that the project will not generate additional impacts on the existing condition of the tribal cultural site. In addition, an environmentally sensitive area will be established and enforced during project planning and construction to avoid unintended impacts on the tribal cultural site.

Caltrans staff has contacted the Native American Heritage Commission and has received a list of consulting tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area. Consultation with tribal groups is ongoing and will continue until project construction is completed. The project will require tribal monitoring during all ground-disturbing activities.

Will 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:

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	**No Impact**
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	**No Impact**

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	**No Impact**
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**
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**

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

Affected Environment

There is a known gas pipeline located west of State Route 1. The gas pipeline is within the state right-of-way and lies parallel to the highway. At Toro Creek, the gas pipeline crosses under the creek channel. The Southern California Gas Company owns the gas pipeline and has confirmed the location, alignment, and size of the pipeline within the project limits.

Environmental Consequences

The project will replace the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge with a new bridge structure. The new southbound bridge will be located over Toro Creek on State Route 1 at the same location as the existing southbound bridge.

It is anticipated that the existing location of the gas pipeline will conflict with the new and wider southbound Toro Creek Bridge structure. Therefore, the gas pipeline will need to be relocated to build the project. Relocation of the gas pipeline will need to occur before the construction of the new foundations and footings for the new southbound bridge structure. The gas pipeline will be relocated farther to the west but still placed within the state right-of-way. Relocating the gas pipeline will involve horizontal directional drilling, which is a trenchless method for installing new pipelines. The use of horizontal directional drilling is anticipated to cause the least amount of disturbance within the project area. All drilling operations associated with the project will comply with all applicable and appropriate Caltrans Standard Specifications, Caltrans Standard Measures, Best Management Practices, and any permit conditions or agreements.

Further investigation into the relocation process is required and will be conducted in the next phase of the project after the project funding has been approved. Caltrans will continue coordinating with the Southern California Gas Company to ensure conflicts between the new bridge and gas pipelines are resolved accordingly.

The project will not change existing water supplies, wastewater treatment, or drainage patterns in the region. The project will not change the existing functions of electrical, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities in the region.

The project will not generate excessive amounts of solid waste that will overwhelm the capacities of existing waste management facilities. The project will recycle any recyclable waste materials generated from project construction. Waste materials generated by the project will be collected and disposed of to meet all state and federal requirements.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

It is anticipated that Caltrans standard specifications, measures, and strategies implemented during project construction will be sufficient to avoid and minimize impacts from utility relocation activities.

2.1.20 Wildfire

The project will not substantially impair emergency response or evacuation plans in the area because it will include a detour that will allow traffic on State Route 1 to continue to flow during project construction. In addition, the project will include a Traffic Management Plan, which will require local emergency response units to be notified of the project's detours and construction schedule.

The project will not exacerbate existing wildfire risk or construct any features or facilities that could exacerbate existing wildfire risk because the project will be limited to replacing the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge with a structure of similar size and design.

There are no residences or structures downslope of the project site, so the project will not increase the risk associated with post-fire conditions.

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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	**No Impact**
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**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for 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**
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**

2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Question:	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?	**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated**
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.)	**Less Than Significant Impact**
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The project is located at Toro Creek on State Route 1 in San Luis Obispo County and is within the city of Morro Bay. The project will replace the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge with a new bridge at the same location. Project activities will occur inside the existing state right-of-way, and no project activities are currently anticipated to occur outside the state right-of-way.

State Route 1 is designated as a State Scenic Highway, an All-American Road, and a National Scenic Byway. State Route 1 is located within the coastal zone and is subject to the Coastal Act. State Route 1 has long been recognized for its scenic qualities due to its geographic character. State Route 1 and its scenic character are important for the local residents, the local economy, and the tourism industry.

Within the project area, there are several types of natural environments and communities that support a variety of animal and plant species. The stream and riparian areas found along Toro Creek support designated critical habitats for protected species. Protected plant species are not expected to be present within the project area, and therefore, the project is not anticipated to impact any protected plant species. Protected animal species are known to be present within the project area. The project could impact the following animal species if they are present during project construction: steelhead, tidewater goby, southwestern pond turtle, Coast Range newt, California red-legged frog, nesting birds, and roosting bats.

Environmental Consequences

The goal of the project is to address issues with the existing southbound Toro Creek Bridge in order to improve reliability and access to the State Highway System at this location. Although project construction could be a temporary nuisance or inconvenience to the general public, the construction period will be relatively short when compared to the expected lifetime of the new southbound bridge. The project does not anticipate general hazards or expose the general public to hazards that could result in substantial adverse effects. In addition, the project will include Caltrans standard measures for testing and monitoring to protect the general public from hazards that could arise from construction activities. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to result in considerable impacts on the general public.

Project activities are anticipated to result in minimal impacts on the human environment. Project activities will occur on the existing State Highway System and will not expand on existing human environments. Permanent impacts will result from the physical structure of the new southbound bridge and its associated elements. However, permanent impacts will be located in the same location as the existing southbound bridge and its associated elements. Temporary impacts will result from construction-related activities

required to remove the existing bridge, construct the new bridge, and take temporary detours. All temporary impacts associated with the project will be within the existing state right-of-way. The project will include minimization measures to reduce the visual noticeability of newly installed permanent features on the highway, and it will also include Caltrans standard measures to reduce impacts caused by construction-related activities. Therefore, the project is anticipated to result in less than significant impacts on the human environment.

Project activities occurring outside of the existing paved surface will disturb natural environments and have the potential to affect any animal or plant species that may be present in those environments. Bridge replacement will result in permanent and temporary impacts on the natural environment. Permanent impacts will result from the installation of rock slope protection and slope grading to protect the new bridge structure from scour and erosion. Temporary impacts will result from vegetation removal, the construction of temporary access and staging sites, and the implementation of water diversions or dewatering plans in the creek. The project will include measures to monitor for species of interest that should be avoided or protected during construction, along with measures to replace vegetation and restore site conditions. With the implementation of the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures, it is anticipated that project impacts on the natural environment will be less than significant.

Since the project will be replacing an existing bridge structure at the same location and will not alter or expand the existing State Highway System in the project area, the project is not anticipated to alter or influence growth or development patterns in the region and is not anticipated to cause further degradation of the surrounding natural environment. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to result in considerable cumulative impacts on the human or natural environment.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The complete list of measures associated with the project can be found in Section 1.5, Standard Measures Included in All Build Alternatives, Section 2.1, CEQA Environmental Checklist, and in Appendix E, Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Summary.

The mitigation measures presented here are found in Section 2.1.4, *Biological Resources,* and will be implemented to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters

WW 8: Compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts is required to prevent a net loss of natural environments. Restoration of temporary impacts is proposed at a minimum 1-to-1 ratio (acreage), and compensatory mitigation

for permanent impacts is proposed at a minimum 3-to-1 ratio (acreage), or as determined by the appropriate agency. Replacement planting will include appropriate native plant species, a one-year plant establishment period, and monitoring to ensure success. Replacement planting strategies will be detailed in the Caltrans Landscape Planting Plan and Caltrans Mitigation and Monitoring Plan. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will include details for mitigation commitments and will be consistent with standards and mitigation commitments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will be prepared after the project has been approved and a full set of construction plans are prepared, and it will be finalized through the permit review process with regulatory agencies.

Steelhead and Tidewater Goby

FIS 3: During in-stream work, a Caltrans-approved biologist shall be retained with experience in steelhead biology and ecology, aquatic habitats, biological monitoring (including diversion and dewatering), and capturing, handling, and relocating fish species. During in-stream work, the biological monitor(s) shall continuously monitor the placement and removal of any required stream diversions to capture stranded steelheads and other native fish species and relocate them to suitable habitats as appropriate. The biologist(s) shall capture steelheads that are stranded as a result of diversion or dewatering and relocate them to suitable instream habitat outside of the work area using methods approved by the appropriate regulatory agencies, which may include providing aerated water in buckets for transport and ensuring adequate water temperatures during transport. The biologist shall note the number of steelheads observed in the affected area, the number of steelheads relocated, and the date and time of the collection and relocation.

FIS 4: During in-stream work, if pumps are incorporated to assist in temporarily dewatering the site, intakes shall be completely screened with no larger than 3/32-inch (2.38 mm) wire mesh to prevent steelheads and other sensitive aquatic species from entering the pump system. Pumps shall release the collected water to a settling basin or tank, allowing the suspended sediment to settle out prior to reentering the stream(s) outside of the isolated area. The form and function of all pumps used during the dewatering activities shall be checked daily to ensure a dry work environment and minimize adverse effects on aquatic species and habitats.

FIS 5: The biological monitor shall monitor erosion and sediment controls to identify and correct any conditions that could adversely affect steelhead or steelhead habitat. The biological monitor shall be granted the authority to stop work activity as necessary and to recommend measures to avoid or minimize adverse effects on steelhead and steelhead habitat.

[The following measure has been revised since the publication of the draft environmental document.] FIS 6: Dewatering and use of vibratory hammers,

casing twisters, and oscillators shall be limited to the low-flow period between June 1 and October 31, thus avoiding adult steelhead spawning migration and peak smolt emigration.

[The following measure has been revised since the publication of the draft environmental document.] FIS 7: The contractor shall be prohibited from using pile driving as a method of construction.

FIS 10: Prior to the initiation of stream diversion or dewatering, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist(s) shall install 1/8-inch block nets outside the impact areas and across the stream, a minimum of 20 feet above and below the locations proposed for stream diversion or dewatering. If widely separated sites are involved, more than one set of block nets shall be placed to protect the work area. The nets shall be installed on the first day of work and monitored thereafter for the duration of the work.

FIS 12: Should dewatering occur, any pumps used shall be fitted with anti-entrapment device(s) to prevent tidewater gobies from being drawn into the pump or impinged on intake screening. As dewatering proceeds, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist(s) shall remove by hand or net all tidewater gobies found and relocate them to suitable habitat downstream of the project site.

FIS 13: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall remain onsite and observe for tidewater gobies and turbidity levels within the work areas during all creek dewatering activities and shall capture and relocate tidewater gobies to suitable habitat as necessary.

Southwestern Pond Turtle, California Red-Legged Frog, and Coast Range Newt

TFN 17: Project sites shall be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area. Locally collected plant materials shall be used to the extent practicable. Invasive exotic plants shall be controlled to the maximum extent practicable. This measure shall be implemented in all areas disturbed by project activities unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible or practical.

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Chapter 3 Comments and Coordination

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process to determine the scope of environmental documentation, the level of analysis required, potential impacts and avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures, and related environmental requirements.

Agency consultation for this project has been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including Project Development Team meetings, interagency coordination meetings, and so on. Public participation is sought through the release and review of this Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration. This section summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

Biological Resource Coordination

April 11, 2023: Shelby Sanchez (Caltrans Biologist) contacted the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to obtain a National Marine Fisheries Service species list for the project area.

October 3, 2023: Shelby Sanchez contacted the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to obtain the California Natural Diversity Database species list for the project area.

October 3, 2023: Shelby Sanchez contacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain a list of threatened and endangered species for the project area.

October 30, 2023: Jennifer Moonjian (Caltrans Senior Biologist) contacted California State Parks to inquire about information regarding recent western snowy plover nesting attempts near Toro Creek Beach. California State Parks informed Caltrans that western snowy plovers have been recorded in past surveys during the breeding season, but no western snowy plovers have been seen recently at Toro Creek Beach.

Cultural Resource Coordination

May 18, 2023: Robert Johnson-Ramirez (Caltrans Archaeologist) contacted the Native American Heritage Foundation and obtained a list of consulting tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area. The following tribes were consulted: Barbareño/Ventureño Band of Mission Indians, Chumash Council of Bakersfield, and Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation.

November 14, 2023: Krista Kiaha (Caltrans Cultural Branch Chief) submitted project materials to the California State Historic Preservation Officer.

Recreational Resource Coordination

April 7, 2023: Geramaldi (Caltrans Environmental Scientist) contacted the County of San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Department for confirmation of recreational areas, place names, and county-designated places around the project limits. County staff was able to respond and provide information on April 10, 2023.

April 7, 2023: Geramaldi contacted the city of Morro Bay Recreation Services for confirmation of recreational areas, place names, and city-designated places around the project limits. City staff was able to respond and provide information on April 17, 2023.

Chapter 4 List of Preparers

This section lists the Caltrans staff responsible for the preparation and/or review of this document and/or supporting studies for this project.

Ruben Atilano PE, Transportation Engineer. M.S, Civil Engineering, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. B.S., Civil Engineering, San Francisco State University, San Francisco; 2 years of Environmental Engineering experience. Contribution: Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Noise Technical Memo, and Water Quality Technical Memo.

Myles Barker, Editorial Specialist. B.A., Mass Communication and Journalism, California State University, Fresno; 4 years of editing experience. Contribution: Technical Editor.

Jose Banuelos, B.S. Structural Engineering, University of California San Diego; 6 years of transportation engineering experience. Contribution: Location Hydraulic Study.

Matthew Fowler, Senior Environmental Planner. B.A., Geography and Methods of Geographic Analysis, San Diego State University; over 22 years of environmental planning experience. Contribution: Initial Study document review and approval.

Geramaldi, Senior Environmental Scientist. B.S., Environmental Geography, California Polytechnic State University, Pomona; 8 years of environmental planning experience. Contribution: Draft Initial Study document writing and review, Climate Change Report.

Michael Hollier, Associate Environmental Planner (Generalist). B.A., History, University of Louisiana, Lafayette; 17 years of transportation, land use, and environmental planning experience. Contribution: Final Initial Study writing and review.

Robert Johnson-Ramirez, Associate Environmental Planner. B.S., Studio Art, Southern Oregon University; 9 years of cultural resource management experience. Contribution Historic Property Survey Report.

Lindsay Kozub, Associate Environmental Planner (Architectural Historian). M.A., History and Cultural Resource Management, Colorado State University; B.A., History, University of Montana; B.S., Business, Montana State University; 13 years of experience in historical and architectural documentation, historic preservation, and cultural resource management.

Kristen Langager, Landscape Architect. B.S., Landscape Architecture, California Polytechnic State University - San Luis Obispo; over 10 years of Landscape Architecture experience. Contribution: Visual Impact Assessment.

Shelby Sanchez, Environmental Scientist. B.S., Animal Science, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; 9 years of wildlife biology experience. Contribution: Natural Environment Study.

Damaris Wyatt, Engineering Geologist. Geologist-in-Training (GIT). M.S. Geosciences, The Pennsylvania State University, B.S. Earth Science-Geology, University of California, Santa Barbara; 2 years of environmental planning experience. Contribution: Initial Site Assessment, Paleontological Investigation Report.

Chapter 5 Distribution List

Cayucos Chamber of Commerce
Post Office Box 106
Cayucos, California 93430

Cayucos Library – County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries
310 B Street
Cayucos, California 93430

City of Morro Bay City Hall
595 Harbor Street
Morro Bay, California 93442

Morro Bay Library
625 Harbor Street
Morro Bay, California 93442

City of Morro Bay Planning Department
955 Shasta Avenue
Morro Bay, California 93442

San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building
976 Osos Street
Room 200
San Luis Obispo, California 93408

San Luis Obispo County Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)
County Government Center – Room 206
1055 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, California 93408

Bike SLO County
860 Pacific Street, Suite 105
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

SLO Bicycle Club
Post Office Box 1585
San Luis Obispo, California 93406

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003-7726

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
1455 Market Street
San Francisco, California 94103

National Marine Fisheries Service
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710

Regional Water Quality Control Board – Central Coast Region
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

California Coastal Commission
Caltrans Liaison
725 Front Street #300
Santa Cruz, California 95060

California Transportation Commission
Caltrans Liaison
Electronically Filed

Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
P.O. BOX 942873, MS–49 | SACRAMENTO, CA 94273–0001
(916) 654-6130 | FAX (916) 653-5776 TTY 711
www.dot.ca.gov

September 2023

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures "*No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.*"

Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin. In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a non-discriminatory manner.

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 639-6392 or visit the following web page: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, at PO Box 942874, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 94274-0001; (916) 879-6768 (TTY 711); or at Title.VI@dot.ca.gov.

TONY TAVARES
Director

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

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Appendix B Preliminary Project Layout

The preliminary project layout in this appendix is presented for informational use only. During final design, a more detailed set of project design plans and layouts will be prepared for use in project construction and permit coordination.

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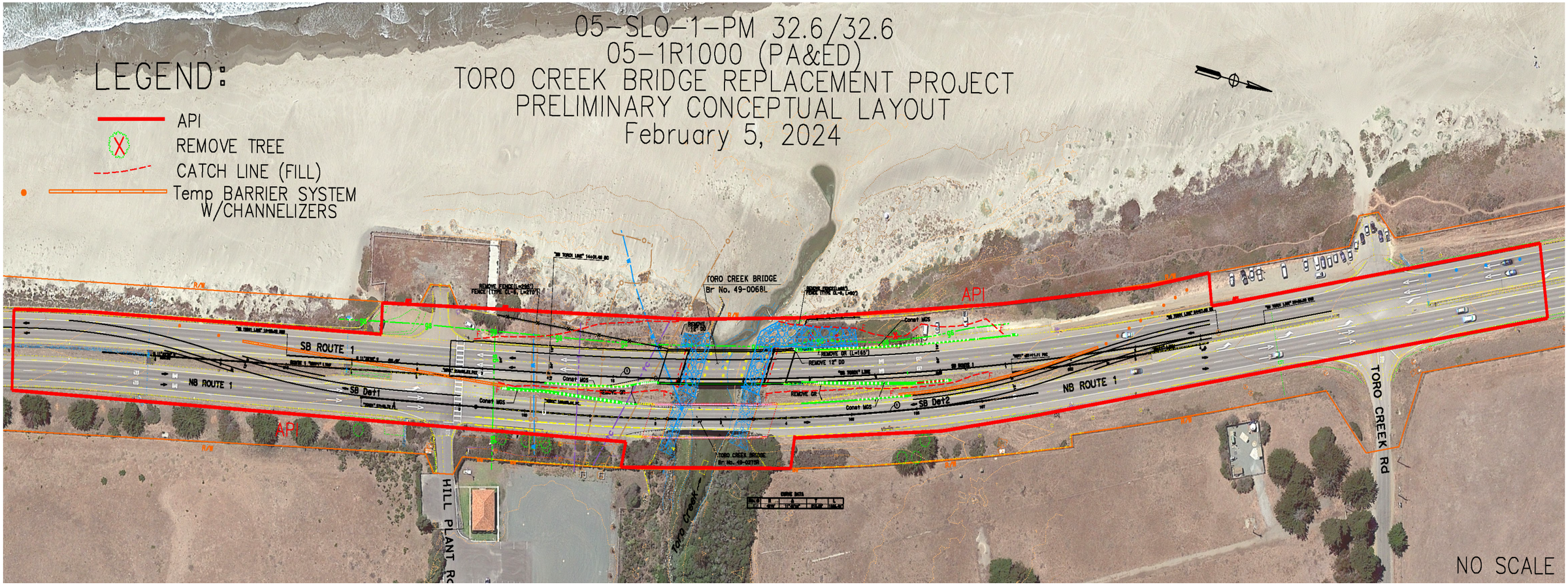
05-SLO-1-PM 32.6/32.6
05-1R1000 (PA&ED)
TORO CREEK BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT
PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL LAYOUT
February 5, 2024
LEGEND:
API
REMOVE TREE
CATCH LINE (FILL)
Temp BARRIER SYSTEM W/CHANNELIZERS
TORO CREEK BRIDGE
Br No. 49-0068L
SB ROUTE 1
NB ROUTE 1
SB Det1
SB Det2
API
API
TORO CREEK Rd
HILL PLANT RD
NO SCALE

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Appendix C Existing Toro Creek Bridge

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Appendix D Existing Bridge Condition

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Appendix E Toro Creek Area Jurisdiction

Torro Creek Area Jurisdiction

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Appendix F Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures

2.1.1 Aesthetics

VIS 1: Staging and storage for construction, including parking and equipment, must consider ocean views and be located on the inland side if possible. Reduce the impact to views and public access to the maximum extent possible.

VIS 2: Following construction, regrade and recontour any temporary construction access roads, staging and storage areas, and other temporary use areas as necessary to match the surrounding natural topography along State Route 1. Avoid unnatural-appearing remnant landforms where possible.

VIS 3: Preserve existing vegetation to the maximum extent feasible.

VIS 4: Bridge rails shall be a "see-through" railing, type ST-75, matching the existing northbound bridge structure.

VIS 5: All new and replacement guardrail vertical posts shall be colored with a stain such as Natina, as directed by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture staff.

VIS 6: If vegetation control treatment is required under the new guardrail, pervious surface treatment or colored concrete should blend with nearby soils, as directed by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture staff.

VIS 7: Any retaining walls or concrete features shall be aesthetically treated per District 5 Landscape Architecture staff.

VIS 8: Any conduits proposed to be attached to the exterior of the bridge shall be integrated with the design of the bridge overhang and rail to minimize their visibility. The conduit design shall be coordinated with and approved by District 5 Landscape Architecture staff.

VIS 9: Disturbed areas shall be revegetated and treated with erosion control using native plants and seeds per District 5 Landscape Architecture staff recommendations.

VIS 10: Replacement planting, as designed and implemented by District 5 Landscape Architecture staff, will balance preservation of view with resource agency permitting requirements and will be maintained and established.

VIS 11: Rock slope protection shall be backfilled with soil and revegetated if feasible.

VIS 12: If utility relocation is a project component, compliance with resource agency regulations is required. Overhead utilities disturbed by the project shall be undergrounded per California Public Utilities Commission requirements under Public Utilities Code 320.

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Natural Communities

NC 1: Environmentally sensitive area fencing will be installed along the maximum disturbance limits to minimize construction disturbances to nearby natural communities and habitats. Before the start of construction activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing will be delineated on project plans and installed in the field as approved by Caltrans District 5 staff.

Jurisdictional Wetlands and Other Waters

WW 1: Before the start of ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing shall be installed around jurisdictional waters, environmentally sensitive habitat areas, and the dripline of trees to be protected within the project limits. Caltrans-defined environmentally sensitive areas shall be noted on design plans and delineated in the field before the start of construction activities.

WW 2: The temporary stream diversion shall be timed to occur between June 1 and October 31 in any given year or as otherwise directed by the regulatory agencies when the surface water is likely to be dry or at a seasonal minimum. Deviations from this work window will only be made with permission from the relevant regulatory agencies.

WW 3: During construction, erosion control measures shall be implemented. Fiber rolls and barriers shall be installed as needed between the project site and jurisdictional other waters and riparian habitat. At a minimum, erosion controls shall be maintained by the contractor on a daily basis throughout the construction period.

WW 4: During construction, the staging areas shall conform to Best Management Practices applicable to attaining zero discharge of stormwater runoff. At a minimum, all equipment and vehicles shall be checked and maintained by the contractor on a daily basis to ensure proper operation and avoid potential leaks or spills.

WW 5: During construction, all project-related hazardous materials spills within the project site shall be cleaned up immediately. Readily accessible spill prevention and clean-up materials will be kept by the contractor on-site at all times during construction.

WW 6: Stream contours shall be restored as close as possible to their original condition at the end of project construction.

WW 7: A portion of the project area overlaps with the compensatory mitigation areas from the Northbound Toro Creek Bridge Replacement Project. Impacts on this newly installed vegetation will be avoided to the maximum extent practical. A minimum 1-to-1 ratio (acreage) for restoration and a 3-to-1 ratio (acreage) for compensatory mitigation, or as determined by the appropriate agency, will apply to any temporary or permanent impacts to the mitigation planting area from the Northbound Toro Creek Bridge Replacement Project.

WW 8: Compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts is required to prevent a net loss of natural environments. Restoration of temporary impacts is proposed at a minimum 1-to-1 ratio (acreage), and compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts is proposed at a minimum 3-to-1 ratio (acreage), or as determined by the appropriate agency. Replacement planting will include appropriate native plant species, a one-year plant establishment period, and monitoring to ensure success. Replacement planting strategies will be detailed in the Caltrans Landscape Planting Plan and Caltrans Mitigation and Monitoring Plan. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will include details for mitigation commitments and will be consistent with standards and mitigation commitments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will be prepared after the project has been approved and a full set of construction plans are prepared, and it will be finalized through the permit review process with regulatory agencies.

Designated Critical Habitat

Measures proposed for jurisdictional waters and other waters (WW 1–8), a measure proposed for steelhead and tidewater goby (FIS 5), measures proposed for California red-legged frogs (TFN 6–9), and measures for nesting birds (NB 3) are applicable and appropriate as measures for designated critical habitats present within the project area. No additional specific measures are required for designated critical habitats.

Invasive Plant Species

INV 1: During construction, Caltrans will ensure that the spread or introduction of invasive exotic plant species will be avoided to the maximum extent possible.

INV 2: Only clean fill will be imported. When practicable, invasive exotic plants on the project site shall be removed and properly disposed of. All invasive vegetation removed from the construction site shall be taken to a landfill to prevent the spread of invasive species. If the soil from weedy areas must be removed off-site, the top 6 inches containing the seed layer in areas

with weedy species shall be disposed of at a landfill. The inclusion of any species that occurs on the California Invasive Plant Council Invasive Plant Inventory in the Caltrans erosion control seed mix or landscaping plans for the project shall be avoided.

INV 3: To minimize the introduction of invasive plant species, all vehicles, machinery, and equipment shall be in a clean, soil-free condition before entering the project limits. Construction equipment shall be certified as "weed-free" by Caltrans before entering the construction site.

Steelhead and Tidewater Goby

FIS 1: Before the start of stream diversion or dewatering, a qualified biologist shall conduct an informal worker environmental training program, including a description of steelhead, its legal or protected status, proximity to the project site, avoidance or minimization measures to be implemented during the project, and the implications of violating the Federal Endangered Species Act and permit conditions.

FIS 2: During construction, in-stream work shall take place between June 1 and October 31 in any given year when the surface water within drainages is likely to be dry or at a seasonal minimum. Deviations from this work window will only be made with permission from Caltrans and the relevant regulatory and resource agencies.

FIS 3: During in-stream work, a Caltrans-approved biologist shall be retained with experience in steelhead biology and ecology, aquatic habitats, biological monitoring (including diversion and dewatering), and capturing, handling, and relocating fish species. During in-stream work, the biological monitor(s) shall continuously monitor the placement and removal of any required stream diversions to capture stranded steelheads and other native fish species and relocate them to suitable habitats as appropriate. The biologist(s) shall capture steelheads that are stranded as a result of diversion or dewatering and relocate them to suitable instream habitat outside of the work area using methods approved by the appropriate regulatory agencies, which may include providing aerated water in buckets for transport and ensuring adequate water temperatures during transport. The biologist shall note the number of steelheads observed in the affected area, the number of steelheads relocated, and the date and time of the collection and relocation.

FIS 4: During in-stream work, if pumps are incorporated to assist in temporarily dewatering the site, intakes shall be completely screened with no larger than 3/32-inch (2.38 mm) wire mesh to prevent steelhead and other sensitive aquatic species from entering the pump system. Pumps shall release the collected water to a settling basin or tank, allowing the suspended sediment to settle out before reentering the stream(s) outside of the isolated area. The form and function of all pumps used during the dewatering activities

shall be checked daily to ensure a dry work environment and minimize adverse effects on aquatic species and habitats.

FIS 5: The biological monitor shall monitor erosion and sediment controls to identify and correct any conditions that could adversely affect steelhead or steelhead habitat. The biological monitor shall be granted the authority to stop work activity as necessary and to recommend measures to avoid or minimize adverse effects on steelhead and steelhead habitat.

[The following measure has been revised since the publication of the draft environmental document.] FIS 6: Dewatering and use of vibratory hammers, casing twisters, and oscillators shall be limited to the low-flow period between June 1 and October 31, thus avoiding adult steelhead spawning migration and peak smolt emigration.

[The following measure has been revised since the publication of the draft environmental document.] FIS 7: The contractor shall be prohibited from using pile driving as a method of construction.

[The following measure has been revised since the publication of the draft environmental document.] FIS 8: Hydroacoustic attenuating devices shall be used, as needed.

FIS 9: Prior to the initiation of stream diversion or dewatering, a qualified biologist shall conduct an informal worker environmental training program, including a description of tidewater goby, its legal or protected status, proximity to the project site, avoidance or minimization measures to be implemented during the project, and the implications of violating the Federal Endangered Species Act and permit conditions.

FIS 10: Prior to the initiation of stream diversion or dewatering, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist(s) shall install 1/8-inch block nets outside the impact areas and across the stream, a minimum of 20 feet above and below the locations proposed for stream diversion or dewatering. If widely separated sites are involved, more than one set of block nets shall be placed to protect the work area. The nets shall be installed on the first day of work and monitored thereafter for the duration of the work.

FIS 11: Once the block nets are secured, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist(s) shall remove all tidewater gobies found between the block nets using 1/8-inch seine and dip nets and relocate tidewater gobies to suitable habitat outside of the project site.

FIS 12: Should dewatering occur, any pumps used shall be fitted with anti-entrapment device(s) to prevent tidewater gobies from being drawn into the pump or impinged on intake screening. As dewatering proceeds, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist(s) shall remove by hand or net all

tidewater gobies found and relocate them to suitable habitat downstream of the proposed project site.

FIS 13: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall remain onsite and observe for tidewater gobies and turbidity levels within the work areas during all creek dewatering activities and shall capture and relocate tidewater gobies to suitable habitat as necessary.

FIS 14: Caltrans shall provide the National Marine Fisheries Service with a written summary of work performed (including biological survey and monitoring results), Best Management Practices implemented (i.e., use of biological monitors, flagging of project areas, and erosion and sedimentation controls), and supporting photographs. Furthermore, the documentation describing listed species surveys and relocation efforts (if appropriate) shall include the name(s) of the Caltrans-approved biologist(s), the location and description of the area surveyed, the time and date of the survey, all survey methods used, a list and tally of all sensitive animal species observed during the survey, a description of the instructions and recommendations given to the applicant during the project, and a detailed discussion of capture and relocation efforts (if appropriate).

FIS 15: Caltrans shall provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with a written summary of work performed (including biological survey and monitoring results), Best Management Practices implemented (i.e., use of biological monitors, flagging of project areas, and erosion and sedimentation controls), and supporting photographs. Furthermore, the documentation describing listed species surveys and relocation efforts (if appropriate) shall include the name(s) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist(s), location and description of the area surveyed, time and date of the survey, all survey methods used, a list and tally of all sensitive animal species observed during the survey, a description of the instructions and recommendations given to the applicant during the project, and a detailed discussion of capture and relocation efforts (if appropriate).

Southwestern Pond Turtle, California Red-Legged Frog, and Coast Range Newt

The measures recommended for California red-legged frogs will be applicable for southwestern pond turtles and Coast Range newts. Additional avoidance and minimization measures may be added during consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

TFN 1: Prior to construction, a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans shall survey the project area and, if present, capture and relocate any Coast Range newts to suitable habitat downstream of the project area. Observations of species of special concern or other special-status species shall be documented on California Natural Diversity Database forms and submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife upon project completion. If

these species or other aquatic species of special concern are seen during construction, they will likewise be relocated to suitable upstream habitat by a qualified biologist.

The following measures are the applicable measures from the Programmatic Biological Opinion for California Red-Legged Frogs that will be implemented for this project:

TFN 2: Ground disturbance shall not begin until written approval is received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the biologist is qualified to conduct the work. Only U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologists shall participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California red-legged frogs.

TFN 3: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall survey the project area no more than 48 hours before the start 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 shall be allowed sufficient time to move them from the site before work begins. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall relocate the California red-legged frogs to the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by project activities. The relocation site shall be in the same drainage to the extent practicable. Caltrans shall coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the relocation site prior to the capture of any California red-legged frogs.

TFN 4: Before any activities begin on a project, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of the California red-legged frog and its habitat, the specific measures that are being implemented to conserve the California red-legged frog for the current project, and the boundaries within which the project may be accomplished. Brochures, books, and briefings may be used in the training session, provided that a qualified person is on hand to answer any questions.

TFN 5: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall be present at the work site until all California red-legged frogs have been removed, workers have been instructed, and disturbance of the habitat has been completed. After this time, Caltrans shall designate a person to monitor on-site compliance with all minimization measures. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall ensure that this monitor receives 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 will 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 shall notify the resident engineer immediately. The resident engineer shall resolve the situation by requiring

that all actions that are causing these effects be stopped. When work is stopped, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be notified as soon as possible.

TFN 6: During project activities, all trash that may attract predators or scavengers shall be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, all trash and construction debris shall be removed from work areas.

TFN 7: Without express permission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, all refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles shall occur at least 60 feet from the riparian habitat or water bodies and not in a location from which a spill will drain directly toward aquatic habitat. The monitor shall ensure contamination of habitat does not occur during such operations. Prior to the start of work, Caltrans shall ensure that a plan is in place for prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. All workers shall be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.

TFN 8: Habitat contours shall be returned to a natural configuration at the end of project activities. This measure shall be implemented in all areas disturbed by project activities unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible or that modification of the original contours will benefit the California red-legged frog.

TFN 9: The number of access routes, the size of staging areas, and the total area of activity shall be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project. Environmentally sensitive areas shall be established to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete construction and minimize the impact on 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.

TFN 10: Caltrans shall attempt to schedule work for times of the year when impacts on the California red-legged frog will be minimal. For example, work that will affect large pools that may support breeding will 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 will 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 project planning shall be used to assist in scheduling work activities to avoid sensitive habitats during key times of the year.

TFN 11: To control sedimentation during and after project construction, Caltrans shall implement Best Management Practices as outlined in any

authorizations or permits issued under the authority of the Clean Water Act received for the project. If Best Management Practices are ineffective, Caltrans shall attempt to remedy the situation immediately, in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

TFN 12: If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes shall be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.2 inch to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water shall be released or pumped downstream at an appropriate rate to maintain downstream flows during construction. Upon completion of construction activities, any diversions or barriers to flow shall be removed in a manner that will allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate. Alteration of the streambed shall be minimized to the maximum extent possible; any imported material shall be removed from the streambed upon project completion.

TFN 13: Unless approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, water shall not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.

TFN 14: A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall permanently remove any individuals of exotic species, such as American bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*), signal and red swamp crayfish *(Pacifastacus leniusculus*; *Procambarus clarkii*), and centrarchid fishes, from the project area to the maximum extent possible. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall be responsible for ensuring his or her activities comply with the California Fish and Game Code.

TFN 15: 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 total amount of permanently disturbed habitat.

TFN 16: To ensure that diseases are not transported 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 shall be followed at all times.

TFN 17: Project sites shall be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area. Locally collected plant materials shall be used to the extent practicable. Invasive exotic plants shall be controlled to the maximum extent practicable. This measure shall be implemented in all areas disturbed by project activities unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible or practical.

TFN 18: Caltrans shall not use herbicides as the primary method to control invasive, exotic plants. However, if it is determined that the use of herbicides

is the only feasible method for controlling invasive plants at a specific project site, it will implement the following additional protective measures for the California red-legged frog:

a. Caltrans shall not use herbicides during the breeding season for the California red-legged frog.

b. Caltrans shall conduct surveys for the California red-legged frog immediately before the start of herbicide use. If found, California red-legged frogs shall be relocated to a suitable habitat far enough from the project area that no direct contact with herbicides will occur.

c. Giant reed and other invasive plants shall 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 shall use a hand-held sprayer for foliar application of AquaMaster® or Rodeo® where large monoculture stands occur at an individual project site.

e. All precautions shall be taken to ensure that no herbicide is applied to native vegetation.

f. Herbicides shall not be applied to or near open water surfaces (no closer than 60 feet from open water).

g. Foliar applications of herbicides shall not occur when wind speeds are in excess of 3 miles per hour.

h. No herbicides shall be applied within 24 hours of forecasted rain.

i. Application of all herbicides shall be done by qualified Caltrans staff or contractors to ensure that overspray is minimized, that all applications are made in accordance with the label recommendations, and with the implementation of all required and reasonable safety measures. A safe dye shall be added to the mixture to visually denote the treated sites. Application of herbicides shall 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 shall be stored, poured, or refilled at least 60 feet from riparian habitat or water bodies in a location where a spill will not drain directly toward aquatic habitat. Before the start of work, Caltrans shall ensure that a plan is in place for a prompt and effective response to accidental spills. All workers shall be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.

Nesting Birds

The following measures apply to all birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife requires preconstruction nesting bird surveys and the avoidance of impacts on active bird nests.

NB 1: Prior to construction, vegetation removal shall be scheduled to occur from October 1 to January 31, outside of the typical nesting bird season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts on nesting birds. If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the nesting season (February 1 to September 30), a nesting bird survey shall be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans no more than three days before construction. If an active nest is found, Caltrans shall coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to 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 juveniles have fledged (permanently left the nest).

NB 2: During construction, active bird nests shall not be disturbed, and eggs or young of birds covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code shall not be killed, destroyed, injured, or harassed at any time. Readily visible exclusion zones where nests must be avoided within 100 feet of disturbance shall be established by a qualified biologist using environmentally sensitive area fencing. Work in exclusion zones shall be avoided until young birds have fledged or a qualified biologist has determined that nesting activity has otherwise stopped.

NB 3: All clearing, grubbing, and vegetation removal shall be monitored and documented by the biological monitor(s), regardless of the time of year.

NB 4: If least Bell's vireo and/or a southwestern willow flycatcher are seen within 100 feet of the project area during the course of construction, a qualified biologist shall implement an exclusion zone, and work shall be avoided within the exclusion zone until the least Bell's vireo and/or the southwestern willow flycatcher is located greater than 100 feet from project-related disturbance. If an active least Bell's vireo and/or southwestern willow flycatcher nest is seen within 100 feet of the project area, all project activities shall immediately stop, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans shall be contacted within 48 hours. Caltrans shall then reinitiate Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for least Bell's vireo and/or southwestern willow flycatcher and implement additional measures as necessary.

NB 5: It is recommended that birds be excluded from the existing bridge prior to its demolition. Nesting bird exclusion methods may include the installation of exclusion materials or other methods approved by the California

Department of Fish and Wildlife. Installation of exclusion materials shall occur outside of the typical nesting season (i.e., implement exclusion methods from October 1 to January 31).

NB 6: Trees to be removed shall be noted on the design plans. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing shall be installed around the dripline of trees to be protected within the project limits.

NB 7: If a western snowy plover is seen within 100 feet of the project area during the course of construction, a qualified biologist shall implement an exclusion zone, and work shall be avoided within the exclusion zone until the western snowy plover is located greater than 100 feet from the project-related disturbance. If an active western snowy plover nest is seen within 100 feet of the project area, all project activities shall immediately stop, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans shall be contacted within 48 hours. Caltrans shall then reinitiate Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the western snowy plover and implement additional avoidance and/or minimization measures as necessary.

Roosting Bats

Due to the presence of potential roosting habitat within the project area, the following measures will be applied to completely avoid adverse effects on roosting bats:

RB 1: Prior to construction, vegetation removal shall be scheduled to occur from September 2 to January 31, outside of the typical maternity roosting season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts on roosting bats. If tree removal, bridge deconstruction, or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the nesting season (February 1 to September 1), a roosting bat survey shall be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans within 14 days before construction. If an active roost is found, a qualified Caltrans biologist will 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 stopped.

RB 2: During construction, active roost sites shall not be disturbed or destroyed. Readily visible exclusion zones where roost sites are present shall be established by a qualified biologist using environmentally sensitive area fencing. The size of the exclusion zone(s) shall be determined by a qualified biologist.

RB 3: If bats are found by a qualified biologist to be maternity roosting, active bat maternity roosts shall not be disturbed until pups are volant (capable of flight).

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emission

GHG 1: Limit idling to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment not used in active operations.

GHG 2: Reduce the need for transport of earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.

GHG 3: Use accelerated bridge construction methods, when feasible, to reduce construction duration.

2.1.11 Hydrology and Water Quality

WQ 1: Minimize active disturbed soil areas during the rainy season.

WQ 2: Implement temporary protective cover and erosion control on all nonactive disturbed soil areas and soil stockpiles.

WQ 3: Control the erosive forces of stormwater runoff with effective storm flow management and strategies such as earthen dikes, drainage swales, and velocity dissipation devices as determined feasible.

WQ 4: Implement linear sediment control on all active and nonactive disturbed soil areas during the rainy season.

WQ 5: Minimize sediment discharge by stabilizing construction site entrances, installing temporary drainage inlet protection, and conducting street sweeping and/or vacuuming as necessary.

WQ 6: Implement appropriate wind erosion controls year-round during construction.

2.1.13 Noise

NOI 1: Notify the public in advance of the construction schedule when construction noise and upcoming construction activities are likely to produce considerably higher noise levels than expected. This notice shall be given two weeks in advance of the proposed work. A notice should be published in local news media and include the dates and duration of the proposed construction activity. The District 5 Public Information Office will post notice of the proposed construction and potential community impacts after receiving the notice from the resident engineer.

NOI 2: Shield loud pieces of stationary construction equipment if complaints are received.

NOI 3: Place portable generators, air compressors, etc., as far away from sensitive noise receptors as possible.

NOI 4: Limit grouping major pieces of equipment operating in one area to the greatest extent possible.

NOI 5: Use newer equipment that is quieter and ensure that all equipment items have the manufacturer's recommended noise abatement measures, such as mufflers, engine covers, and engine vibration isolators, intact and operational. Internal combustion engines used for any purpose on or related to the job shall be equipped with a muffler or baffle of a type recommended by the manufacturer.

NOI 6: Consult District 5 noise staff if complaints are received during the construction process.

Appendix G Comment Letters and Responses

This appendix contains the comments received during the public circulation and comment period from March 8, 2024, to April 8, 2024, retyped for readability. The comment letters are stated verbatim as submitted, with acronyms, abbreviations, and any original grammatical or typographical errors included. A Caltrans response follows each comment presented. Copies of the original comment letters and documents can be found in Volume 2 of this document.

Comments from California Coastal Commission (letter via email, Eric Stevens, Senior Transportation Program Analyst, April 4, 2024):

Dear Matt Fowler:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for a proposed replacement bridge located on Highway 1. Caltrans is proposing to replace the existing southbound bridge (which has been found to be seismically deficient, along with having non-standard shoulders and non- standard bridge railings) with a new bridge that would have standard bridge rails and standard shoulders that would accommodate a Class III bicycle route. The Commission approved a consolidated Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the replacement of the northbound Toro Creek Bridge on May 13, 2020 (Ref: CDP No. 3-19-1199) and as identified in the IS/MND, the replacement bridge was completed in 2023.

Please accept these comments to ensure the project's compliance with applicable Coastal Act policies and County of San Luis Obispo and City of Morro Bay Local Coastal Program (LCP) policies. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss the project and working with you to bring it forward.

Comment 1: Permitting Jurisdiction (California Coastal Commission)

Permitting Jurisdiction. The proposed project is located at an existing bridge along northbound Highway 1 where it crosses Toro Creek (at postmile (PM) 32.6), approximately 0.5 miles north of Morro Bay and 0.5 miles south of Cayucos in San Luis Obispo County. The existing southbound bridge is approximately 131 feet long, with a similar bridge located approximately 50 feet to the east serving northbound Highway 1. The segment of Highway 1 through this corridor (i.e., from PM 31.3 to 33.9) between northern Morro Bay and southern Cayucos is a four-lane divided highway, with twelve- foot-wide lanes and shoulders that are generally around 10 feet wide.

The project includes components within the CDP jurisdictions of the City of Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo County. In addition, the project crosses Toro Creek, which includes retained CDP jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission (CCC). Thus, Section 1.7 of the IS/MND should be updated to reflect that a CDP from the CCC will be required, potentially in addition to CDPs from Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo County.1

In cases where jurisdiction sits in both the state and local coastal jurisdictions, the Commission can consolidate the CDP application, if Caltrans, the City, and the County concur. Thank you for providing the consolidation requests from the City of Morro Bay and from the County. We support this consolidation to improve the permitting process. The standard of review for a consolidated CDP is the Coastal Act, with the LCP policies used as guidance.

Regardless, even if consolidated, extensive outreach and engagement with the local community will be essential for this project. We recommend that Caltrans continue to have regular community meetings and carefully consider all community input on the bridge project.

In terms of the substance of the project, our comments below focus on core Coastal Act policies (such as protection of environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHAs), wetlands, and coastal access) as well as on project alternatives.

Response to comment 1: Caltrans recognizes the project's location within overlapping state and local coastal jurisdictions. In accordance with Section 30601.3 of the California Coastal Act, Caltrans will submit a consolidated coastal development permit application after project approval and before the final design is complete. As the commentor noted, consolidation requests from the city of Morro Bay and from the County of San Luis Obispo have been obtained by Caltrans.

Cindy Jacinth, the planning manager for the city of Morro Bay, submitted a letter (dated February 27, 2024) to the project's California Coastal Commission, noting the city's support of the project and requesting consolidated processing of the Coastal Development Permit application. Kevin Kahn, the district manager for the Central Coast district office of the California Coastal Commission, responded with an email (dated February 27, 2024) confirming the executive director's consent to the consolidation of the Coastal Development Permit application.

Trevor Keith, the director of the Department of Planning and Building for the county of San Luis Obispo, submitted a letter (dated March 27, 2024) to the California Coastal Commission requesting that the project's Coastal Development Permit application be considered for consolidated processing. Eric Stevens, the Caltrans liaison for the California Coastal Commission, responded with an email (dated April 12, 2024) confirming the executive director's consent to the consolidation of the Coastal Development Permit application.

Caltrans will engage in public outreach to gather additional community input regarding design and project construction as part of the project's final design during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase. The results of the public outreach will be included in the Coastal Development Permit application for the project.

Comment 2: Wetlands and Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (California Coastal Commission)

Wetlands and ESHA. Section 30233 of the Coastal Act requires avoidance of fill of wetlands and Section 30240 protects ESHA. Both require compensatory

mitigation when avoiding impacts is infeasible. The Coastal Act and the County's and City's LCPs require that new development assure continued biological productivity and that ESHA (and areas adjacent to ESHA) be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values (e.g., Coastal Act Sections 30230 and 30231, SLO County LCP ESHA Policies 1 and 3, and Morro Bay LCP Policies 11.01 and 11.17).

In addition, both the Coastal Act and the County's and City's LCPs require that new development protect coastal access (including Coastal Act Section 30212, SLO County LCP Comprehensive Public Access Planning Policy 12, and Morro Bay LCP Policy 11.01) and, except in certain cases, also prohibit shoreline armoring or alterations of bluff landforms or beaches in new development (e.g., Coastal Act Section 30235, SLO County LCP Hazards Policy 4, and Morro Bay LCP Policy 9.14). Further, Morro Bay LUP Policy PS-3.3 states that new shoreline protective devices shall only be utilized if no other feasible, less environmentally damaging alternative can be used to address erosion hazards and that nonstructural and soft structural alternatives shall be prioritized.

The IS/MND only includes two alternatives, a build alternative and a no build alternative. The build alternative would result in a new three-span bridge with eight new bridge piles/columns in the creek channel. Additionally, the IS/MND states that "Rock slope protection (known as RSP) would also be installed around the new bridge abutments to help prevent erosion and scour on the slopes." Any creek channel impacts, RSP, or alteration of the bluff or beach must be avoided if feasible, pursuant to the Coastal Act and County's and City's LCPs. Thus, alternatives (including the single-span alternative) should investigate the feasibility of new bridge abutments that would be placed outside the creek banks and placed without the use of RSP either as part of the design, or for protection in the future due to expected sea level rise and climate change. If there is supportable evidence (which has not been provided) that not including RSP as part of the project is infeasible, then the RSP must be minimized and all impacts from it mitigated. Please also confirm whether fabric will be installed underneath the proposed RSP.

Response to comment 2: A hydraulic analysis for the project (dated October 18, 2023) has determined that the 50-year creek flow and velocities will require a minimum of one-half ton rock slope protection (Class 7), which will be required to meet Caltrans Highway Design Manual design criteria. This similar type of rock slope protection was proposed for the nearby northbound Toro Creek Bridge; however, observations showed that the creek velocities would undermine and carry the rock slope protection from its placement, so one-ton rock slope protection (Class 8) was installed for that project. The recommendation for the southbound Toro Creek banks is to extend the same one-ton rock slope protection. The rock slope protection will extend up to the top of the bank but still allow sufficient clearance for the structure soffit. Not including rock slope protection is infeasible since it would potentially result in

damage to the new bridge from high-wave action that could shorten the lifespan of the bridge and require increased maintenance or replacement.

Per the professional opinion of the Caltrans Hydraulics Branch, the seawall potentially serves to protect the State Route 1 roadway embankment during low flows. However, this seawall is not tall enough to protect against higher flows. The branch's recommendation is to extend rock slope protection along the approach and departure roadway embankments. Based on damage to these embankment areas from recent observed wave action during major storm events, the recommended approach is to upsize the rock slope protection outside of the bridge's footprint to three-ton rock slope protection (Class 10). This recommendation is consistent with the city of Morro Bay's 2018 Sea Level Rise Adaptation Strategy Report and 2018 Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) Sea Level Rise Analysis. The rock slope protection will also include a gravel filter similar to what was installed under the rock slope protection for the northbound Toro Creek Bridge.

Comment 3: Bridge Span Analysis (California Coastal Commission)

Caltrans' analysis for the northbound bridge replacement included an investigation of a bridge retrofit, a single-span bridge, and a two-span bridge, which would eliminate or reduce the need for new piles/columns to be placed in the creek channel. Please undertake a similar analysis for the southbound bridge replacement. If Caltrans continues to follow the current alternative, you will need to convincingly demonstrate why other alternatives are infeasible.

Response to comment 3: Replacing the existing bridge with a single-span bridge would require the following:

- Raising the current bridge/roadway profile by as much as 8 feet.
- Reconstructing the southbound lanes and existing median for a length of approximately 840 feet south of the existing bridge and 600 feet north of the center of the existing bridge at Toro Creek.
- Building about 620 feet of a new retaining wall and a concrete barrier in the median to the south of the bridge.
- Building about 500 feet of a new retaining wall and a concrete barrier in the median to the north of the bridge.
- Building retaining walls as high as 10 feet in the median would impact existing transverse utility crossings south of the Toro Creek Bridge.
- Relocating utilities may be required, as well as complex and costly retaining wall designs.

- Modifying the Hill Plant Road intersection to restrict turning movements to only right-turn in and right-turn out.
- Prohibiting northbound and southbound left-turn and U-turn movements at Hill Plant Road due to a need for median closure and construction of a retaining wall.
- Using Toro Creek Road for northbound traffic to make U-turn movements on State Route 1 would require an additional travel distance of 0.54 mile round trip from the current Hill Plant Road intersection.
- Using Yerba Buena Street for southbound traffic to make U-turn movements on State Route 1 would require an additional travel distance of 1.15 miles round trip from the current Hill Plant Road intersection.
- Installing additional drainage inlets and culverts to facilitate drainage of roadway runoff due to the profile changes.
- For the oceanside roadway treatment, there is a requirement of either 12-foot-tall retaining walls within the right-of-way or the acquisition of additional right-of-way to meet clear recovery embankment slopes due to the raising of the roadway profile.
- Due to the existing narrow median of 23 to 38 feet, there may be complications with stage construction, which may restrict the ability for one lane of traffic to be open in each direction of travel.
- Increased costs due to approach fills, retaining walls, and expansion of the project limits farther south and north to raise the highway profile to meet a higher bridge profile.

Based on the above-listed considerations, replacing the existing bridge with a single-span bridge would involve a larger disturbance footprint and more environmental impacts, which would outweigh the benefits of a reduction in spans. Therefore, a single-span bridge was not considered as a potentially viable Build Alternative. Furthermore, retrofitting the existing structure was not pursued further due to the age of the existing bridge, the reduction of hydraulic flow capacity of the existing creek, the need for widening, and high comparative costs.

Comment 4: Stream Diversion and Dewatering Analysis (California Coastal Commission)

Finally, the IS/MND only includes general information on dewatering the creek during construction: “Temporary impacts would result from construction access in the creek and stream diversion and/or dewatering plans within the construction site.” Please provide a similar analysis as was completed for the northbound bridge and include, at a minimum, the evaluation of the following

dewatering alternatives: pumping water into Baker tanks for settling before discharge back into the channel, pumping water downstream to an excavated retention basin on the beach, installing temporary sheet pile cofferdams for partial dewatering, and a pass-through gravel work pad.

Response to comment 4: For the development of a dewatering strategy for the southbound Toro Creek Bridge replacement, the Project Development Team agreed that the most practical strategy is to use a similar gravel work pad that was used during the northbound Toro Creek Bridge replacement project. The northbound bridge construction strategy used a 4-foot-thick permeable gravel elevated work pad and a 36-inch-diameter high-density polyethylene pass-through pipe culvert. It is assumed that the contractor for the replacement of the southbound Toro Creek Bridge will use a similar method for dewatering. The contractor will need to submit a plan supporting the gravel pad thickness and size of the pass-through pipe.

It is estimated that as many as 285 Baker tanks per day would be needed to dewater the area for construction activities. Due to the limited space for the placement of these many Baker tanks, Caltrans has decided this method is not feasible.

A retention basin on the beach would temporarily impact the public and their enjoyment of the limited beach area. If this option were to remain, the city of Morro Bay would need to agree to a Permission to Enter to use the beach area. The property south of Toro Creek belongs to Chevron Corporation. The existing wooden seawall and the presence of subsurface utilities would complicate placing a retention basin on the beach.

The effort of having a continuous pump running to dewater is more expensive and has the potential for complications should there be equipment failures. Thus, this option is also viable but not a preferred or practical strategy at this site.

Comment 5: Updated Wetland Delineation (California Coastal Commission)

As detailed in the Natural Environment Study (NES), the wetland delineation for the project was conducted June 17-18, 2016. Wetland delineations must be a maximum for five years old. Please provide an updated wetland delineation for the site.

Response to comment 5: Wetland delineations for the project occurred in 2016 and 2023. Please reference Appendix G in the project's Natural Environment Study for the 2023 wetland delineation.

Comment 6: Impact Mitigation (California Coastal Commission)

The IS/MND states that there is about 0.6 acre of CCC wetland jurisdictional area along the riparian corridor of Toro Creek and that southern foredune was one of the dominant communities within the Biological Study Area. The NES further clarifies that impacts to jurisdictional waters would consist of removal of vegetation and installation of piers that would result in temporary impacts to approximately 0.6 acre of CCC wetland jurisdictional area and that approximately 0.28 acre of southern foredune habitat is anticipated to be temporarily impacted. The IS/MND proposes that impacts would be mitigated at 1:1 and 3:1 for temporary and permanent impacts, respectively. Please note that if there are permanent wetland impacts, compensatory mitigation must result in a 4:1 increase of wetland acreage. The Commission has generally utilized a distinct definition of "temporary impacts" that requires full restoration within one year from onset of impacts. Another potential option, as described in the March 2022 Memorandum: Coastal Commission Mitigation for Natural Resource Impacts - Background for Caltrans Projects:3 (Mitigation Memo) "…Some recent projects have taken a more flexible approach to characterizing impacts and allowed for "long-term temporary impacts." Long-term temporary impacts have been defined as those that may be intermittent or sustained for up to a 24-month period such that vegetation recovery may require more than 12 months from the initial point of disturbance. However, vegetation recovery should be no more than 12 months from the conclusion of disturbance. Under this definition, a long-term temporary impact could allow for as much as 36 months from the initial impact to full recovery. These long-term temporary impacts require a higher mitigation ratio than truly temporary impacts (e.g., 1.5:1) in order to account for the temporal loss of the resource, though, note that these are lower than ratios for permanent impacts. All other impacts are considered permanent, as discussed below, and these impacts require higher mitigation ratios to be considered fully compensatory…" As more information is made available related to the timing and extent of habitat impacts, CCC staff can provide further information as to whether the long- term temporary approach to mitigation ratios may be appropriate for this project.

Response to comment 6: The entirety of the wetland and riparian areas occur on the northeast side of the northbound Toro Creek Bridge. The anticipated temporary impacts will only occur in areas with previously developed rock slope protection and within the stream channel. The environmental document establishes a minimum ratio of compensatory mitigation replacement for the project's temporary and permanent impacts on natural environments. However, replacement ratios may be higher if mandated by permits from jurisdictional agencies. Caltrans notes that any coastal development permit for the project may require a 4-to-1 mitigation ratio for permanent wetland impacts. Mitigation measure WW 8 has been clarified to note that the project will be subject to jurisdictional agency permit conditions, which will determine replacement ratios for the affected areas.

Comment 7: Existing and Proposed Pier and Rock Slope Protection Impact Areas (California Coastal Commission)

The NES further states that no net permanent impacts to jurisdictional areas and foredune habitat areas are anticipated as the proposed RSP and new bridge piers will be replaced in a similar footprint. Please quantify the footprint and habitat impacts of the existing and proposed piers and RSP.

Response to comment 7: The existing structure has three piers with five 16-inch-diameter concrete-driven piles per pier, totaling 15 columns with a total footprint of 20.94 square feet. The replacement bridge will have two piers near Pier 2 and Pier 4 of the existing bridge. Each new pier will have four 30-inch-diameter columns per pier, totaling eight columns with a new footprint total of 39.27 square feet. The piers of the new bridge will increase the existing pier footprint by 18.33 square feet.

Existing rock slope protection under the southbound Toro Creek Bridge and westward covers 997 square feet of the south creek bank and 1,201 square feet of the north creek bank. In total, 2,198 square feet of Rock Slope Protection currently protect the southbound Toro Creek Bridge.

A total of 5,554 square feet of three-ton rock slope protection and 3,204 square feet of one-ton rock slope protection are proposed for installation to protect the new southbound Toro Creek Bridge. More specifically, the installation of 1,112 square feet of three-ton rock slope protection is proposed south of Toro Creek, and 4,442 square feet of three-ton rock slope protection is proposed north of Toro Creek. Construction of South Abutment Number 1 will include the installation of 1,550 square feet of one-ton rock slope protection. The North Abutment Number 4 will have 1,652 square feet of rock slope protection installed.

Comment 8: Compensatory Mitigation Overlap (California Coastal Commission)

The IS/MND also notes that a portion of the project area overlaps with the compensatory mitigation areas of the Northbound Toro Creek Bridge Replacement Project and that impacts to the newly installed vegetation would be mitigated at 1:1 and 3:1 for temporary and permanent impacts to those areas, respectively. Any impacts to the restoration area for the Northbound Toro Creek Bridge Replacement Project would also need to be accounted for, in addition to impacts from the Southbound Toro Creek Bridge Replacement Project. Consistent with the CDP requirements for the Northbound bridge replacement, to ensure that the mitigation meets the proposed performance standards, five years of annual monitoring reports will be required. As detailed in the Mitigation Memo: “Caltrans should aim to have fully-developed compensatory mitigation plans well before the project permit approval stage, and a fully-developed compensatory mitigation plan is necessary for a CDP

application to be marked complete." Commission staff would welcome pre-submittal coordination and early submittal of the project mitigation and monitoring plan.

Response to comment 8: Caltrans appreciates the opportunity to coordinate with California Coastal Commission staff through presubmittal and early submittal of the project's Mitigation and Monitoring Plan. The southbound project will avoid areas designated as restoration sites for the northbound project as much as possible to allow completion of the southbound project. Restoration sites disturbed by activities associated with the southbound project will be restored again as recommended by the project biologist to meet permitting requirements. Fully developed compensatory mitigation plans will be submitted prior to project permit approval.

Comment 9: Pile Driving (California Coastal Commission)

Pile Driving. The IS/MND Steelhead and Tidewater Goby conditions FIS 6 and FIS 8 state that pile driving with impact hammers will be limited to the low-flow period between June 1 and October 31 and that hydroacoustic attenuating devices will be used if possible.

During the early stages of project development for the Northbound Bridge Replacement Project, Caltrans had concluded that bridge pile installation for the replacement bridge may require use of an impact hammer (i.e., "pile driving"). However, after further geotechnical investigation, Caltrans determined that all aspects of the bridge pile installation may be accomplished using vibratory or oscillatory methods.

Please analyze whether there are other alternatives or demonstrate that pile driving is the only feasible option for the southbound bridge replacement. Regardless, given that there are sensitive species in the creek, and that dewatering activities will be required during construction, the project should include appropriate best management practices to ensure that such negative impacts are avoided/mitigated under all construction scenarios. In numerous Caltrans projects, the Commission has imposed a hydroacoustic monitoring condition to set limits on hydroacoustic impacts from pile driving, and Caltrans can expect such a condition here.

Response to comment 9: Pile driving will not be used for this project's construction efforts. Permanent cast-in-drilled-hole concrete piles will be installed at the southbound Toro Creek Bridge piers and abutments. Temporary steel casing will be required for dewatering and maintaining a higher head for drilling and concrete pouring of cast-in-drilled-hole concrete piles. Installation of temporary steel casings for the columns will occur using a vibratory hammer, casing twister, and/or oscillators. Therefore, hydroacoustic monitoring will be used as needed for project implementation. The description of the Build Alternative in Chapter 1 has been revised for clarification.

Avoidance and Minimization Measure FIS 6 has been clarified to include restrictions on the use of vibratory hammers, casing twisters, and oscillators. Avoidance and Minimization Measure FIS 7 has been revised to prohibit the contractor from using pile driving as a method of construction. Avoidance and Minimization Measure FIS 8 will now require hydroacoustic attenuating devices as needed.

Comment 10: Public Access (California Coastal Commission)

Public Access. The IS/MND anticipates that staging will occur along the southbound shoulders of the highway and that public access would be impacted. The shoulder areas on the south side of the highway both north and south of Toro Creek Bridge are heavily used parking areas for members of the public to park and visit the adjacent beach. Please provide an analysis of options to avoid and/or minimize impacts to public parking areas. If impacts to public parking must occur, public access mitigation will be required. Public access mitigation may include, but is not limited to, paving the existing dirt shoulder areas used for public parking, installation of new directional or interpretive signage for the public beach, removing the fence described below and adding a trail connection to the beach, and providing funding for nearby public access improvement projects, such as the Morro Bay to Cayucos Connector Trail. Please provide an analysis of potential public access mitigation.

Response to comment 10: State Route 1, at this location, is an access-controlled expressway with limited public access points at Toro Road (900 feet north of Toro Creek) and Hill Plant Road (450 feet south of Toro Creek). Hill Plant Road serves as a private access connection for the landowner, the Chevron Corporation. As noted in Section 2.1.16 of this document, during project construction, highway shoulders and pullouts within the project limits will be temporarily closed for public use in order to provide a safe working space for construction activities. Although shoulders and pullouts will be temporarily unavailable during project construction, beach access will still be open. Beachgoers will still be able to access the beach from multiple nearby locations outside of the project limits. As part of the final project design during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase, Caltrans will consider potential design opportunities and methods to further reduce the project construction footprint and the need for temporary parking restrictions.

Comment 11: Hazards (California Coastal Commission)

Hazards. If approved and constructed, analysis of any necessary future adaptation needs for the replacement southbound bridge should be included in the Coastal Hazards Analysis required by the CCC as a condition of approval for the northbound bridge (Ref: Special Condition No. 6 of CDP 3-19-1199).

Response to comment 11: The new bridge structure will be designed to adapt to future climate conditions to ensure climate-related hazards do not compromise the functionality or integrity of the structure during its expected lifetime. A Climate Change Report (dated October 2, 2023) was prepared for the project that investigated the adaptability of the new structure to potential hazards resulting from predicted future climate conditions. Since the predicted future climate conditions at the project location are not anticipated to result in coastal hazards that could negatively affect the functionality or integrity of the new bridge structure during its expected lifetime, the project did not anticipate a need to include additional adaptation strategies in the current design of the new bridge structure.

A Sea Level Rise Assessment was prepared for this project, and it identifies the predicted future conditions at the project location that support the predictions and assessment found in the Climate Change Report. Requested materials and reports will be provided as part of the Coastal Development Permit application process, if necessary.

Comment 12: The Morro Bay to Cayucos Connector Trail (California Coastal Commission)

The Morro Bay to Cayucos Connector Trail. As identified in the IS/MND, there is a current project going through the local government planning process to construct a multi-use trail to connect Morrow Bay with Cayucos that would cross Toro Creek seaward of the southbound highway bridge. Please provide an analysis of the feasibility of constructing the southbound bridge in such a way that the multi-use trail creek crossing can be incorporated into the existing design or could cantilever from the seaward side to minimize biological impacts from multiple bridges. Please describe in more detail your current ongoing and expected coordination efforts.

Response to comment 12: The project development team decided not to cantilever the Morro Bay Connector Trail to the southbound Toro Creek Bridge because it would require raising the bridge profile considerably to meet the requirements of hydraulics and sea level rise at the site. The bridge and roadway design teams have been providing information to the Morro Bay Connector team as the design progresses.

Caltrans has been in communication with the Morro Bay Connector team since the project initiation phase of the Southbound Toro Creek Bridge Replacement project. Plans and project details have been shared and continue to occur. The Caltrans Morro Bay Connector Oversight Project Manager and Morro Bay Connector team agree that both projects should continue as separate, independent projects.

Comment 13: Existing Wooden Seawall (California Coastal Commission)

Existing Wooden Seawall. The IS/MND identifies that there is an existing wooden seawall located seaward of the southbound bridge partially within the state right-of-way. The wooden seawall is not adjacent to the bluff and does not appear to be serving any purpose. The seawall adversely impacts public views and may adversely impact the biological resources of the area. Ideally, the entire wooden seawall, or at a minimum, the portion of the seawall in the right-of-way should be removed.

Response to comment 13: Based on the following concerns, this project will not remove the wooden seawall:

- Removal of the seawall is not required for the replacement of the bridge.
- The Cayucos Sanitary District owns and manages a subsurface 30-inch-diameter steel casing with a 20-inch-diameter flush line that leads to the ocean. Recent communications with the Cayucos Sanitary District have indicated it relies on the seawall to protect the embankment and foredune that cover its utility.
- The city of Morro Bay Sea Level Rise Adaptation Strategy Report (page 12) cites the seawall as being owned by the Chevron Corporation. The owner would need to be in agreement about its removal and/or contacted for repairs needed to this structure.
- The seawall is partially located within protected snowy plover habitat.

Comment 14: Broadband (California Coastal Commission)

Broadband. Broadband is proposed to be attached to one of the Toro Creek Bridge structures and estimated to be completed by the end of 2026. Please confirm that Broadband will either be attached to the completed northbound bridge or evaluate how the proposed bridge replacement project will coordinate with the Broadband installation.

Response to comment 14: Installing conduits to carry utilities and communication lines under bridges and within the road right-of-way is a common practice. Steel conduit has been installed within the right exterior precast, prestressed concrete voided slab on the nearby northbound Toro Creek Bridge. Therefore, Caltrans Bridge Design has recommended to the Caltrans Middle-Mile Broadband Initiative Project Development Team that any fiber-optic communication lines proposed for installation along the corridor be placed within the existing steel conduit on the northbound Toro Creek Bridge.

Comment 15: Permanent Fencing (California Coastal Commission)

Permanent Fencing. As proposed, the project would include removal and re-installation of the existing chain link fencing along the western right-of-way. The existing chain link fencing results in a significant adverse visual impact to the scenic area. This fencing should be removed and not reinstalled. For any proposed retention of the fencing, Caltrans will need strong and convincing evidence demonstrating why the fencing needs to be reinstalled. In such a case, Caltrans will also need to provide an evaluation of alternative fencing options that would reduce the visual impact as compared to the existing fence.

Response to comment 15: State Route 1 is an access-controlled facility and thus is required to construct access-controlled fencing to prohibit access to the operating facility. The standard fence type is chain-link fencing. Deviation from this standard would require processing a Design Standard Deviation Document and concurrence from the Caltrans District 5 Division of Maintenance.

The Caltrans District 5 Maintenance Manager prefers using standard fencing for delineating the access-controlled right-of-way. A nonstandard fence type would require a maintenance agreement with the appropriate local agency (county of San Luis Obispo and the city of Morro Bay for fencing south of Toro Creek) for responsibility for any nonstandard fencing repairs. The use of nonstandard fencing to delineate access control will be considered as part of the project's final design during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase.

Comments from Lea Brooks (email, April 9, 2024):

Comment 1: Toro Creek Northbound Bridge Replacement (Lea Brooks)

I somehow missed the April 5 deadline to submit comments, but just wanted to thank Caltrans for the Toro Creek northbound bridge replacement project that included a shoulder that bicyclists had been requesting for decades. This shoulder has significantly improved our safety and enjoyment because we no longer are forced to ride in a traffic lane with motorists who are often speeding and distracted by the spectacular view of Estero Bay.

Response to comment 1: Caltrans appreciates your gratitude and is glad that your mode of transportation was satisfactorily accommodated.

Comment 2: Protected Path for Bicyclists During Construction (Lea Brooks)

Because the existing southbound bridge already has a shoulder, my request is that bicyclists are provided a protected place to ride that protects us from motorists during construction. We would appreciate the same safeguards provided during construction of the northbound replacement bridge so we can feel safe riding this very popular bicycling route.

Response to comment 2: As noted in Sections 2.1.16 (Recreation) and 2.1.17 (Transportation) of this project's environmental document, bicycle lanes on State Route 1 going through the project area will be maintained and will remain accessible during project construction. Bicycle lanes will be temporarily detoured over the northbound Toro Creek Bridge during the construction of the new southbound bridge. After construction, bicycle traffic will be accommodated within a 5-foot-wide shoulder area.

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List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)

- Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Noise Technical Memo (September 25, 2023)
- Climate Change Report (October 2, 2023)
- Geotech - Infiltration Report for 05-0L721 (December 11, 2018)
- Geotech - Preliminary Foundation Report for 05-0L721 (January 17, 2017)
- Geotech - Preliminary Seismic Recommendation for 05-0L721 (March 28, 2014)
- Historic Property Survey Report (October 13, 2023)
- Initial Site Assessment (November 28, 2023)
- Location Hydraulic Study (October 2, 2023)
- Natural Environment Study (November 6, 2023)
- Paleontological Investigation Report (November 16, 2023)
- Visual Impact Assessment (September 13, 2023)
- Water Quality Technical Memo (September 25, 2023)

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

Matthew Fowler
District 5 Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Or send your request via email to: matt.c.fowler@dot.ca.gov
Or call: 805-779-0793

Please provide the following information in your request:
Project title: Toro Creek Southbound Bridge Replacement Project
General location information: On State Route 1 between Morro Bay and Cayucos
District number-county code-route-post mile: 05-SLO-01-PM 32.6
Project ID number: 0523000125