PLACERVILLE CAPM PROJECT

INITIAL STUDY

with Negative Declaration

EL DORADO, CALIFORNIA

DISTRICT 3 – ED – 50

Post Miles 18.7 to 21.9, 22.6 to 22.9 and 24.2 to R29.1

EA 03-0J400 / EFIS 0319000280

Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

July 2024

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General Information About This Document

What is in this document?

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has prepared this Initial Study with Negative Declaration (IS/ND) which examines the potential environmental effects of the proposed project on United States 50 in El Dorado County, California. Caltrans is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

This document tells you why the project is being proposed, how the existing environment could be affected by the project, the potential impacts of the project, and proposed avoidance and minimization measures. This IS/ND was circulated to the public for 30 days between May 29, 2024, and June 27, 2024.

Comments received during this period are discussed in Appendix D. Elsewhere throughout this document, a vertical line in the margin indicates a change made since the draft document circulation. Minor editorial changes and clarifications have not been so indicated.

Additional copies of this document and the related technical studies are available for review at the District 3 Office at 703 B Street Marysville, CA 95901. This document may also be downloaded at the following website: https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-3/d3-programs/d3-environmental/d3-environmental-docs/d3-el-dorado-county

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please write to or call Caltrans, Attention: Steve Nelson, Chief Public Information Officer Environmental - District 3, 703 B Street, Marysville, CA 95901; (530) 632-0080 Voice, or use the California Relay Service 1 (800) 735-2929 (TTY to Voice), 1 (800) 735-2922 (Voice to TTY), 1 (800) 855-3000 (Spanish TTY to Voice and Voice to TTY), 1-800-854-7784 (Spanish and English Speech-to-Speech) or 711.

SCH: 2024051181
03-ED-50-18.7 to 21.9, 22.6 to 22.9, and 24.2 to R 29.1
EA: 03-0J400 / EFIS 0319000284

PLACERVILLE CAPM PROJECT

Preserve and extend the service life of the pavement and drainage system, upgrade non-standard median concrete barriers, guardrails, and Transportation Management System elements. Construct an acceleration lane and Maintenance Vehicle Pullouts on United States Highway 50 in El Dorado County from Post Miles 18.7 to 21.9, 22.6 to 22.9, and 24.2 to R29.1.

INITIAL STUDY
with Negative Declaration

Submitted Pursuant to: Division 13, California Public Resources Code

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

07/22/2024
Date of Approval

Erin Dwyer
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NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Pursuant to: Division 13, California Public Resources Code

SCH Number: 2024051181

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to preserve and extend the service life of the existing pavement and extend the service life of drainage systems by replacing fair or poor condition systems. The proposed project would also improve safety by upgrading non-standard median concrete barriers and guardrails to current standards, upgrading Transportation Management System elements, constructing one acceleration lane, paving beyond the gore areas, and constructing Maintenance Vehicle Pullouts.

Determination

This proposed Negative Declaration (ND) is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is Caltrans' intent to adopt an ND for this project. This does not mean that Caltrans' decision regarding the project is final. This ND is subject to change based on comments received by interested agencies and the public.

Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study for this project and, pending public review, has determined from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant impact on the environment based on the following:

The project would have ***No Impacts*** to:

- Agriculture and Forest Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities And Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Mandatory Findings Of Significance

The project would have ***Less than Significant Impacts*** to:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards And Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Transportation

Erin Dwyer

Erin Dwyer, Office Chief
North Region Environmental–District 3
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

07/22/2024

Date

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Acronyms and Abbreviated Terms

Acronym/Abbreviation	Description
§	Section
AB	Aggregate Base
AB	Assembly Bill
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADL	Aerially Deposited Lead
APE	Area of Potential Effect
AC	Asphalt Concrete
BAT/BCT	Best Available Technology/Best Conventional Technology
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BSA	Biological Study Area
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAFE	Corporate Average Fuel Economy
CAL-CET	Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool
CAL EPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Cal/OSHA	California Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAPM	Capital Maintenance
CAPTI	Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFGC	California Fish and Game Code
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGP	Construction General Permit
CH	Critical Habitat
CH_4	methane
CIA	Cumulative Impact Analysis
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
CRPR	California Rare Plant Rank
CSP	Corrugated Steel Pipe
CTP	California Transportation Plan
CWA	Clean Water Act

Acronym/Abbreviation	Description
dB	decibels
dBA	A-weighted decibels
DI	Drainage Inlet
Department	Caltrans
DOT	Department of Transportation
DP	Director's Policy
DWR	Department of Water Resources
EB	Eastbound
ECL	Environmental Construction Liaison
EDCTC	El Dorado County Transportation Commission
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EO(s)	Executive Order(s)
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESA(s)	Environmentally Sensitive Area(s)
ESL	Environmental Study Limits
EMS	Extinguishable Message Signs
ºF	degrees Fahrenheit
FED	Final Environmental Document
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GWP	Global Warming Potential
H&SC	Health & Safety Code
HFCs	hydrofluorocarbons
HMA-Type A	Hot Mix Asphalt-Type A
IS	Initial Study
IS/ND	Initial Study / Negative Declaration
Lmax	Maximum Sound Level
LSAA	Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement
MASH	Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MGS	Midwest Guardrail System
MBGR	Metal Beam Guardrail
MGS	Midwest Guardrail System
MLD	Most Likely Descendent
MMT	million metric tons
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MSAT	Mobile Source Air Toxics
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Acronym/Abbreviation	Description
MVP	Maintenance Vehicle Pullouts
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
ND	Negative Declaration
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NES	Natural Environment Study
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOA	Naturally Occurring Asbestos
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWP	Nationwide Permit
O_3	ozone
OHM	Ordinary High Water
OHWM	Ordinary High Water Mark
OPR	Governor's Office of Planning and Research
PM_{10}	Particulate Matter
PDT	Project Development Team
PIR	Project Initiation Report
PM(s)	Post Mile(s)
Porter-Cologne Act	Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act
PPCFSC	Pollock Pines Camino Fire Safe Council
Project	Placerville CAPM (Capital Maintenance) Project
PRC	Public Resources Code (California)
RCP	Reinforced Concrete Pipe
RSP	Rock Slope Protection
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RTPA	Regional Transportation Planning Agency
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SACOG	Sacramento Area Council of Governments
SB	Senate Bill
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
SF_6	sulfur hexafluoride
SHOPP	State Highway Operations and Protection Program
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SNC(s)	Sensitive Natural Community(ies)
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
SPCC Plan	Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures Plan

Acronym/Abbreviation	Description
SRA	State Responsibility Area
SS	Standard Specification
SSC	Species of Special Concern
SWMP	Storm Water Management Plan
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
THVF	Temporary High Visibility Fencing
TMP	Transportation Management Plan
TMS	Transportation Management System
UC	Under Crossing
U.S.	United States
U.S. 50	United States Highway 50
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
U.S. DOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
U.S. EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
VMS	Video Message Signs
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
WPCP	Water Pollution Control Program
WB	Westbound

Chapter 1. Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction/Project Setting

The California Department of Transportation is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The proposed Placerville Capital Maintenance (CAPM) Project is located in El Dorado County on United States Highway 50 (US 50). US 50 serves the larger Sacramento Metropolitan Area east to Placerville, where it primarily serves recreational travel to the Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe. The main attraction is the numerous recreational opportunities in the largely rural eastern half of the facility. The functional classification in the California Road System of this portion of US 50, between its beginning in West Sacramento and Canal Street in Placerville, is "Other Freeway or Expressway." The portion from Canal Street in Placerville to the California/Nevada state line is classified as "Other Principal Arterial" Street.

US 50, from Post Miles (PM) 18.11 to PM R25.95, consists of 7.8 miles from Bedford Avenue to the Cedar Grove Exit, which is a four-lane freeway from Bedford Avenue to Smith Flat Road and a four-lane expressway from Smith Flat Road to the Cedar Grove Exit. This segment of US 50 includes retail and commercial offices, primarily along Main Street and Broadway, and low-density residential land uses. Significant trip attractors and operational considerations occur on a seasonal basis, such as Apple Hill events during apple harvest and a growing wine industry with associated tourism.

US 50, from PM R25.95 to PM R31.97, is a four-lane rural freeway that ends at the freeway, then transitions to a conventional highway east of Sly Park Road. No capacity increases are envisioned during the 20-to-25-year window to maintain the concept level of service, although major trip attractors include the community of Pollock Pines (via Sly Park Road) and Jenkinson Lake, also referred to as Sly Park Lake.

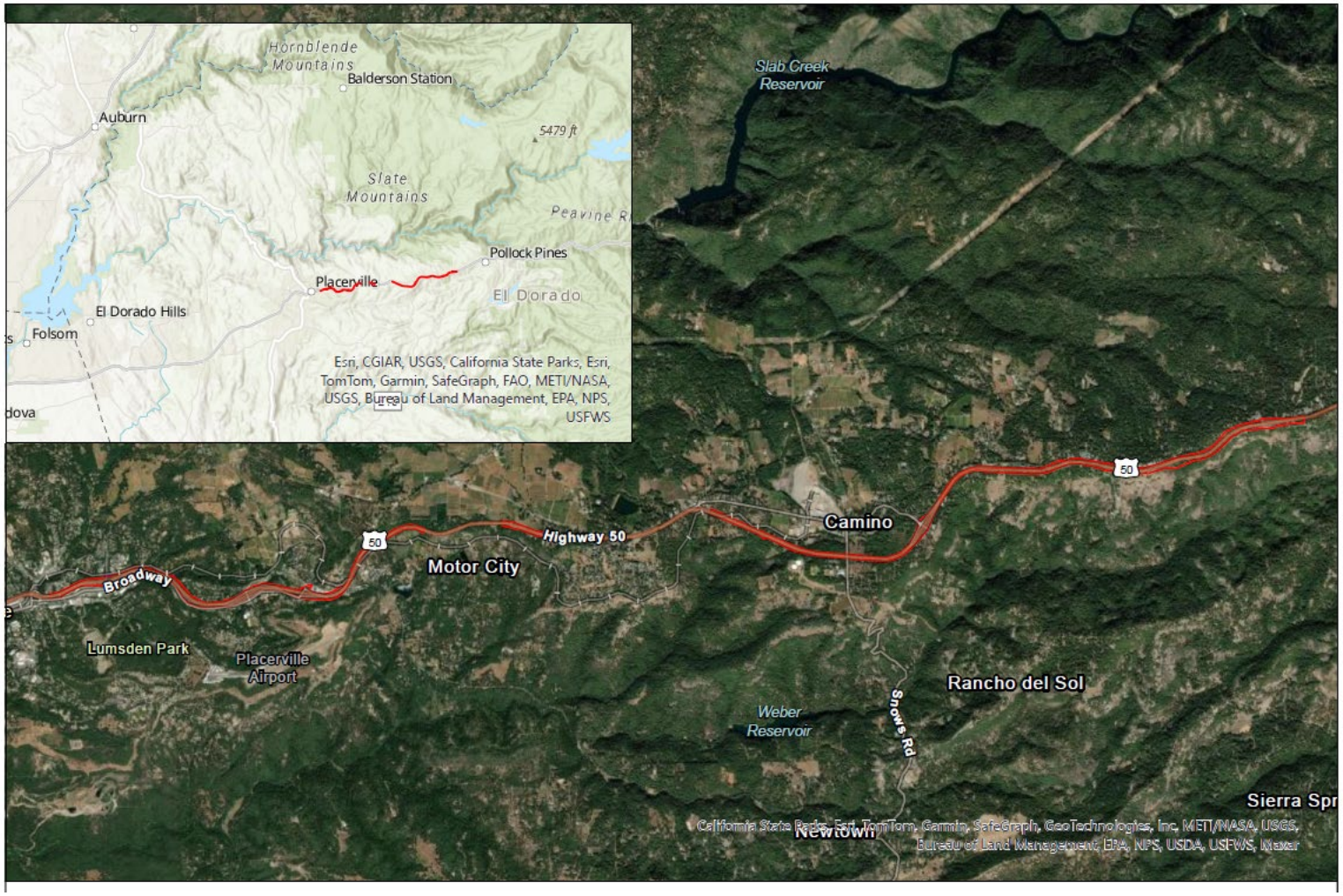

Figure 1. Project Vicinity Map

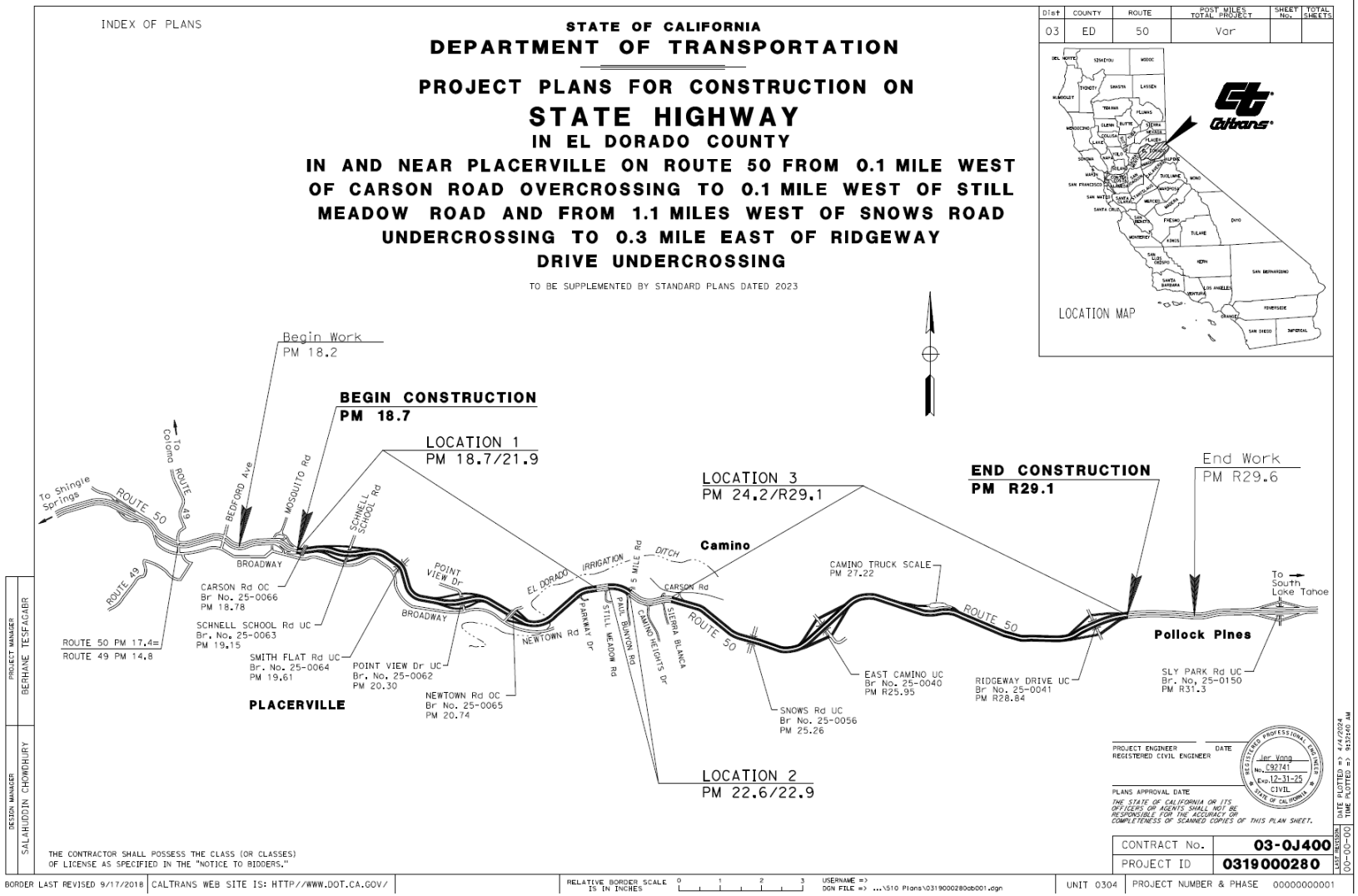

Figure 2. Project Location Map

1.2 Purpose and Need

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to preserve and extend the service life of the existing pavement and extend the service life of drainage systems by replacing fair or poor condition systems. The project also improves safety by upgrading non-standard median concrete barriers and guardrails to the current standards, upgrading Transportation Management System (TMS) elements and signs, constructing one acceleration lane, paving beyond the gore areas, and constructing Maintenance Vehicle Pullouts (MVPs) to improve Caltrans worker safety.

Need

A total of 29.8 lane miles of existing flexible pavement is projected to be in fair condition by the construction year 2026 and the existing pavement is expected to further deteriorate in the absence of proper action. Culvert assessment indicates that multiple culverts are in fair and poor condition, which jeopardizes the stability of the existing roadbed. Drainage systems that are in fair or poor conditions require rehabilitation or replacement to restore functionality. Additionally, poor condition overhead signs; two-post, ground-mounted signs; luminaires; existing guardrails; and existing median concrete barriers need to be upgraded to meet the current standards. Paving areas beyond the gore are needed in multiple locations and areas for MVPs are needed to provide adequate parking or ingress/egress.

1.3 Project Description

The proposed project is located in El Dorado (ED) County on US 50 from west of the Carson Road Overcrossing to west of Still Meadow Road (PMs 18.7 to 21.19); at Five Mile Road in the westbound direction (PMs 22.6 to 22.9); and near Camino, from 1.1 miles west of the Snows Road Undercrossing to east of the Ridgeway Drive Undercrossing (PM 24.2 to R29.1). This project proposes to grind and replace existing pavement; improve existing drainage systems; upgrade existing curb ramps to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards; upgrade overhead signs and two-post, ground-mounted signs; upgrade Transportation Management System (TMS) elements ; upgrade non-standard guardrails and median concrete barriers; pave beyond the gore areas; construct new maintenance vehicle pullouts (MVPs), and construct one new acceleration lane that will require a soil-nail wall and Type 7 retaining wall.

1.4 Proposed Alternatives

Construction work would include:

Pavement

From PMs 18.7 to 21.9 and 24.2 to R28.6

- Cold plane 0.2' and overlay 0.2' of Hot Mix Asphalt-Type A (HMA-Type A) on the mainline and interchange ramps, except for bridge deck locations.
- Cold plane 0.15' and overlay 0.15' of HMA-Type A at the ramps and parking lot of the Camino Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Facility.
- Restripe lanes, shoulders, and ramps with new standard 6" thermoplastic traffic stripe pavement marking and place recessed retroreflective pavement markers between PM 18.7 and PM 21.9.
- Restripe lanes, shoulders, and ramps with recessed two-component paint traffic stripe and surface applied/recessed two-component paint pavement marking between PM 24.2 and PM R28.6.
- Place imported material shoulder backing at the outside edge of both shoulders, where appropriate.
- Replace HMA dike on mainline and on/off-ramps as needed.
- Repair locations of severe existing asphalt pavement failure with dig-outs.

Drainage

Rehabilitate 32 poor and 17 fair condition culverts within access area and re-establish connections to existing drainage systems as follows:

- Concrete invert paving for one 6'-diameter culvert.
- Replace 8 culverts with overside flumes.
- Replace 37 culverts with reinforced concrete pipes.
- Cementitious line three (3) culverts at PMs 19.61, 24.60, and 24.80.
- Place rock slope protection as needed.
- Replace HMA dikes as needed.

Address flooding and erosion at the following locations:

- US 50 at Schnell School Road Undercrossing (PM 19.10)
    - Repair HMA dike (WB, west of the bridge rail).
    - Install overside drain/flume in a gentle slope to minimize velocity of runoff toward WB on-ramp (start 15' away from bridge rail).
- Add drainage inlets at median at PM R26.26.

Safety

- Replace existing non-standard median concrete barriers with the current Type 60 standards from PM 18.7 to PM 21.9, except for bridge deck locations.
- Replace existing metal beam guard rail (MBGR) with steel post Midwest Guardrail System (MGS) and bring appropriate end treatments and transition railing to the current standards of the *Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware* (MASH).
- Place rumble strips, where appropriate, throughout project limits.
- Replace vehicle detection loops that will be damaged by cold plane operations.
- Construct an acceleration lane from PMs 22.6 to 22.9. The acceleration lane will start at Five Mile Road and go in the westbound direction on US 50. The acceleration lane will require a soil-nail retaining wall and a Type 7 standard plan retaining wall.
- Pave (1.15' Class 2 AB and 0.25' colored HMA-Type A) beyond the gore area at 20 locations. Relocate pull boxes, controller cabinets, call boxes, and any other items within the proposed paving beyond the gore area as needed.
- Construct 12 new MVPs.
- Required tree removal within proposed MVPs, acceleration lane, and paving beyond the gore area locations will be necessary during construction.

Complete Streets

- Upgrade 10 non-standard curb ramps at Schnell School Road Undercrossing and Point View Drive Undercrossing to current ADA standards.
- Replace approximately 200 feet of asphalt sidewalks with concrete sidewalks at Schnell School Road Undercrossing.

- Realign the crosswalks to remove the hinge at the eastbound off-ramp at Schnell School Road Undercrossing and at the westbound off-ramps at Jacquier Road (Point View Drive Undercrossing). This will reduce the corner sight distance. These crosswalks are at an all-way stop and it is acceptable for a vehicle to stop then move forward to increase the line of sight.

Signs and Transportation Management System (TMS) Elements

- Upgrade non-standard two-post, ground-mounted signs and replace two poor condition extinguishable message signs (EMS) at PM 21.117 westbound and at PM R27.946 eastbound with new Variable Message Signs (VMS).

1.5 Permits and Approvals Needed

The following permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications (PLACs) are required for project construction.

Table 1. Agency, Permit/Approval and Status

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Section 404–Nationwide Permit	Preparing for submittal to USACE
Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)	Section 401–permit from Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVRWQCB)	Preparing for submittal to RWQCB
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	Section 1602–Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement	Preparing for submittal to CDFW

1.6 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Alternatives

Under CEQA, "mitigation" is defined as avoiding, minimizing, rectifying, reducing/ eliminating, and compensating for an impact. In contrast, Standard Measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) are prescriptive and sufficiently standardized to be generally applicable, and do not require special tailoring for a project. These are measures that typically result from laws, permits, agreements, guidelines, resource management plans, and resource agency directives and policies. For this reason, the measures and practices are not considered "mitigation" under CEQA; rather, they are included as part of the project description in environmental documents.

The project contains a number of standardized project features, standard practices (measures), and Best Management Practices (BMPs) which are employed on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project and, as such, are included as part of the project description. Any project-specific avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures that would be applied to reduce the effects of project impacts are listed further below or in Section 2.4.–Biological Resources.

Aesthetics Resources

AR-1: Where feasible, construction lighting would be temporary, and directed specifically on the portion of the work area actively under construction.

Biological Resources

BR-1: General

Before start of work, as required by permit or consultation conditions, a Caltrans biologist or Environmental Construction Liaison (ECL) would meet with the contractor to brief them on environmental permit conditions and requirements relative to each stage of the proposed project, including, but not limited to, work windows, drilling site management, and how to identify and report regulated species within the project areas.

BR-2: Animal Species

A. To protect migratory and nongame birds (occupied nests and eggs), if possible, vegetation removal would be limited to the period outside of the bird breeding season (removal would occur between September 16 and January 31). If vegetation removal is required during the breeding season, a nesting bird survey would be conducted by a qualified biologist within five days prior to vegetation removal. If an active nest is located, the biologist would coordinate with CDFW to establish appropriate species-specific buffer(s) and any monitoring requirements. The buffer would be delineated around each active nest and construction activities would be excluded from these areas until birds have fledged, or the nest is determined to be unoccupied.

B. To prevent attracting corvids (birds of the *Corvidae* family which include jays, crows, and ravens), no trash or foodstuffs would be left or stored on-site. All trash would be deposited in a secure container daily and disposed of at an approved waste facility at least once a week. Also, on-site workers would not attempt to attract or feed any wildlife.

C. Artificial night lighting may be required. To reduce potential disturbance to sensitive resources, lighting would be temporary and directed specifically on the portion of the work area actively under construction. Use of artificial lighting would be limited to Cal/OSHA work area lighting requirements.

BR-3: Plant Species, Sensitive Natural Communities

Seasonally appropriate, pre-construction floristic surveys for sensitive plant species would be completed (or updated) by a qualified biologist prior to construction in accordance with *Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities* (CDFW 2018).

A. A *Revegetation Plan* would be prepared which would include a plant palette, establishment period, watering regimen, monitoring requirements, and pest control measures. The Revegetation Plan would also address measures for wetland and riparian areas temporarily impacted by the project.

B. Prior to the start of work, Temporary High Visibility Fencing (THVF) and/or flagging would be installed around sensitive natural communities, environmentally sensitive habitat areas, rare plant occurrences, intermittent streams and wetlands and other waters, where appropriate. No work would occur within fenced/flagged areas.

C. Upon completion of construction, all superfluous construction materials would be completely removed from the site. The site would then be restored by regrading and stabilizing with a hydroseed mixture of native species along with fast growing sterile erosion control seed, as required by the Erosion Control Plan.

BR-5: Invasive Species

Invasive non-native species control would be implemented. Measures would include:

- Straw, straw bales, seed, mulch, or other material used for erosion control or landscaping which would be free of noxious weed seed and propagules.
- All equipment would be thoroughly cleaned of all dirt and vegetation prior to entering the job site to prevent importing invasive non-native species. Project personnel would adhere to the latest version of the *California Department of Fish and Wildlife Aquatic Invasive Species Cleaning/Decontamination Protocol (Northern Region)* for all field gear and equipment in contact with water.

Cultural Resources

CR-1: If cultural materials are discovered during construction, work activity within a 60-foot radius of the discovery would be stopped and the area secured until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

CR-2: If human remains and related items are discovered on private or State land, they would be treated in accordance with State Health and Safety Code (H&SC) § 7050.5. Further disturbances and activities would cease in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County Coroner contacted. Pursuant to California Public Resources Code (PRC) § 5097.98, if the remains are thought to

be Native American, the coroner would notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who would then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD).

Human remains and related items discovered on federally-owned lands would be treated in accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA) (23 USC 3001).
The procedures for dealing with the discovery of human remains, funerary objects, or sacred objects on federal land are described in the regulations that implement NAGPRA 43 CFR Part 10. All work in the vicinity of the discovery shall be halted and the administering agency's archaeologist would be notified immediately. Project activities in the vicinity of the discovery would not resume until the federal agency complies with the 43 CFR Part 10 regulations and provides notification to proceed.

Geology, Seismic/Topography, and Paleontology

GS-1: The project would be designed to minimize slope failure, settlement, and erosion using recommended construction techniques and Best Management Practices (BMPs). New earthen slopes would be vegetated to reduce erosion potential.

GS-2: In the unlikely event that paleontological resources (fossils) are encountered, all work within a 60-foot radius of the discovery would stop, the area would be secured, and the work would not resume until appropriate measures are taken.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

GHG-1: The project would comply with Standard Specification (SS) 14-9 "Air Quality" which requires compliance by the contractor with all applicable laws and regulations related to air quality.

GHG-2: Caltrans would comply with Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations, which includes restricting idling of diesel-fueled commercial motor vehicles and equipment with gross weight ratings of greater than 10,000 pounds to no more than 5 minutes.

GHG-3: Caltrans would comply with Standard Specification 7-1.02C "Emissions Reduction" ensures that construction activities adhere to the most recent emissions reduction regulations mandated by the California Air Resource Board (CARB).

GHG-4: Use of a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to minimize vehicle delays and idling emissions. As part of this, construction traffic would be scheduled and routed to reduce congestion and related air quality impacts caused by idling vehicles along the highway during peak travel times.

GHG-5: All areas temporarily disturbed during construction would be revegetated with appropriate native species, as appropriate. Landscaping reduces surface warming and, through photosynthesis, decreases CO_2. This replanting would help offset any potential CO_2 emissions increase.

Hazardous Waste and Material

HW-1: Per Caltrans requirements, the contractor(s) would prepare a project-specific *Lead Compliance Plan* (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 8, § 1532.1, the "Lead in Construction" standard) to reduce worker exposure to lead-impacted soil. The plan would include protocols for environmental and personnel monitoring, requirements for personal protective equipment, and other health and safety protocols and procedures for the handling of materials containing lead.

HW-2: When identified as containing hazardous levels of lead, traffic stripes would be removed and disposed of in accordance with Caltrans Standard Special Provision SSP 14-11.12 "Remove Yellow Traffic Stripes and Pavement Markings with Hazardous Waste Residue".

HW-3: If treated wood waste (such as removal of sign posts or guardrail) is generated during this project, it would be disposed of in accordance with Standard Specification 14-11.14 "Treated Wood Waste."

Traffic and Transportation

TT-1: A Transportation Management Plan (TMP) will be prepared for the project. The contractor would be required to schedule and conduct work to avoid unnecessary inconvenience to the public and to maintain access to driveways, houses, and buildings within the work zones.

Utilities and Emergency Services

UE-1: Caltrans would coordinate with utility providers to plan for relocation of any utilities to ensure utility customers would be notified of potential service disruptions before relocation.

Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff

WQ-1: The project would comply with the provisions of the Caltrans Statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit (Order 2022-0033-DWQ), effective January 1, 2023. If the project results in a land disturbance of one acre or more, coverage under the Construction General Permit (CGP) (Order 2022-0057-DWQ) is also required.

Before any ground-disturbing activities, the contractor would prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) (per the Construction General Permit Order 2022-0057-DWQ) or Water Pollution Control Program (WPCP) (projects that result in a land disturbance of less than one acre) that includes erosion control measures and construction waste containment measures to protect Waters of the State during project construction. For SWPPP projects (which are governed according to both the Caltrans NPDES permit and the Construction General Permit), soil disturbance is permitted to occur year-round as long as the Caltrans NPDES and CGP and the corresponding requirements of those permits are adhered to. For WPCP projects (which are governed according to the Caltrans NPDES permit), soil disturbance is permitted to occur year-round as long as the Caltrans NPDES permit is adhered to.

The SWPPP or WPCP would identify the sources of pollutants that may affect the quality of stormwater; include construction site Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control sedimentation, erosion, and potential chemical pollutants; provide for construction materials management; include non-stormwater BMPs; and include routine inspections and a monitoring and reporting plan. All construction site BMPs would follow the latest edition of the *Caltrans Storm Water Quality Handbooks: Construction Site BMPs Manual* to control and reduce the impacts of construction-related activities, materials, and pollutants on the watershed.

The project SWPPP or WPCP would be continuously updated to adapt to changing site conditions during the construction phase.

Construction may require one or more of the following temporary construction site BMPs:

- Accumulated stormwater, groundwater, or surface water from excavations or temporary containment facilities would be removed by dewatering.
- Water generated from the dewatering operations would be discharged on-site for dust control and/or to an infiltration basin, or disposed of offsite.
- Temporary sediment control and soil stabilization devices would be installed.
- Clearing, grubbing, and excavation would be limited to specific locations, as delineated on the plans, to maximize the preservation of existing vegetation.
- For SWPPP projects (which are governed according to both the Caltrans NPDES permit and the Construction General Permit), soil disturbance is permitted to occur year-round as long as the Caltrans NPDES and CGP and the corresponding requirements of these permits are adhered to. For WPCP projects (which are governed according to the Caltrans NPDES permit), soil disturbance is permitted to occur year-round as long as the Caltrans NPDES permit is adhered to.

WQ-2: The project would incorporate pollution prevention and design measures consistent with the *2016 Caltrans Storm Water Management Plan* (Caltrans 2016). This plan complies with the requirements of the Caltrans Statewide NPDES Permit (Order 2022-0033-DWQ).

The project design may include one or more of the following:

- Vegetated surfaces would feature native plants, and revegetation would use the seed mixture, mulch, tackifier, and fertilizer recommended in the Erosion Control Plan prepared for the project.
- Where possible, stormwater would be directed in such a way as to sheet flow across vegetated slopes, thus providing filtration of any potential pollutants.

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 would be 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 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)—in other words, species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act [FESA]).

Chapter 2. CEQA Environmental Checklist

Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors noted below would be potentially affected by this project. Please see the CEQA Environmental Checklist on the following pages for additional information.

Potential Impact Area	Impacted: Yes / No
Aesthetics	**Yes**
Agriculture and Forest Resources	No
Air Quality	**Yes**
Biological Resources	**Yes**
Cultural Resources	No
Energy	**Yes**
Geology and Soils	No
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	**Yes**
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	**Yes**
Hydrology and Water Quality	**Yes**
Land Use and Planning	No
Mineral Resources	No
Noise	**Yes**
Population and Housing	No
Public Services	No
Recreation	No
Transportation	**Yes**
Tribal Cultural Resources	No
Utilities and Service Systems	No
Wildfire	No
Mandatory Findings of Significance	No

The CEQA Environmental Checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with the project indicate there are no impacts to a particular resource. A “NO IMPACT” answer in the last column of the checklist reflects this determination.

The words "significant" and "significance" used throughout the CEQA Environmental Checklist are only related to potential impacts pursuant to CEQA. The questions in the CEQA Environmental 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, as well as standardized measures that are applied to all or most Caltrans projects (such as Best Management Practices [BMPs] and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions [Section 1.4]), are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented in the checklist or document.

Project Impact Analysis Under CEQA

CEQA broadly defines "project" to include "the whole of an action, which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment" (14 CCR § 15378). Under CEQA, normally the baseline for environmental impact analysis consists of the existing conditions at the time the environmental studies began. However, it is important to choose the baseline that most meaningfully informs decision-makers and the public of the project's possible impacts. Where existing conditions change or fluctuate over time, and where necessary to provide the most accurate picture practically possible of the project's impacts, a lead agency may define existing conditions by referencing historic conditions, or conditions expected when the project becomes operational, or both, that are supported with substantial evidence. In addition, a lead agency may also use baselines consisting of both existing conditions and projected future conditions that are supported by reliable projections based on substantial evidence in the record. The CEQA Guidelines require a "statement of the objectives sought by the proposed project" (14 CCR § 15124(b)).

CEQA requires the identification of each potentially "significant effect on the environment" resulting from the project, and ways to mitigate each significant effect. Significance is defined as *"Substantial or potentially substantial adverse change to any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project"* (14 CCR § 15382). CEQA determinations are made prior to and separate from the development of mitigation measures for the project.

The legal standard for determining the significance of impacts is whether a "fair argument" can be made that a "substantial adverse change in physical conditions" would occur. The fair argument must be backed by substantial evidence including facts, reasonable assumption predicated upon fact, or expert opinion supported by facts. Generally, an environmental professional with specific training in an area of environmental review can make this determination.

Though not required, CEQA suggests Lead Agencies adopt thresholds of significance, which define the level of effect above which the Lead Agency will consider impacts to be significant, and below which it will consider impacts to be less than significant. Given the size of California and it's varied, diverse, and complex ecosystems, as a Lead Agency that encompasses the entire State, developing thresholds of significance on a state-wide basis has not been pursued by Caltrans. Rather, to ensure each resource is evaluated objectively, Caltrans analyzes potential resource impacts in the project area based on their location and the effect of the potential impact on the resource as a whole. For example, if a project has the potential to impact 0.10 acre of wetland in a watershed that has minimal development and contains thousands of acres of wetland, then a "less than significant" determination would be considered appropriate. In comparison, if 0.10 acre of wetland would be impacted that is located within a park in a city that only has 1.00 acre of total wetland, then the 0.10 acre of wetland impact could be considered "significant."

If the action may have a potentially significant effect on any environmental resource (even with mitigation measures implemented), then an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared. Under CEQA, the lead agency may adopt a negative declaration (ND) if there is no substantial evidence that the project may have a potentially significant effect on the environment (14 CCR § 15070(a)). A proposed negative declaration must be circulated for public review, along with a document known as an Initial Study. CEQA allows for a "Mitigated Negative Declaration" in which mitigation measures are proposed to reduce potentially significant effects to less than significant (14 CCR § 15369.5).

Although the formulation of mitigation measures shall not be deferred until some future time, the specific details of a mitigation measure may be developed after project approval when it is impractical or infeasible to include those details during the project's environmental review. The lead agency must (1) commit itself to the mitigation, (2) adopt specific performance standards the mitigation will achieve, and (3) identify the type(s) of potential action(s) that can feasibly achieve that performance standard and that will be considered, analyzed, and potentially incorporated in the mitigation measure.

Compliance with a regulatory permit or other similar processes may be identified as mitigation if compliance would result in implementation of measures that would be reasonably expected, based on substantial evidence in the record, to reduce the significant impact to the specified performance standards (§ 15126.4(a)(1)(B)). Per CEQA, measures may also be adopted, but are not required, for environmental impacts that are not found to be significant (14 CCR § 15126.4(a)(3)). Under CEQA, mitigation is defined as avoiding, minimizing, rectifying, reducing, and compensating for any potential impacts (CEQA 15370). Regulatory agencies may require additional measures beyond those required for compliance with CEQA. Though not considered "mitigation" under CEQA, these measures are often referred to in an Initial Study as "mitigation", Good Stewardship or Best Management Practices. These measures can also be identified after the Initial Study/Negative Declaration is approved.

CEQA documents must consider direct and indirect impacts of a project (California Public Resources Code § 21065.3). They are to focus on significant impacts (14 CCR § 15126.2(a)). Impacts that are less than significant need only be briefly described (14 CCR § 15128). All potentially significant effects must be addressed.

Definitions of Project Parameters

When determining the parameters of a project for potential impacts, the following definitions are provided:

Project Area: This is the general area where the project is located. This term is mainly used in the Affected Environment section (e.g., watershed, climate type, etc.).

Project Limits: This is the beginning and ending post miles for a project. This is different than the ESL in that it sets the beginning and ending limits of a project along the highway. It is the limits programmed for a project, and every report, memo, etc. associated with a project should use the same post mile limits. In some cases, there may be areas associated with a project that are outside of the project limits, such as staging and disposal locations.

Project Footprint: The area within the Environmental Study Limits (ESL) the project is anticipated to impact, both temporarily and permanently. This includes staging and disposal areas.

Environmental Study Limits (ESL): The project engineer provides the Environmental team the ESL as an anticipated boundary for potential impacts. The ESL is *not* the project footprint. Rather, it is the area encompassing the project footprint where there could

potentially be direct and indirect disturbance by construction activity. The ESL is larger than the project footprint in order to accommodate any future scope changes. The ESL is also used for identifying the various Biological Study Areas (BSAs) needed for different biological resources.

Biological Study Area (BSA): The BSA encompasses the ESL plus any areas outside of the ESL that could be potentially affected by a project (e.g., noise, visual, Coastal Zone, etc.). Depending on resources in the area, a project could have multiple BSAs. Each BSA should be identified and defined. If the project is within the Coastal Zone, this area would also include the required 100 foot buffer.

2.1 Aesthetics

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

"No Impact" and "Less than Significant Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, as well as the *Visual Impact Assessment* (Caltrans 2023e) dated November 17, 2023.

Regulatory Setting

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

Affected Environment

Determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, as well as the *Visual Impact Assessment* dated November 17, 2023 (Caltrans 2023e).

The project limits are located along United States (US) 50 in El Dorado County from west of the Carson Road Overcrossing to west of Still Meadow Road (PMs 18.7 to 21.19); at Five Mile Road in the westbound direction (PMs 22.6 to 22.9); near Camino, from 1.1 miles west of the Snows Road Undercrossing to east of the Ridgeway Drive Undercrossing (PMs 24.2 to R29.1). The surrounding land uses are a mixture of forest, open space, and agriculture and the area is characterized by rolling mountain terrain.

Environmental Consequences

Potential impacts to aesthetics are minimal due to there being negligible visual changes to the environment from the construction of this project. As the proposed project is located on an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway, the visual impact of the proposed project is anticipated to be low.

The project would not compromise the project corridor's visual quality and character, and it would not adversely impact highway viewers nor generate public concern. Also, the impacts to vegetation removal should be minimal.

Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures

Based on the determinations made in the CEQA Environmental Checklist, no mitigation measures are proposed for this project.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.1—Aesthetics

a) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less than Significant Impact. A scenic vista is defined as a viewpoint that provides expansive views of a highly valued landscape for the benefit of the public. Some scenic vistas are officially designated by public agencies or informally designated by tourists and tourist guides. A substantial adverse effect to such a scenic vista is one that degrades the view from a designated view spot. Although US 50 is an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway and eastbound US 50 is considered a corridor with important scenic viewpoints for its views of the Sacramento Valley, minimal tree removal would still result in an appearance similar to existing locations along the project corridor.

The project scope includes pavement repair and replacement and curb ramp upgrades as well as restoring existing drainage systems. This portion of the project within US 50 is listed as eligible for State Scenic Highway designation. This project would not have any of its scenic viewpoints or vistas affected by the proposed project scope. As a result, the project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Therefore, there would be a less than significant impact.

b) Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings, within a state scenic highway?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project is in an area of US 50 listed as an Eligible Scenic Highway. Eligible Scenic Highways possess similar scenic resources to those of an Officially Designated Scenic Highway; therefore, an effort should be made to preserve and protect their scenic resources. The implementation of the proposed project would not damage scenic resources such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings. The project would not construct any buildings or structures that would block long-range views or interfere with scenic vistas. The scope of the project includes preserving and extending the service life of the roadbed and rehabilitating the culverts. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

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

No Impact. The project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. The proposed work would be on the roadway and would be compatible with the existing site elements. Therefore, the project would have no impact to public views.

d) Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed work is expected to be completed during normal working daylight hours; however, construction may require some work during the night. All nighttime illumination sources coming from the project would comply with standard Caltrans practices controlling illumination for public safety pursuant to Cal/OSHA and any light and glare from construction activities would be temporary. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

2.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources

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

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				✓
Would the project: b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				✓
Would the project: c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of forest land (as defined by 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))?				✓
Would the project: d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				✓

"No Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, as well as the California Department of Conservation Farmland Maps (California Department of Conservation 2024a). Potential impacts to Agriculture and Forest Services are not anticipated.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.2—Agriculture and Forest Resources

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

No Impact. The areas surrounding the proposed project are zoned Timber Mountain, Community Commercial, Foothill Residential, and Public Use. There is no agricultural land in the project area that would be impacted. The proposed project would not convert land designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agriculture use. Therefore, the project would have no impact to agricultural resources.

b) Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact. There are no parcels within the Williamson Act contract within the project limits. The project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural uses. Therefore, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract and no impacts would occur.

c) Would the project 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. The proposed project does not conflict with forest land or timberland. There are no parcels with these classifications identified within the project limits that would be required for the construction of the proposed project. Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned for Timberland Production. Therefore, there would be no impacts.

d) Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. The proposed project would not involve the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. The purpose of the project is to preserve and extend the life of the roadbed, ensure pavement reliability and rideability by rehabilitating drainage systems, and improve safety. The areas where improvements would occur outside of the Caltrans right of way are not identified as forest land or timberland. Therefore, no impacts to forest land would occur.

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

No Impact. The purpose of the project is to rehabilitate pavement and culverts. The proposed project would not involve other changes in the existing environment, which could result in the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use. The proposed project is not growth inducing as it is proposed to serve existing travel. Therefore, there would be no impacts to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

2.3 Air Quality

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

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

"No Impact" and "Less Than Significant" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, as well as the *Air Quality and Noise Analysis Report* (Caltrans 2023a) dated February 28, 2024.

Regulatory Setting

The federal Clean Air Act (CAA), as amended, is the primary federal law that governs air quality, while the California Clean Air Act is its corresponding state law. These laws, and related regulations by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and California Air Resources Board (CARB), set standards for the concentration of pollutants in the air.

Federal air quality standards and regulations provide the basic scheme for project-level air quality analysis under NEPA. In addition to this analysis, a parallel "Conformity" requirement under the federal CAA also applies. U.S. EPA regulations at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 93 govern the conformity process. Conformity requirements do not apply in unclassifiable/attainment areas for National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and do not apply at all for state standards regardless of the status of the area.

Affected Environment

Determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, as well as the *Air Quality and Noise Analysis Report* dated February 28, 2024. This project is exempt from all air quality conformity analysis requirements, "Safety-Hazard Elimination Program," and no further air quality analysis is required. The purpose of this project is to preserve the existing facility and prevent further deterioration of the roadway. The proposed modifications would not result in changes to the traffic volume, fleet mix, speed, location of existing facility or any other factor that would cause an increase in emissions relative to the no build alternative; therefore, this project would not cause an increase in operational emissions.

Environmental Consequences

Potential long-term impacts to Air Quality are not anticipated due to the proposed modifications not resulting in changes to the traffic volume, fleet mix, speed, location of existing facility or any other factor that would cause an increase in emissions. This project would not cause an increase in operational emissions and would be exempt from all air quality conformity analysis requirements per Table 2 of 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 93.126 subsection "Safety-pavement resurfacing and/or rehabilitation."

During construction, short-term degradation of air quality may occur due to the release of particulate emissions (airborne dust) generated by excavation, grading, hauling, and other construction-related activities. Emissions from construction equipment also are expected and would include carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), directly-emitted particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), and toxic air contaminants such as diesel exhaust particulate matter. Construction activities are expected to increase traffic congestion in the area, resulting in increases in emissions from traffic during the delays. These emissions would be temporary and limited to the immediate area surrounding the construction site.

Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures

Based on the determinations made in the CEQA Environmental Checklist, no mitigation measures are proposed for this project.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.3—Air Quality

a) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

No Impact. The project would not conflict with any air quality plan. The proposed project would preserve the service life of the existing highway. The project would not result in changes to the traffic volume, fleet mix, speed, location of existing facility, or any other factor that would cause an increase in emissions relative to the No-Build Alternative. This project would not cause an increase in operational emissions that affect quality standards. Therefore, there would be no impact to any air quality plan.

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

No Impact. Based on the *Air Quality and Noise Analysis Report* (Caltrans 2024a), the project would not result in increases of criteria pollutants. Construction activities are expected to increase traffic congestion in the area, resulting in an increase in emissions from traffic during delays. However, these emissions would be temporary and limited to the immediate area surrounding the construction site. Therefore, there would be no impact.

c) Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project anticipates temporary short-term air quality impacts during construction; however, these impacts would be reduced with incorporation of the Standard Measures and Best Management Practices identified in Section 1.6.

The purpose of this project is to preserve the pavement life of US 50 and extend the life of drainage systems. The proposed project would not cause an increase in operational emissions during the future years when compared to the No-Build Alternative. Therefore, there would be a Less Than Significant Impact.

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

No Impact. The proposed project would not result in other emissions that would adversely affect a substantial number of people. Fugitive dust, sometimes called windblown dust or particulate matter (PM_{10}), would be generated during grading and construction operations; however, it would be a short-term construction emission. The project would comply with construction standards, and implementation of Caltrans Standard Measures and Best Management Practices would minimize air pollutants during construction. Therefore, there would be no impact.

2.4 Biological Resources

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or NOAA Fisheries?				✓
Would the project: 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?			✓	
Would the project: 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?			✓	
Would the project: 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?				✓
Would the project: e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				✓

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: 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" and "Less Than Significant Impact "determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, as well as the *Natural Environment Study* (Caltrans 2023d).

Regulatory Setting

Within this section of the document (2.4. Biological Resources), the topics are separated into Natural Communities, Wetlands and Other Waters, Plant and Animal Species, including Threatened and Endangered Species, and Invasive Species. Threatened and endangered special status plant and animal species include USFWS, NMFS and CDFW candidate species and CDFW Fully Protected (FP) species. CDFW Species of Special Concern (SSC) and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) rare plants are covered in their respective Plant and Animal sections.

CESA states that all native species of plants and fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, invertebrates and their habitats threatened with extinction or endangered designation would be protected or preserved. Section 2081 of the California Fish and Game Code states CDFW may authorize, by permit, the "take" of endangered species, threatened species, and candidate species if the take is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity and if the impacts of the authorized take shall be minimized and fully mitigated. The measures required to meet this obligation shall be roughly proportional in extent to the impact of the authorized taking of the species.

Natural Communities

In this section, the focus is on biological communities, not individual plant or animal species. CDFW maintains a list of sensitive natural communities (SNCs). SNCs are those natural communities that are of limited distribution statewide or within a county or region and are often vulnerable to environmental effects of projects. These communities may or may not contain special status taxa or their habitat. This section also includes information on wildlife corridors and habitat fragmentation. Wildlife corridors are areas of habitat used by wildlife for seasonal or daily migration. Habitat fragmentation involves the potential for dividing sensitive habitat and thereby lessening its biological value.

Habitat areas that have been designated as critical habitat under the Federal Endangered Species Act are discussed below in the Threatened and Endangered Species section.

Wetlands and Other Waters

Waters of the United States (including wetlands) and State are protected under several laws and regulations. The primary laws and regulations governing wetlands and other waters include:

- Federal: Clean Water Act (CWA)–33 United States Code (USC) 1344
- Federal: Executive Order for the Protection of Wetlands (Executive Order [EO] 11990)
- State: California Fish and Game Code (CFGC)–Sections 1600–1607
- State: Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act–Sections 3000 et seq.

Plant Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) have regulatory responsibility for the protection of special status plant species. The primary laws governing plant species include:

- Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA)–USC 16 Section 1531, et seq. See also 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 402
- California Endangered Species Act (CESA)–California Fish and Game Code Section 2050, et seq.
- Native Plant Protection Act–California Fish and Game Code Sections 1900–1913

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)–40 CFR Sections 1500 through 1508
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)–California Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 21000–21177

Animal Species

The USFWS, NMFS, and CDFW have regulatory responsibility for the protection of special status animal species. The primary laws governing animal species include:

- NEPA–40 CFR Sections 1500 through 1508
- CEQA–California Public Resources Code Sections 21000–21177
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act–16 USC Sections 703–712
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act–16 USC Section 661
- California Fish and Game Code Sections 1600–1603
- California Fish and Game Code Sections 4150 and 4152

Threatened and Endangered Species

The primary laws governing threatened and endangered species include:

- FESA–USC 16 Sections 1531, et seq. See also 50 CFR Part 402
- CESA–California Fish and Game Code Sections 2050, et seq.
- CESA–California Fish and Game Code Section 2080
- CEQA–California Public Resources Code, Sections 21000–21177
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended–16 USC Section 1801

Invasive Species

The primary laws governing invasive species are Executive Order (EO) 13112 as amended and NEPA.

Affected Environment

A Natural Environment Study (NES) (Caltrans 2024) was prepared for the project.

Sensitive Natural Communities

Habitats and sensitive natural communities are habitats considered sensitive because of their high species diversity, high productivity, unusual nature, limited distribution, or declining status. Local, state, and federal agencies consider these habitats important, and compensation for loss of sensitive communities is generally required by agencies. Streams, wetlands, riparian habitat, sensitive natural communities (SNCs), critical habitat (CH), and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) are regulated by federal, state, and local laws; therefore, they are considered habitats of concern. These habitat types are discussed below.

Wetlands and Other Waters

Discussion of Aquatic Resources

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regulates Waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbor Act. Waters of the U.S. include essentially all surface waters, such as navigable waters and their tributaries, interstate waters and their tributaries, most natural lakes, wetlands adjacent to these waters, and impoundments of these waters. This may include lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent and ephemeral streams), natural ponds, mudflats, playa lakes, sloughs, wet meadows, swamps, bottomland hardwood wetlands, and other kinds of watercourses, wetlands, and aquatic areas. The term "Other Waters of the U.S." is sometimes used simply to describe those jurisdictional waters (such as streams and other aquatic sites) that do not meet the definition of "wetlands." A Nationwide Permit (NWP) 14 is anticipated as a requirement for the project. Since three of the culverts (PM 21.2, 21.3, and 21.6) are associated with a seep, the project does not qualify for a non-reporting NWP 14.

At the state level, wetlands and waters are regulated primarily by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) and the CDFW. Sections 1600-1607 of the California Fish and Game Code require any agency that proposes a project that will substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of or substantially change the bed or bank of a river, stream, or lake to notify CDFW before beginning construction. If CDFW determines the project may substantially and adversely affect fish or wildlife resources, a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) will be required. CDFW jurisdictional limits are usually defined by the tops of the stream or lake banks, or the outer edge of riparian vegetation, whichever is wider. Wetlands under jurisdiction of the USACE may or may not be included in the area covered

by a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement obtained from the CDFW. This project would require a 1602 LSAA for impacts to Waters of the State due to culvert replacement, addition of RSP, and clear water diversion needed to accomplish the work.

The RWQCB regulates discharges of fill and dredged material into Waters of the State under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. These programs protect all waters in their regulatory scope but have special responsibility for wetlands, riparian areas, and headwaters because these water bodies have high resource value, are vulnerable to filling, and are not systematically protected by other programs. The RWQCB is involved with protection of special status species and regulation of hydro-modification effects. The program encourages basin- or landscape-level analysis and protection of functions of wetlands, riparian areas, and headwater streams, including pollutant removal, floodwater retention, and habitat connectivity. The project is under the jurisdiction of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and a Water Quality Certification would be required.

Survey Results

Surveys for Waters of the U.S. and State were conducted at all culverts in which work is proposed. See Table 2 below for culvert locations and conveyance and work proposed at Waters of the U.S. and State and Table 3 for the proposed construction at each culvert.

Table 2. Culverts within the Project Study Area that are Waters of the U.S. and State

Drainage System No.	PM	Drainage	Conveyance
250508001961	19.6	Hangtown Creek	Perennial
250508001961	19.6	Hangtown Creek	Perennial
250508001975	19.75	Small unnamed tributary to Hangtown Creek	Intermittent
250506002074	20.74	Hangtown Creek	Perennial
250504002119	21.2	Seep	Perennial
250504002133	21.3	Seep	Perennial
250504002159	21.6	Seep	Perennial
250504002179	21.8	Unnamed stream that flows from freshwater pond northeast of the culvert; stream flows south of the ROW where it dissipates into wetland on private property	Intermittent
250504002460	24.6	Unnamed tributary to China Creek	Ephemeral
250504002480	24.8	Unnamed tributary to China Creek	Ephemeral

Table 3. Work Proposed at Culvert within the Project Study Area that are Waters of the U.S. and State

Drainage System No.	PM	Existing Culvert	Work Proposed
250508001961	19.6	6' x 6' Box Culvert	Concrete Invert Paving
250508001961	19.6	72" Corrugated Steel Pipe (CSP)	Lined with cementitious liner, Rock Slope Protection (RSP)
250508001975	19.75	24" CSP	Replace with 24" Reinforced Concrete Pipe (RCP), RSP
250506002074	20.74	24" CSP	Replace with 24" RCP, RSP
250504002119	21.2	18" CSP	Replace with 24" RCP, RSP
250504002133	21.3	18" and 24" CSP	Replace 18" with 24" RCP; CIPP line 24" and add RSP
250504002159	21.6	18" CSP	Replace with 24" CSP, RSP
250504002179	21.8	24" CSP	Replace with 24" CSP, RSP
250504002460	24.6	24" CSP	Lined with cementitious liner
250504002480	24.8	24" CSP	Lined with cementitious liner

Project Impacts

The project would have impacts to three culverts associated with a seep (special aquatic site) (PMs 21.2, 21.3 and 21.6) and at four culverts associated with Other Waters of the U.S. and State (PMs 19.6, 19.75, 20.74, and 21.8). Impacts would occur as a result of placement of fill within waters consisting of rock slope stabilization (RSP) at most inlets and outlets. At PMs 19.6, 24.6 and 24.8, culverts would only be lined with cementitious liner. Total impacts to Waters of the U.S. and State are approximately 0.21 acres.

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts/Compensatory Mitigation

Implementation of the following avoidance and minimization efforts would ensure the proposed project minimizes effects on aquatic resources of the Waters of the U.S./Waters of the State. Caltrans will obtain a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) from CDFW that may contain additional BMPs and water quality measures to ensure the protection of water quality.

Install Fencing to Protect Sensitive Biological Resources

Prior to construction, Caltrans's contractor would install high-visibility orange construction fencing and/or flagging, as appropriate, along the perimeter of the work area adjacent to ESAs (e.g., other waters, riparian, and active bird nests). The fencing would be maintained throughout the duration of the construction period. If the fencing is removed, damaged, or otherwise compromised during construction, the fencing would be repaired or replaced. SSP 14-1.02 for ESA fencing would be incorporated into the project specifications in the contract.

Caltrans would obtain a Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 permit, a CWA Section 401 permit, and a 1602 LSAA. The final acreage of impact and compensation will be determined as part of the permitting phase of the proposed project. Caltrans will also implement the conditions and requirements of permits that will be obtained for the proposed project.

Containment Measures/Construction Site Best Management Practices:

Measures will be employed to prevent any construction material or debris from entering surface waters or their channels. BMP for erosion control will be implemented and in place prior to, during, and after construction in order to ensure that no silt or sediment enters surface waters.

The project is subject to stormwater quality regulations established under the NPDES, described in Section 402 of the federal CWA. In California, the NPDES program requires that any construction activity disturbing 1 or more acres comply with the statewide General Permit, as authorized by the State Water Board. The General Permit requires elimination or minimization of non-stormwater discharges from construction sites and development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for the site.

Caltrans and its contractors will comply with all construction site BMPs specified in the SWPPP and any other permit conditions to minimize the introduction of construction-related contaminants and mobilization of sediment in wetlands and other waters in and adjacent to the project area. These BMPs would address soil stabilization, sediment control, wind erosion control, vehicle tracking control, non-stormwater management, and waste management practices. The BMPs would be based on the best conventional and best available technology.

The BMPs would include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conduct all drainage, earthwork, or foundation activities involving wetlands and other waters in the dry season (generally between June 15 and October 15, may vary based on weather).

- Where working areas encroach on live or dry streams, lakes, or wetlands, RWQCB-approved physical barriers adequate to prevent the flow or discharge of sediment into these systems shall be constructed and maintained between working areas and streams, lakes, and wetlands. During construction of the barriers, discharge of sediment into streams shall be held to a minimum. Discharge will be contained through the use of RWQCB-approved measures that will keep sediment from entering protected waters.

- Oily or greasy substances originating from the Contractor's operations shall not be allowed to enter or be placed where they will later enter a live or dry stream, pond, or wetland.

- Asphalt concrete shall not be allowed to enter a live or dry stream, pond, or wetland

Riparian

Riparian habitat vegetation represents an assemblage of plant species that grow exclusively in the riparian zone. Riparian is vegetation associated with a stream. Many of the 49 culverts did not have riparian habitat that would impede access to conduct the culvert replacement work.

Survey Results

Riparian vegetation proposed for removal was identified at culverts located at PMs 19.75, 20.74, 21.2, 21.6, and 21.8. A more inclusive field survey would be conducted in spring and summer of 2024 to determine exact species to be impacted and associated diameter at breast height (DBH).

Project Impacts

As currently designed, the project would impact approximately 0.82 acres of riparian. Riparian habitat would be removed at the inlets and outlets of culverts to allow access of work to replace the culvert pipes and add RSP.

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts/Compensatory Mitigation

Riparian habitat would be avoided to the greatest extent practicable. Through consultation with CDFW, riparian impacts would be offset by on-site revegetation or off-site revegetation at an approved location within the service area, as defined and approved by the regulatory agency.

Migratory Birds

The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (15 USC 703–711), Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 21 and 50 CFR Part 10, the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) Sections 3503, 3513, 3800, and AB-2627 protect migratory birds, their occupied nests, and their eggs from disturbance or destruction. The MBTA provides protection in part by restricting the disturbance of nests during the bird nesting season.

Survey Results

Tree removal is proposed as part of the project. Tree and shrub trimming and removal would be required during the nesting season of protected raptors and migratory birds (February 1 to September 30) to access some culvert inlets or outlets.

Project Impacts

The proposed project could result in the "take" of migratory birds during construction activities; however, with implementation of avoidance and minimization measures, no take of migratory or non-game birds is anticipated.

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts/Compensatory Mitigation

Contractor Supplied Biologist to Conduct Nesting Bird Surveys

If tree trimming is conducted within the nesting season (February 1–September 30) focused surveys for active nests of such birds would be conducted by a qualified biologist within 5 days prior to tree trimming. If a lapse in project-related work of 5 days or longer occurs, another survey would be required before the work can be reinitiated. SSP 14-6.03A for species protection would be incorporated into the project specifications in the contract. No impacts are anticipated; no compensatory mitigation is needed.

Plant Species

Plants are considered to be of special concern based on (1) federal, state, or local laws regulating their development; (2) limited distributions; and/or (3) the presence of habitat required by the special-status plants occurring on site.

Botanical surveys were conducted during the appropriate time of the year when potentially occurring rare plants are present and identifiable following CDFW (CDFW 2018) and Caltrans protocols. Botanical surveys were conducted on May 15 and June 22, 2023, to assess the presence of sensitive plants and sensitive natural communities within the Environmental Study Limits (ESL), specifically within the construction footprint. Botanical surveys focused heavily on the areas surrounding the inlets and outlets of culverts in which culvert replacement is proposed. There are no federal or state listed plants within the project area. No special status plants were found in the ESL. Additional botanical surveys are being completed in 2024 to increase the certainty that no special status plants would be impacted. Botanical surveys will be focused on areas around where culvert inlets and outlets occur and at Location 2 where the acceleration lane is proposed. All other work proposed is within the current roadway pavement.

While the following plant species were identified as having suitable habitat within the ESL, they were not observed during botanical surveys; therefore, will not be discussed further.

- Pleasant Valley mariposa-lily (*Calochortus clavatus* var. *avius*)
- Sierra arching sedge (*Carex cyrtostachya*)
- Fresno ceanothus (*Ceanothus fresnensis*)
- Brandegee's clarkia (*Clarkia biloba* ssp. *Brandegeeae*)
- Sierra clarkia (*Clarkia virgata*)
- Northern Sierra daisy (*Erigeron petrophilus* var. *sierrensis*)
- Serpentinite bluecup (*Githopsis pulchella* ssp. *serpentinicola*)
- Baker Cypress (*Hesperocyparis bakeri*)
- Yosemite tarplant (*Jensia yosemitana*)
- Humboldt lily (*Lilium humboldtii* ssp. *Humboldtii*)
- Sierra sweet bay (*Myrica hartwegii*)
- Stebbins' phacelia (*Phacelia stebbinsii*)
- Brownish beaked-rush (*Rhynchospora capitellata*)
- Long-fruit jewelflower (*Streptanthus longisiliquus*)
- Oval-leaved viburnum (*Viburnum ellipticum*)

Survey Results

There were no rare, sensitive, threatened, or endangered plant species found within the ESL or areas in which work is proposed. A soaproot species was discovered at the culvert located at PM 19.75. After a focused survey to key out this plant, it was realized that it was not the Red Hills soaproot (1B.2), and was instead Amole (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), a native perennial herb.

Project Impacts

There would be no impacts to any special status plant species. The project does involve some tree removal of Sierran Conifer Forest and Montane Hardwood Conifer, however these are not considered habitats that are sensitive.

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts/Compensatory Mitigation

There are no special status plants where work would occur in undisturbed areas; therefore, no avoidance, minimization, or compensatory mitigation is needed.

Special Status Animal Species

Animals are considered to be of special concern based on (1) federal, state, or local laws regulating their development; (2) limited distributions; and/or (3) the habitat requirements of special-status animals occurring on site. There are no special status animal species expected to be within the ESL. There is potential bat habitat within the ESL and areas of tree removal.

Fringed myotis (myotis thysanodes) and Yuma myotis (Myotis yumanensis)

There would be no impact to these two bat species. Although the project ESL exists within the range of fringed myotis, suitable maternity roosting sites do not exist within the project study area. Although potential night roosting habitat (manmade structures) are available, appropriate day and maternity roosts are absent from the ESL.

Silver-haired Bat

Silver-haired bat ***(****Lasionycteris noctivagans****)*** is a species that roosts in trees, snags, buildings, rock crevices, and caves. It occurs in coastal and montane forests from Oregon to San Francisco Bay, to the Sierra Nevada's. During the spring and fall migrations, the silver-haired bat can be found anywhere in California. Summer habitats includes forests and woodlands below 9,000 feet.

Silver-haired bats feed mainly on moths and other soft-bodied insects. They also are known to eat beetles and other hard-shelled insects to some extent. Its foraging strategy consists of slow fluttery flights less than 20 feet above forested and aquatic habitats. Requirements for drinking water restrict the species to mesic habitats. They are known to have a small foraging range of 150 to 300 feet. Young are born from May-July. The young are mature their first summer. They are known to live an average of 12 years.

This species is most commonly killed by turbines at wind energy facilities. Cumulative impact from wind turbines with the expansion of wind energy could have a notable impact to the species population as a whole. Also threats to the species include habitat loss and fragmentation and the reduction of prey due to pesticide applications.

Long-legged myotis

The long-legged myotis ***(****Myotis volans****)*** roosts in rock crevices, buildings, tree bark, and caves. Trees are the most important day roost for the species. They are common in California occurring throughout California, Oregon, and Mexico. Ideal habitat for this species includes woodland and forest habitats above 4,000 feet. It is also known to forage in chaparral, coastal scrub, and early successional stages for forests. It feeds on flying insects specializing in moths. It feeds at low heights 10-15 feet over water and around trees. It is not particularly maneuverable. It often responds to short lived patches of high insect density. Its requirement to drink regularly restricts its habitat to around a reliable water source.

Long-legged myotis forms nursery colonies which comprise hundreds of individuals, usually under bark or in hollow trees. Young are born in June and July. Young can begin flying in mid-July. The maximum recorded age for this species is 21 years old. No major threats are known. Locally it could be impacted by the closure of mines, disturbance by humans, and reduction of snags due to forest management practices.

Survey Results

No directed surveys have been conducted for bats within the ESL; however, snags and suitable trees were observed throughout the ESL that may provide roosting habitat for bats.

Project Impacts

The proposed project would potentially result in the removal of trees that could support roosting habitat for silver haired bat and fringed myotis. Removal of this habitat could result in the injury or mortality of bats if they are roosting in these trees at the time of the removal. Construction noise and activity taking place leading up to the removal of an occupied snag could disturb roosting bats and cause them to abandon roosts or avoid the area. Considering the avoidance and minimization efforts proposed below, the project would not result in any adverse impacts to silver-haired bat or long-legged myotis.

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts/Compensatory Mitigation

Conduct Preconstruction Surveys for Roosting Bats and Implement Protective Measures

To avoid and minimize potential impacts to all bat species, the project proponent would implement the following actions.

Preconstruction Surveys

A contractor supplied biologist would conduct surveys to identify the trees within the tree removal areas that could be potential bat habitat as well as look for bats (visual detection) and bat sign (e.g., guano, culled insect parts, staining). If evidence of bats is detected or cavities are not accessible it would be assumed that the tree is occupied by bats.

Protective Measures

To the extent practicable, trees determined to be suitable or occupied would be removed during the fall preceding construction in order to avoid affecting maternal colonies. If removal during this time period is not practicable the following measures will be implemented:

- To the greatest extent practicable, snags that provide suitable roost habitat would be removed in pieces, rather than felling the entire tree. It is recommended that removal be done late in the day or in the evening to reduce the likelihood of evicted bats falling prey to diurnal predators, and will take place during warm weather conditions conducive to bat activity.
- To the greatest extent practicable, structural changes may be made to any known roost proposed for removal (determined by pre-construction surveys) to create conditions in the roost that are undesirable to roosting bats and encourage the bats to leave on their own (e.g., open additional portals so that temperature, wind, light and precipitation regime in the roost change). Structural changes to the roost would be performed during the appropriate exclusion timing (listed above) to avoid harming bats.
- A qualified biologist will be present on-site to conduct monitoring during removal of the suitable bat habitat identified during pre-construction surveys.

No compensatory mitigation is proposed. These bat species are not listed or special status, and no compensatory mitigation is required. No impacts to bats should occur with the avoidance and minimization measures incorporated.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The following special status (threatened, endangered or fully protected) animal species identified on the USFWS, and CDFW species lists either did not have suitable habitat present and/or the project is out of the geographical range of the species; therefore, they will not be discussed further as there would be no effect/no impact to these species.

- Foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylii)*-South Sierra Distinct Population Segment (DPS) (pop. 5)–federal threatened, state threatened
- Bank swallow *(Riparia riparia)*–state threatened
- California spotted owl *(Strix occidentalis occidentalis)*–federal fully protected
- Steelhead *(Oncorhynchus mykiss)*-Central Valley Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU)–federal threatened
- Monarch butterfly *(Danaus plexippus)*–federal candidate
- Western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata)*–federal proposed threatened, state SSC

California Red-legged Frog (Rana draytonii)

California red-legged frog (CRLF) *(Rana draytonii)*, a federal threatened and state Species of Special Concern (SSC), has suitable habitat and designated critical habitat adjacent to the very easterly end of the project, however, the culvert replacement work on this end of the project is limited to stormwater drainage inlets and there are no perennial waters in which work is proposed near CRLF designated critical habitat. Although the project runs parallel to designated critical habitat for CRLF, there are no occurrences of CRLF reported on CNDDB within this critical habitat. The nearest CRLF occurrence is 15 miles from the project site and within a different watershed. The closest occurrence within the HUC-8 watershed (South Fork American River) is approximately 18 miles away from the project site and is in a different sub-watershed (Bear Creek) than the project site. Although suitable habitat is present in the general vicinity, CRLF would not be present within the ESL.

Environmental Consequences

Plant Species

There would be no impact to special status plant species as either the project is out of the elevational range of the species or the species was not observed during botanical surveys.

Animal Species–Species of Special Concern or Rare

There would be no impacts to animal species listed as Species of Special Concern or Rare as either the project was out of range of the species or there was no suitable habitat for the species within the Environmental Study Limits.

Threatened and Endangered Animal Species

There would be no impacts to threatened and endangered animals as either the project was out of range of the species or there was no suitable habitat for the species within the Environmental Study Limits.

Invasive Species

Under Executive Order 13112, federal agencies cannot authorize, fund, or carry out actions that it believes are likely to cause or promote the introduction or spread of invasive species, including spores, in the United States or elsewhere unless all reasonable measures to minimize risk of harm have been analyzed and considered. With implementation of Caltrans' Standard Measures and Best Management Practices, the project would avoid the spread of known and potentially occurring invasive species and plant pathogens to ensure invasive species do not proliferate.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.4a)—Biological Resources

a) Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or NOAA Fisheries/NMFS?

Special Status Plants

No Impact. As no special status plants were identified within the project ESL, there would be no impact to special status plants.

Animal Species

No Impact. Caltrans has determined there would be no impact to the following species listed as CDFW Species of Special Concern or Rare that may potentially occur in the project Environmental Study Limits:

- California red-legged frog and critical habitat
- Silver-haired bat
- Long-legged myotis
- Fisher
- Sierra Mountain Beaver
- Western pond turtle

Threatened and Endangered Species

No Impact.

Per FESA, Caltrans has determined the project would have ***no effect*** on California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) and critical habitat due to no occurrences in proximity to the project and no connectivity to waters in which this species is found. There would be no impact to CRLF critical habitat as the project runs parallel to the designated critical habitat and does not overlap. Culvert work is not proposed in designated critical habitat for California red-legged frog. There are also no occurrences of CRLF within the habitat that was designated as critical for this species since its designation, approximately 14 years ago.

Invasive Species

Under Executive Order 13112, federal agencies cannot authorize, fund, or carry out actions that it believes are likely to cause or promote the introduction or spread of invasive species, including spores, in the United States or elsewhere unless all reasonable measures to minimize risk of harm have been analyzed and considered. With implementation of Caltrans' Standard Measures and Best Management Practices, the project would avoid the spread of known and potentially occurring invasive species and plant pathogens to ensure invasive species do not proliferate.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.4b)—Biological Resources

> ***b) Would the project 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. The project is anticipated to impact approximately 0.82 acres of riparian habitat. There is an abundance of riparian habitat within the greater vicinity surrounding China Creek and Hangtown Creek. The proposed project would result in a less than significant impact to riparian habitat. When compared to the entire area, which encompasses over approximately 9 miles and five culverts, impacts to riparian habitat would be considered minimal.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.4c)—Biological Resources

> ***c) Would the project 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. The project would have impacts to three culverts associated with a seep (special aquatic site) (PMs 21.2, 21.3 and 21.6) and four culverts associated with Other Waters of the U.S. and State (PMs 19.6, 19.75, 20.74, and 21.8). Rock slope stabilization (RSP) would be placed at most inlets and outlets. At PMs 19.6, 24.6 and 24.8 culverts would only be lined with cementitious liner. The total impacts to Waters of the U.S. and State are approximately 0.21 acres. The impacts at each culvert are approximately less than 0.1 acres of impact due to fill within waters, which is a less than significant amount.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.4d)—Biological Resources

> ***d) Would the project 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?***

No Impact. No new barriers to wildlife would be created. Existing median barriers would be replaced to the current standard (Type 60) between PM 18.7–21.9, just west of Placerville where it is fairly urban and residential in nature. Under the current scope of work, no new impacts to habitat connectivity would occur. Therefore, there would be no impact to migratory wildlife corridors or native wildlife nursery sites.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.4e)—Biological Resources

> ***e) Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?***

No Impact. The proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance, as none were identified within the project limits. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.4f)—Biological Resources

> ***f) Would the project 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. The determination in this section is based on the location of the proposed project. As the project is not within any habitat or community conservation location, it would not conflict with provisions of any Habitat or Natural Community Conservation Plan.

2.5 Cultural Resources

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

"No Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project and the *Placerville CAPM Project Cultural Resources Report* (Caltrans 2023b). Potential impacts to cultural resources are not anticipated.

Regulatory Setting

The term "cultural resources," as used in this document, refers to the built environment (e.g., structures, bridges, railroads, water conveyance systems, etc.), places of traditional or cultural importance, and archaeological sites (both prehistoric and historic), regardless of significance. Under California state laws, cultural resources that meet certain criteria of significance are referred to by various terms including *archaeological resources, historic resources, historic districts, historical landmarks, and tribal cultural resources* as defined in PRC § 5020.1(j) and PRC § 21074(a). The primary state laws and regulations governing cultural resources include:

- California Historical Resources–PRC § 5020 et seq.
- California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR)–PRC § 5024 et seq. (codified 14 CCR § 4850 et seq.)

  - PRC § 5024, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): The MOU between Caltrans and the State Historic Preservation Officer streamlines the PRC § 5024 process.
- California Environmental Quality Act–PRC § 21000 et seq. (codified 14 CCR § 15000 et seq.)
- Native American Historic Resource Protection Act–PRC § 5097 et seq.
- Assembly Bill (AB) 52, amends California Environmental Quality Act and the Native American Historic Resource Protection Act:
  - An effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, as defined in PRC § 21074(a), is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment
  - Additional consultation guidelines and timeframes
- California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act–California Health and Safety Code §§ 8010-8011

Sections 5024(f) and 5024.5 require state agencies to provide notice to and consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) before altering, transferring, relocating, or demolishing state-owned historical resources that are listed on or are eligible for inclusion in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NRHP) or are registered or eligible for registration as California Historical Landmarks. Procedures for compliance with PRC Section 5024 are outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)[1] between the California Department of Transportation and SHPO, effective January 1, 2015. For most Federal-aid projects on the State Highway System, compliance with the Section 106 PA will satisfy the requirements of PRC Section 5024.

Affected Environment

Analysis of the cultural resources for the proposed project was carried out by Caltrans Professionally Qualified Staff (PQS) in a manner consistent with Caltrans regulatory responsibilities under Section 106 of the NHPA (36 CFR Part 800) as it pertains to the administration of the Federal Aid Highway Program in California and pursuant to the

[1] The MOU is located on the SER at https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/ser/5024mou-15-a11y.pdf

January 2014 Programmatic Agreement (PA) among Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Advisory Council on historic Preservation, and the California SHPO. Methods used to support the studies for the analysis include records searches, field surveys including Phase I pedestrian surveys, and Native American consultation with tribal entities. A summary of consultation with tribal entities can be found in Chapter 3. Agency and Public Coordination.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.5—Cultural Resources

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?

No Impact. The proposed project would not affect the significance of any historical or archaeological resources pursuant to § 15064.5. The proposed project would rehabilitate the highway, pertaining to a scope of work limited to the edge of pavement and contained within the existing Caltrans right of way.

The cultural resources study included literature and records review of the project area, visits to and/or contacts with a number of repositories, agencies, organizations, and Native American representatives, and an archaeological field survey of the project area. As a result, one prehistoric property was identified within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). A review of the Native American Heritage Commission's (NAHC) sacred lands file indicated there was a negative result in the section for the project area and noted that the list of Native American groups and individuals that may have knowledge or concerns regarding cultural resources for the project area was also included by the NAHC. Correspondence was sent October 12, 2022, followed by emails on November 22, 2022, to the Native Americans who were identified as having an interest in projects within this area by the NAHC and who were previously contacted for initial consultation.

In accordance with 36 CFR § 800.11(e), the archaeological historic property will be avoided and protected by establishing an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). Thus, the project would have a less than significant impact for the prehistoric property.

b) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?

No Impact. Although the existing prehistoric property falls within the APE, the potential significant impacts to archaeological resources and human remains are not anticipated as Caltrans Standard Measures and Best Management Practices (Section 1.6: CR-1, CR-2, CR-3 and CR-4) would be implemented in the Area of Potential Affect. An Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Action Plan, dated April 2024, has also been developed to protect the resources from any disturbance.

c) Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

No Impact. Implementing cultural ESAs during construction of the project would protect cultural resources, including any potential human remains that may be associated within the project area or adjacent to its boundary. Compliance with Caltrans Standard Measure in CR-4 (Section 1.6) would ensure there would be no impact to any potential human remains discovered. Given the determinations above, the project would have a *no impact* on cultural resources.

2.6 Energy

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

"No Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project.

Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States Code [USC] Part 4332) requires the identification of all potentially significant impacts to the environment, including energy impacts.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(b) and CEQA Guidelines Appendix F—Energy Conservation require an analysis of a project's energy use to determine if the project may result in significant environmental effects due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary use of energy, or wasteful use of energy resources.

Affected Environment

Determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, as well as the *Energy Analysis Memorandum* dated August 29, 2023 (Caltrans 2023c).

Transportation energy is generally described in terms of direct and indirect energy. Direct energy is the energy consumed in actual propulsion (e.g., automobiles, trains, airplanes). This energy consumption is a function of traffic characteristics such as VMT, speed, vehicle mix, and thermal value of the fuel being used. Some projects may also include features such as

new or replacement roadway lighting or other features requiring electricity, which is an ongoing and permanent source of direct energy consumption. The one-time energy expenditure involved in constructing a project is also considered direct energy.

Indirect energy is defined as all of the remaining energy consumed to run a transportation system, including maintenance energy, and any substantial impacts on energy consumption related to project-induced land use changes and mode shifts, as well as any substantial changes in energy associated with vehicle operation, manufacturing, or maintenance due to increased automobile use.

Environmental Consequences

The project is not capacity increasing and will not add additional lanes which will not result in additional trips or change the speed or alignment of the roadway. The proposed project does not add roadway capacity. It will improve the existing pavement condition within the project limit. As such, it is unlikely to increase direct energy consumption through increased fuel usage. Energy impacts from construction would be short term and would not result in inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.6—Energy

a) Would the project result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project would not result in environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation as the construction-related energy consumption would be temporary and not a permanent new source of energy demand, and demand for fuel would have no noticeable effect on peak or baseline demands for energy. While construction would result in a short-term increase in energy use, energy-saving measures and construction design features would help conserve energy. The proposed project would consume energy primarily from fuel consumed by construction vehicles and equipment. Fossil fuels used for construction vehicles and other equipment would be used during site clearing, grading, paving, and building. Fuel consumed during construction would be temporary in nature and would not represent a significant demand on available fuel. There are no unusual characteristics that would necessitate the use of construction equipment that would be less energy efficient than at comparable construction sites in the region. Therefore, there would be no impact.

b) Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

No Impact. The proposed project is a SHOPP–Minor Pavement Rehabilitation, Capital Preventative Maintenance (CAPM) project. Projects funded with State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) resources are for safety, improvements, damage repairs, and highway operational projects on the State Highway System. The proposed project would be designed and constructed to comply with the applicable requirements. The purpose of the proposed project is to repair and preserve US 50. As the project would not conflict with state or local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency, there would be no impact.

2.7 Geology and Soils

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				✓
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?				✓
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				✓
iv) Landslides?				✓
Would the project: b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				✓
Would the project: c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				✓
Would the project: 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?				✓

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				✓
Would the project: f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				✓

"No Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, and data obtained from the California Department of Conservation (California Department of Conservation 2024b and c.)

Regulatory Setting—Geology and Soils

The primary laws governing geology and soils include:

- Historic Sites Act of 1935–16 USC 461 et seq.
- CEQA–California Public Resources Code (PRC) 21000

Affected Environment—Geology and Soils

Determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project. The proposed project is located on US 50 and includes work to rehabilitate drainage systems, to restore and extend the life of the roadway pavement, upgrade/replace/rehabilitate Transportation Management System (TMS) elements (e.g., signals, signs and sensors), and replace guardrails. Potential impacts to geology and soil are not anticipated.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Questions 2.7a-e)—Geology and Soils

a) Would the project 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. According to the Earthquake Zone of Required Investigation Maps (California Department of Conservation 2024b), the proposed project is not within a fault zone. Given the absence of known earthquake faults in the area, the project would not result in a rupture of a known earthquake fault; therefore, there would be no impact.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

No Impact. The proposed project would not cause potential adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death due to strong seismic ground shaking as the project is not in a known earthquake fault zone; therefore, there would be no impact.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

No Impact. Liquefaction is a process in which cohesion-less, saturated, fine-grained sand and silt soils lose shear strength due to ground shaking and behave as fluid. Areas overlying groundwater within 30 to 50 feet of the surface are considered susceptible to liquefaction hazards. The project area is not located in an area susceptible to liquefaction. Additionally, the proposed project would not cause adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death due to seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction. The general composition of the soils are marine sedimentary and metasedimentary rocks and volcanic rocks. Therefore, there would be no impact.

iv) Landslides?

No Impact. The proposed project would not cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death due to landslides. The project area is not susceptible to landslides, nor has a landslide occurred where the proposed project is located. Therefore, there would be no impact.

b) Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

No Impact. The proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. The project activities would primarily be performed within the existing road prism, minimizing the potential for substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. In addition,

implementation of erosion control measures during construction would minimize any potential soil erosion or loss of topsoil. Therefore, there would be no impact.

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

No Impact. The project limits go over several different geologic units consisting of marine sedimentary rock, metavolcanics rock, and plutonic rock. As the proposed project is not located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, there would be no impact.

d) Would the project 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. As the proposed project is not located on expansive soil, it would not create substantial risks to life or property. Therefore, there would be no impact.

e) Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

No Impact. The proposed project would not construct any structures that would require septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. As the purpose of the proposed project is to rehabilitate the roadway, there would be no impact.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.9f)—Paleontological Resources

f) Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

No Impact. A *Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report* (Caltrans 2023g) dated March 2023 to assess the extent the project may affect paleontological resources. The study concluded that the potential to encounter paleontological resources during the construction of the project are low. Most of the work is in disturbed material/fill and is very surface-related. While the potential to encounter scientifically significant paleontological resources is low, the following minimization measures are recommended:

- Before working anywhere within the project corridor, construction personnel will be provided with paleontological resource awareness training.
- If unanticipated paleontological resources are discovered at the job site, do not disturb the resources and immediately:
  - Stop all work within a 60-foot radius of the discovery
  - Secure the area
  - Notify the Resident Engineer

This measure makes adverse effects on paleontological resources unlikely, therefore a Paleontological Mitigation Plan is not recommended.

Changes in project scope, project footprint, or depths of ground disturbance may necessitate a reevaluation of impacts to paleontological resources.

2.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

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

Climate Change

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

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

The impacts of climate change are already being observed in the form of sea level rise, drought, extended and severe fire seasons, and historic flooding from changing storm patterns. The most important strategy to address climate change is to reduce GHG emissions.

Additional strategies are necessary to mitigate and adapt to these impacts. In the context of climate change, "mitigation" involves actions to reduce GHG emissions to lessen adverse impacts that are likely to occur. "Adaptation" is planning for and responding to impacts to reduce vulnerability to harm, such as by adjusting transportation design standards to withstand more intense storms, heat, and higher sea levels. This analysis will include a discussion of both in the context of this transportation project.

Regulatory Setting

This section outlines federal and state efforts to comprehensively reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation sources. For a full list of laws, regulations, and guidance related to climate change (GHGs and adaptation), please refer to Caltrans' Standard Environmental Reference (SER), Chapter 16, Climate Change

FEDERAL

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

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 United States Code [USC] Part 4332) requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making a decision on the action or project. In January 2023, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued updated and expanded interim National Environmental Policy Act Guidance on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change (88 Fed. Reg. 1196) (CEQ NEPA GHG Guidance), in accordance with EO 14057, *Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability*, 86 FR 70935 (December 13, 2021) and EO 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*. The CEQ guidance does not establish numeric thresholds of significance, but emphasizes quantifying reasonably foreseeable lifetime direct and indirect emissions whenever possible. This guidance also emphasizes resilience and environmental justice in project-level climate change and GHG analyses.

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

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

Early efforts by the federal government to improve fuel economy and energy efficiency to address climate change and its associated effects include The Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (42 USC Section 6201); and Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards. The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA) sets and enforces corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards for on-road motor vehicles sold in the United States. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) calculates average fuel economy levels for manufacturers, and also sets related GHG emissions standards for vehicles under the Clean Air Act. Raising CAFE standards leads automakers to create a more fuel-efficient fleet, which improves our nation's energy security, saves consumers money at the pump, and reduces GHG emissions (U.S. DOT 2014). These standards are periodically updated and published through the federal rulemaking process.

STATE

California has been innovative and proactive in addressing GHG emissions and climate change by passing multiple Senate and Assembly bills and executive orders (EOs).

In 2005, EO S-3-05 initially set a goal to reduce California's GHG emissions to 80 percent below year 1990 levels by 2050, with interim reduction targets. Later EOs and Assembly and Senate bills refined interim targets and codified the emissions reduction goals and strategies. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) was directed to create a climate change scoping plan and implement rules to achieve "real, quantifiable, cost-effective reductions of greenhouse gases." Ongoing GHG emissions reduction was also mandated in Health and Safety Code (H&SC) Section 38551(b). In 2022, the California Climate Crisis Act was passed, establishing state policy to reduce statewide human-caused GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels, achieve net zero GHG emissions by 2045, and achieve and maintain negative emissions thereafter.

Beyond GHG reduction, the State maintains a climate adaptation strategy to address the full range of climate change stressors, and passed legislation requiring state agencies to consider protection and management of natural and working lands as an important strategy in meeting the state's GHG reduction goals.

Affected Environment / Environmental Setting

The proposed project is in Placer County on US 50. The surrounding land uses are a mixture of forest, open space, residential, commercial, and industrial use. US 50 is an undivided four-lane freeway. US 50 serves the large Sacramento Metropolitan Area up to east of Placerville, where it primarily serves recreational travel to the Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe. Numerous recreational opportunities are the main attraction in the largely rural eastern half of the facility.

GHG INVENTORIES

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

National GHG Inventory

The annual GHG inventory submitted by the U.S. EPA to the United Nations provides a comprehensive accounting of all human-produced sources of GHGs in the United States. Total national GHG emissions from all sectors in 2021 were 5,586.0 million metric tons (MMT), factoring in deductions for carbon sequestration in the land sector. (Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry provide a carbon sink equivalent to 12% of total U.S. emissions in 2021 [U.S. EPA 2023a].) While total GHG emissions in 2021 were 17% below 2005 levels, they increased by 6% over 2020 levels. Of these, 79.4% were CO_2, 11.5% were CH_4, and 6.2% were N_2O; the balance consisted of fluorinated gases. From 1990 to 2021, CO_2 emissions decreased by only 2% (U.S. EPA 2023a).

The transportation sector's share of total GHG emissions increased to 28% in 2021 and remains the largest contributing sector (Figure 2). Transportation fossil fuel combustion accounted for 92% of all CO2 emissions in 2021. This is an increase of 7% over 2020, largely due to the rebound in economic activity following the COVID-19 pandemic (U.S. EPA 2023a, 2023b).

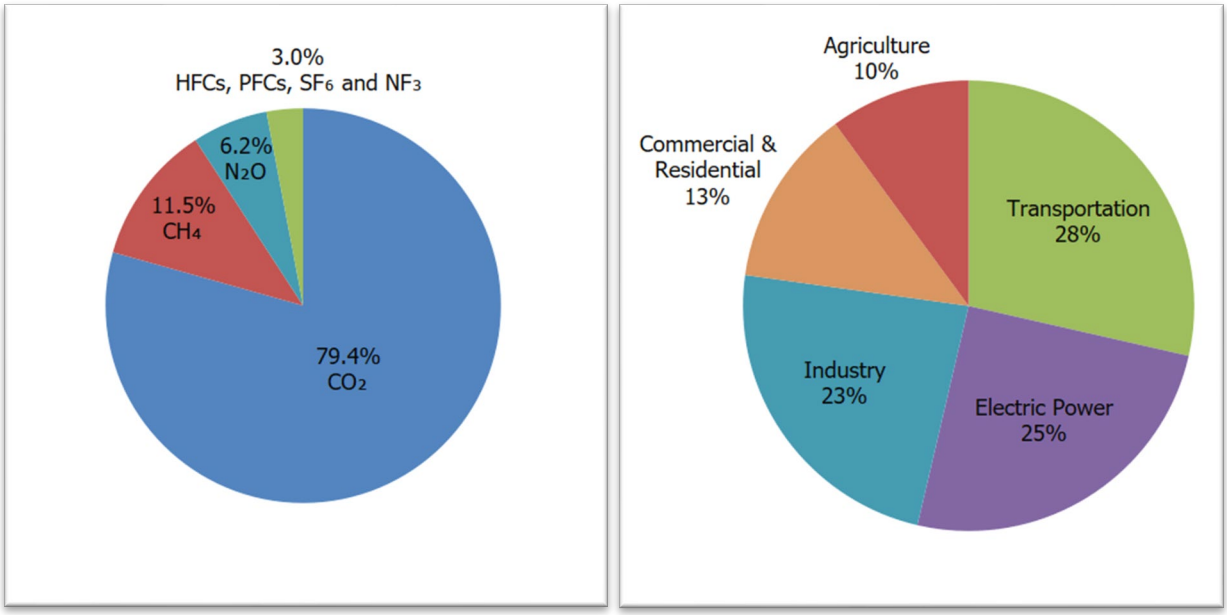

Figure 2. U.S. 2021 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

(Source: U.S. EPA 2023b)

State GHG Inventory

The CARB collects GHG emissions data for transportation, electricity, commercial and residential, industrial, agricultural, and waste management sectors each year. It then summarizes and highlights major annual changes and trends to demonstrate the state's progress in meeting its GHG reduction goals. Overall statewide GHG emissions declined from 2000 to 2020 despite growth in population and state economic output (Figures 3 and 4) (CARB 2022a).

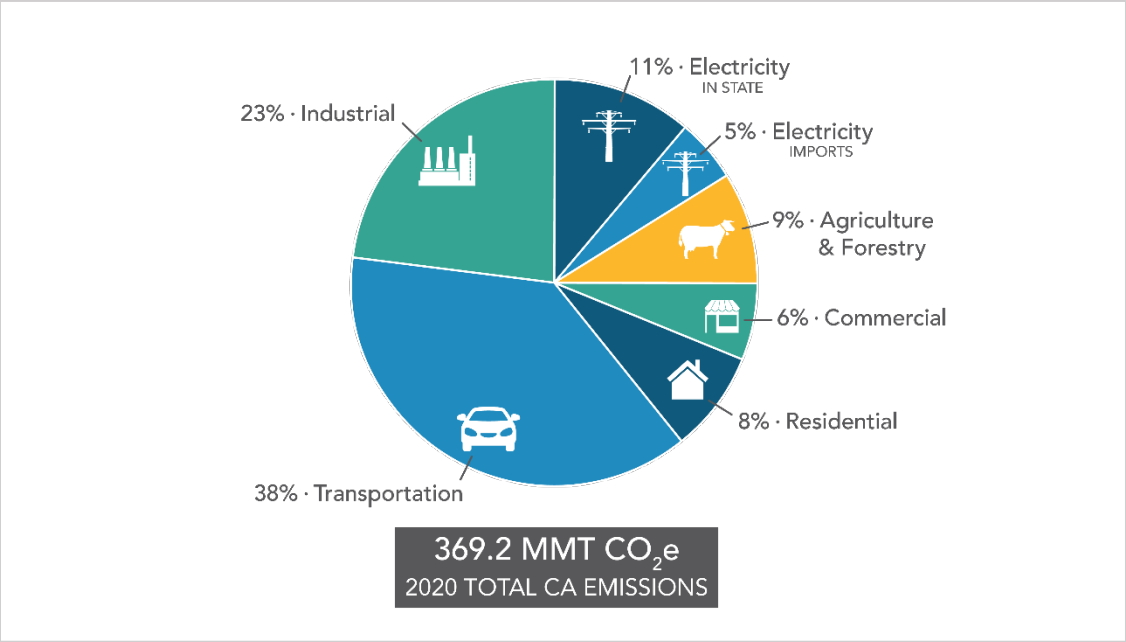

Figure 3. California 2020 Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Scoping Plan Category
(Source: CARB 2022a)

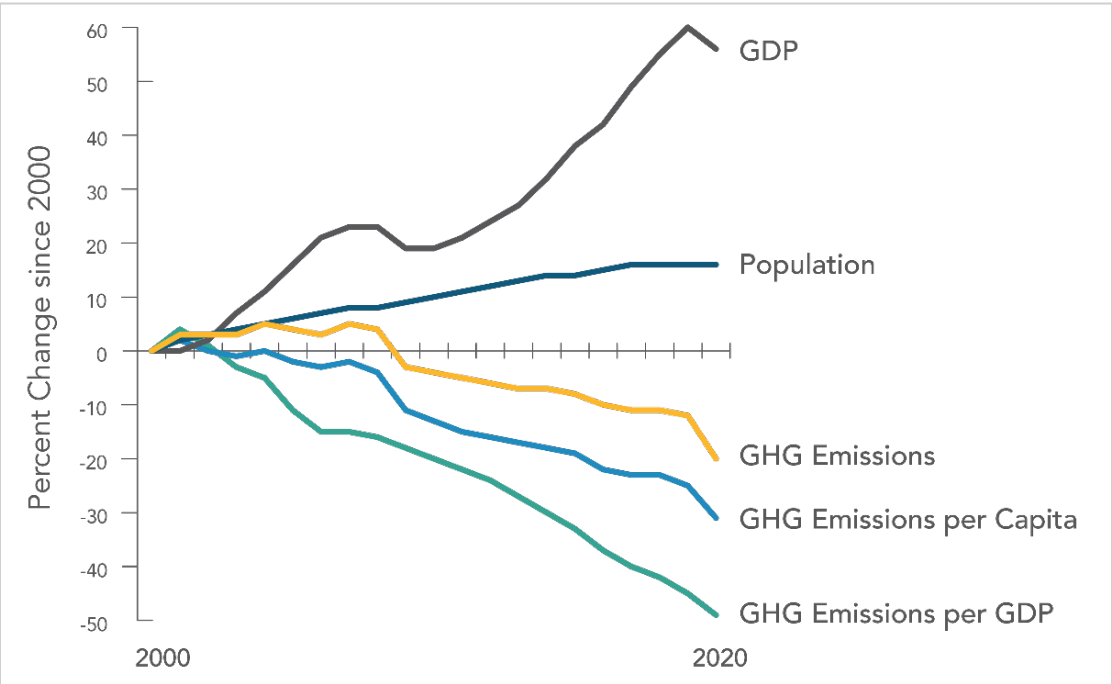

Figure 4. Change in California GDP, Population, and GHG Emissions since 2000

(Source: CARB 2022a)

AB 32 required the CARB to develop a Scoping Plan that describes the approach California will take to achieve the goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and to update it every 5 years. The AB 32 Scoping Plan, and the subsequent updates, contain the main strategies California will use to reduce GHG emissions. The CARB adopted the first scoping plan in 2008. The second updated plan, California's 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan (CARB 2008), adopted on December 14, 2017, reflects the 2030 target established in EO B-30-15 and SB 32. The 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality, adopted September 2022, assesses progress toward the statutory 2030 reduction goal and defines a path to reduce human-caused emissions to 85 percent below 1990 levels and achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2045, in accordance with AB 1279 (CARB 2022b).

REGIONAL PLANS

As required by *The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008*, the CARB sets regional GHG reduction targets for California's 18 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to achieve through planning future projects that will cumulatively achieve those goals, and reporting how they will be met in the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). Targets are set at a percent reduction of passenger vehicle GHG emissions per person from 2005 levels. The El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for the project area. The Sacramento Area Local Council of Governments (SACOG) is designated as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties and prepares the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the Sacramento Region.

The most recent SACOG MTP/SCS (The SACOG 2020 MTP/SCS) was adopted in November 2019. For the fourth round of SCS's in the state, the CARB assigned SACOG a 19 percent reduction target by 2035. Specifically, this target is the percent reduction in passenger vehicle greenhouse gas emission per capita, compared to year 2005.

Project Analysis

GHG emissions from transportation projects can be divided into those produced during operation and use of the State Highway System (SHS) (operational emissions) and those produced during construction (construction emissions). The primary GHGs produced by the transportation sector are CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, and HFCs. CO_2 emissions are a product of burning gasoline or diesel fuel in internal combustion engines, along with relatively small amounts of CH_4 and N_2O. A small amount of HFC emissions related to refrigeration is also included in

the transportation sector. (GHGs differ in how much heat each traps in the atmosphere, called global warming potential, or GWP. CO_2 is the most important GHG, so amounts of other gases are expressed relative to CO_2, using a metric called "carbon dioxide equivalent", or CO_2e. The global warming potential of CO_2 is assigned a value of 1, and the GWP of other gases is assessed as multiples of CO_2.)

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

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

Operational Emissions

This project would not change traffic volume, fleet mix, speed, or any other factor that would cause an increase in emissions relative to the No-Build alternative; therefore, this project would not cause an increase in operational emissions. No minimization measures are recommended for operational emissions.

Construction Emissions

Construction GHG emissions would result from material processing and transportation, on-site construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions will be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases. While construction GHG emissions are only produced for a short time, they have long-term effects in the atmosphere, so cannot be considered "temporary" in the same way as criteria pollutants that subside after construction is completed.

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

The proposed project would result in generation of short-term construction-related GHG emissions. Construction GHG emissions consist of emissions produced as a result of material processing, emissions produced by on-site construction equipment, and emissions arising from traffic delays and detours due to construction. These emissions would be generated at different levels throughout the construction phase.

The Caltrans Construction Emission Tool (CAL-CET2021 version 1.0) was used to estimate average carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) emissions from construction activities. Table 1 summarizes estimates of GHG emissions during the construction period for the project.

Table 4. Maximum Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Construction

Construction Year 2025	CO_2	CH_4	N_2O	HFC-134a
Total: Tons	436	<1	<1	<1

* A quantity of GHG is expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) that can be estimated by the sum after multiplying each amount of CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, and HFCs by its global warming potential (GWP). Each GWP of CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, and HFCs is 1, 25, 298, and 14,800, respectively.

All construction contracts include Caltrans Standard Specifications related to air quality. Sections 7-1.02A and 7 1.02C, Emissions Reduction, require contractors to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and will comply with all CARB emission reduction regulations. Section 14-9.02, Air Pollution Control, requires contractors to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. Certain common regulations, such as equipment idling restrictions, that reduce construction vehicle emissions also help reduce GHG emissions.

CEQA CONCLUSION

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

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies

Statewide Efforts

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

Major sectors of the California economy, including transportation, will need to reduce emissions to meet 2030 and 2050 GHG emissions targets. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) identified five sustainability pillars in a 2015 report:

1) Increasing the share of renewable energy in the State's energy mix to at least 50 percent by 2030
2) Reducing petroleum use by up to 50 percent by 2030
3) Increasing the energy efficiency of existing buildings by 50 percent by 2030
4) Reducing emissions of short-lived climate pollutants; and
5) Stewarding natural resources, including forests, working lands, and wetlands, to ensure that they store carbon, are resilient, and enhance other environmental benefits (California Governor's OPR 2015).

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

In addition, SB 1386 (Wolk 2016) established as state policy the protection and management of natural and working lands and requires state agencies to consider that policy in their own decision making. Trees and vegetation on forests, rangelands, farms, and wetlands remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through biological processes and sequester the carbon in above- and below-ground matter.

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

Caltrans Activities

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

Climate Action Plan For Transportation Infrastructure

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

California Transportation Plan

The *California Transportation Plan* (CTP) is a statewide, long-range transportation plan to meet our future mobility needs and reduce GHG emissions. It serves as an umbrella document for all the other statewide transportation planning documents. The CTP 2050 presents a vision of a safe, resilient, and universally accessible transportation system that supports vibrant communities, advances racial and economic justice, and improves public and environmental health.

The plan's climate goal is to achieve statewide GHG emissions reduction targets and increase resilience to climate change. It demonstrates how GHG emissions from the transportation sector can be reduced through advancements in clean fuel technologies; continued shifts

toward active travel, transit, and shared mobility; more efficient land use and development practices; and continued shifts to telework (Caltrans 2021a).

Caltrans Strategic Plan

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

Caltrans Policy Directives And Other Initiates

Caltrans Director's Policy 30 (DP-30) Climate Change (June 22, 2012) established a policy to ensure coordinated efforts to incorporate climate change into Caltrans decisions and activities. Other Director's policies promote energy efficiency, conservation, and climate change, and commit Caltrans to sustainability practices in all planning, maintenance, and operations. Caltrans Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Mitigation Report (Caltrans 2020) provides a comprehensive overview of Caltrans' emissions and current Caltrans procedures and activities that track and reduce GHG emissions. It identifies additional opportunities for further reducing GHG emissions from Department-controlled emission sources, in support of Caltrans and State goals.

Adaptation Strategies

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

FEDERAL EFFORTS

Under NEPA Assignment, Caltrans is obligated to comply with all applicable federal environmental laws and FHWA NEPA regulations, policies, and guidance. Caltrans practices generally align with the 2023 CEQ interim Guidance on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change, which offers recommendations for additional ways of evaluating project effects related to GHG emissions and climate change. These recommendations are not regulatory requirements.

The *Fifth National Climate Assessment*, published in 2023, presents the most recent science and "analyzes the effects of global change on the natural environment, agriculture, energy production and use, land and water resources, transportation, human health and welfare, human social systems, and biological diversity; [It] analyzes current trends in global change, both human-induced and natural, and projects major trends for the subsequent 25 to 100 years … to support informed decision-making across the United States." Building on previous assessments, it continues to advance "an inclusive, diverse, and sustained process for assessing and communicating scientific knowledge on the impacts, risks, and vulnerabilities associated with a changing global climate" (U.S. Global Change Research Program 2023).

The U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) recognizes the transportation sector's major contribution of GHGs that cause climate change and has made climate action one of the department's top priorities (U.S. DOT 2023). FHWA's policy is to strive to identify the risks of climate change and extreme weather events to current and planned transportation systems. FHWA has developed guidance and tools for transportation planning that fosters resilience to climate effects and sustainability at the federal, state, and local levels (FHWA 2022).

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provides sea level rise projections for all U.S. coastal waters to help communities and decision makers assess their risk from sea level rise. Updated projections through 2150 were released in 2022 in a report and online tool (NOAA 2022).

STATE EFFORTS

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

California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment (Fourth Assessment) (2018) provides information to help decision makers across sectors and at state, regional, and local levels protect and build the resilience of the state's people, infrastructure, natural systems, working lands, and waters. The Fourth Assessment reported that if no measures are taken to reduce GHG emissions by 2021 or sooner, the state is projected to experience an up to 8.8 degrees Fahrenheit increase in average annual maximum daily temperatures; a two-thirds decline in water supply from snowpack resulting in water shortages; a 77% increase in average area burned by wildfire; and large-scale erosion of up to 67% of Southern California beaches due to sea level rise. These effects will have profound impacts on infrastructure, agriculture, energy demand, natural systems, communities, and public health (State of California 2018).

Sea level rise is a particular concern for transportation infrastructure in the Coastal Zone. Major urban airports will be at risk of flooding from sea level rise combined with storm surge as early as 2040; San Francisco airport is already at risk. Miles of coastal highways vulnerable to flooding in a 100-year storm event will triple to 370 by 2100, and 3,750 miles will be exposed to temporary flooding. The Fourth Assessment's findings highlight the need for proactive action to address these current and future impacts of climate change.

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

EO S-13-08, issued in 2008, directed state agencies to consider sea level rise scenarios for 2050 and 2100 during planning to assess project vulnerabilities, reduce risks, and increase resilience to sea level rise. It gave rise to the 2009 *California Climate Adaptation Strategy*, the Safeguarding California Plan, and a series of technical reports on statewide sea level rise projections and risks, including the *State of California Sea-Level Rise Guidance Update* in 2018. The reports addressed the full range of climate change impacts and recommended

adaptation strategies. The current *California Climate Adaptation Strategy* incorporates key elements of the latest sector-specific plans such as the *Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy*, *Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan*, *Water Resilience Portfolio*, and the CAPTI (described above). Priorities in the 2023 *California Climate Adaptation Strategy* include acting in partnership with California Native American Tribes, strengthening protections for climate-vulnerable communities that lack capacity and resources, implementing nature-based climate solutions, using best available climate science, and partnering and collaboration to best leverage resources (California Natural Resources Agency 2023).

EO B-30-15 recognizes that effects of climate change threaten California's infrastructure and requires state agencies to factor climate change into all planning and investment decisions. Under this EO, the Office of Planning and Research published *Planning and Investing for a Resilient California: A Guidebook for State Agencies*, to encourage a uniform and systematic approach to building resilience.

SB 1 Coastal Resources: Sea Level Rise (Atkins 2021) established statewide goals to "anticipate, assess, plan for, and, to the extent feasible, avoid, minimize, and mitigate the adverse environmental and economic effects of sea level rise within the Coastal Zone." As the legislation directed, the Ocean Protection Council collaborated with 17 state planning and coastal management agencies to develop the *State Agency Sea-Level Rise Action Plan for California* in February 2022. This plan promotes coordinated actions by state agencies to enhance California's resilience to the impacts of sea level rise (California Ocean Protection Council 2022).

CALTRANS ADAPTATION EFFORTS

Caltrans Vulnerability Assessments

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

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

Caltrans Sustainability Programs

The Director's Office of Equity, Sustainability and Tribal Affairs supports implementation of sustainable practices at Caltrans. The *Sustainability Roadmap* is a periodic progress report and plan for meeting the Governor's sustainability goals related to EOs B-16-12, B-18-12, and B-30-15. The Roadmap includes designing new buildings for climate change resilience and zero-net energy, and replacing fleet vehicles with zero-emission vehicles (Caltrans 2023).

PROJECT ADAPTATION EFFORTS

In addition to statewide efforts, each Caltrans District has prepared a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment to help determine the impacts of climate change within the district for various metrics including temperature, sea level rise, precipitation, and wildfire (Caltrans 2019). Predictions of future conditions for these metrics were made in the report to show the scale of climate impacts throughout the district. The Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment helps guide project adaptation efforts as well as the district's plan overall. These studies help with understanding the vulnerability of California's State Highway System and other Caltrans assets to future changes in the climate. The objectives of the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment are:

- Understand the types of weather-related and longer-term climate change events that will likely occur with greater frequency and intensity in future years,
- Conduct a vulnerability assessment to determine those Caltrans assets vulnerable to various climate-influenced natural hazards.
- Develop a method to prioritize candidate projects for actions that are responsive to climate change concerns when financial resources become available.

Future climate conditions are in some ways uncertain. While it is documented that the climate is changing, the degree of change depends on the quantity of GHG emissions currently and in the future. Climate-change risk analysis involves uncertainties as to the timing and intensity of potential risks. Increased levels of GHG emissions will result in more climate change. These changes to the climate can have impacts on transportation assets which could potentially increase the costs of maintenance and construction of transportation projects, disrupt local economies, and damage the State Highway System. Individual project adaptation efforts are required to help minimize climate change-related impacts on the State Highway System and help make the system more resilient.

Precipitation

El Dorado County is prone to four types of flooding: General rain floods are likely to occur in the county from November to May. They are characterized by prolonged, heavy rainfall and a large volume of runoff with high peaks and moderate durations. Cloudburst storms are likely to occur from early fall to late spring. They can last up to three hours and are characterized by high peak flows, equal to or greater than the peak flow of general rainstorms, short duration of flood flow, and small volume of runoff. Snowmelt floods are prone to occur in the Upper Truckee River Basin between May and June. They last longer and consist of larger volumes than general rain floods, although they do not have the high peak flows typically seen with those floods. Thunderstorm flooding may occur from late spring to early fall and usually lasts about 15 to 20 minutes. Although they may produce three inches or more of precipitation, their short duration and small extent make their runoff relatively small.

While climate change is not expected to drastically alter the overall amount of precipitation received by the county, warming temperatures are expected to shift precipitation patterns, resulting in both more droughts and flooding events. Precipitation that had previously fallen as snow is expected to increasingly fall as rain, triggering increased runoff during winter months and decreased snowmelt water supply during warmer months. Secondary effects of this cycle are likely to result in increased flooding. Soil that has been dried out and hardened by drought is less adept at absorbing water, resulting in a greater volume of runoff. Vegetation, which may have slowed water flow, will likely be weakened or killed by drought. Damaged vegetation also becomes fuel for wildland fire, which in turn dries out soil, hardening it and making the area more prone to flooding. The combination of West Slope hydrology, soils and topography may cause areas to experience frequent and localized flooding. Drainage problems and flooding have occurred in low-lying areas around Cameron Park, and areas where culverts are undersized or blocked with debris can intensify flooding. The Tahoe Basin experiences flooding because of rain-on-snow events, particularly when severe storms start warm with rain and later, snow (El Dorado 2023).

Wildfire

The project is in the Pollock Pines Camino Fire Safe Council (PPCFSC) area. The area covers most of the unincorporated communities near the project location. The elevation of the Camino area ranges from 3,000 to 3,500 feet. Much of the area is mixed conifer forest interspersed with chaparral. Fire protection is provided by El Dorado County Fire Protection District for structure protection and CAL FIRE for wildland fire protection.

The proposed project includes culvert replacement work that consists of drainage system restoration to pre-failure conditions, which would reduce the risk of flooding and landslides if future wildfires were to occur and leave slopes exposed.

Caltrans Standard Specifications mandate fire prevention procedures, including a Fire Prevention Plan, to avoid accidental fire starts during construction. The project is therefore expected to be resilient to the risk of wildfire.

Temperature

The *District 3 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment* does not indicate temperature changes during the project's design life that would require adaptive changes in pavement design or maintenance practices (Caltrans 2019).

2.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				✓
Would the project: 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?				✓
Would the project: c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?			✓	
Would the project: 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?				✓
Would the project: e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?				✓

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			✓	
Would the project: g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?				✓

"No Impact" and "Less than Significant Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, as well as the *Initial Site Assessment* dated July 12, 2023 (Caltrans 2023c).

Regulatory Setting

Hazardous materials, including hazardous substances and wastes, are regulated by many state and federal laws. Statutes govern the generation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials, substances, and waste, and also the investigation and mitigation of waste releases, air and water quality, human health, and land use.

The primary laws governing hazardous materials, waste and substances include:

- California Health and Safety Code–Chapter 6.5
- Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act–§ 13000 et seq.
- CFR Title 22 Division 4.5 Environmental Health Standards for the Management of Hazardous Waste, Title 23 Waters, and Title 27 Environmental Protection

Worker and public health and safety are key issues when addressing hazardous materials that may affect human health and the environment. Proper management and disposal of hazardous material is vital if it is found, disturbed, or generated during project construction.

Affected Environment

Determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project. The proposed project is located on US 50 and includes work to rehabilitate drainage systems, to restore and extend the life of the roadway pavement, upgrade/replace/rehabilitate Transportation Management System (TMS) elements (e.g., signals, signs and sensors), and replace guardrails. Potential hazards and impacts from hazardous materials are not anticipated; the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or environment.

Environmental Consequences

Caltrans specifications require the management of hazardous materials to comply with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. If encountered, Aerially Deposited Lead, commonly found in unpaved areas around the highway, and treated wood waste from potential guardrail replacement, would be handled and disposed of in accordance with Caltrans standard specifications for these materials.

The Standard Measures and Best Management Practices described in Section 1.4 would be used on-site to contain hazardous materials should they be encountered and avoid exposure to workers, the public, and surrounding environment.

Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation Measures

Based on the determinations made in the CEQA Environmental Checklist, no mitigation measures are proposed for this project.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.9—Hazards and Hazardous Materials

a) Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

No Impact. This project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. If soil is to be removed from the site, an Aerially Deposited Lead (ADL) survey would be conducted. Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA) may exist within and near the right of way. Since a large quantity of soil disturbance will occur, a NOA site investigation is required. This site investigation will determine if NOA exists and what actions, if any, will need to occur during construction. This study would take place at the same time as the ADL study.

Through implementation of Caltrans Standard Measures and Best Management Practices and Caltrans Standard Specifications, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, there would be no impact regarding disposal of hazardous materials.

b) Would the project 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. Standard specifications and implementation of Caltrans Standard Measures and Best Management Practices for the removal and handling of known hazardous materials such as treated wood waste, ADL, and yellow traffic striping would minimize the chances of accidental release into the environment. Therefore, there would be no impact regarding significant hazards pertinent to the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Therefore, there would be no impact.

c) Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Less than Significant Impact. The El Dorado Adventist School is one mile south of the project limits. The proposed project would not cause an increase in mobile source air toxics (MSAT), which are considered hazardous air pollutants, and would not cause an increase in criteria pollutants which have been established as hazardous to human health. Caltrans Standard Measures and Best Management Practices (Section 1.6) would be implemented to prevent the spread and limit the impacts of hazardous waste to the environment and the public, which ensures that hazardous emissions and materials are contained within the project area, if present. Given the implementation measures and the projected outcomes of the proposed project, impacts to schools from hazardous waste and/or their associated emissions would be less than significant.

d) Would the project 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. This project is not on the Cortese list (hazardous materials list). Therefore, there would be no impact since the project would not create a hazard to the public or the environment.

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

No Impact. The Placerville Airport is .52 miles south of the project site. The project would not expose people to additional airport-related hazards. Due to the nature of the work, the project would have no impact related to airport hazards. The project would not produce excessive noise or pose a safety hazard for those working or residing in the area, therefore, there would be no impact.

f) Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. US 50 is a pivotal route for transportation of goods. Implementation of a Transportation Management Plan, finalized in later design stages of the project, would include provisions to allow evacuation efforts to be conducted in coordination with the California Highway Patrol and local emergency response personnel. Because of these provisions, there would be a less than significant impact to emergency response and evacuations.

g) Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

No Impact. The proposed project would not exacerbate existing risks associated with wildfire caused by highway users. Standard Measures and Best Management Practices (Section 1.6), including construction specifications for equipment idling and fuel storage during construction, are intended to minimize the risk associated with their use. Thus, there would be no impact.

2.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?			✓	
Would the project: b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?				✓
Would the project: c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: (i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;			✓	
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;				✓
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or				✓
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?				✓

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?				✓
Would the project: e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				✓

"No Impact" and "Less Than Significant Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, as well as the *Water Quality Assessment* dated February 2024 (Caltrans 2023f). The Water Quality Assessment was used to inform the analysis of effects to hydrology and water quality from the proposed project. Potential impacts to resources are not anticipated.

Regulatory Setting

The primary laws and regulations governing hydrology and water quality include:

- Federal: Clean Water Act (CWA)–33 USC 1344
- Federal: Executive Order for the Protection of Wetlands–EO 11990
- State: California Fish and Game Code (CFGC)–Sections 1600–1607
- State: Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act– Sections 13000 et seq.

Affected Environment

The project area is in the El Dorado Foothills with an elevational range of approximately 2,170–3,600 feet. Western El Dorado County is in the western part of the central Sierra Nevada. It is dominated by steeply dipping, faulted and folded metamorphic rocks that have been intruded by several types of igneous rocks. The project is within the South Fork American River watershed. The project site specifically is located within the Indian Creek-Weber Creek and North Fork Weber Creek sub-watersheds.

Environmental Consequences

Typical construction Standard Measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) would be utilized to prevent pollutants from leaving the construction site. In addition to BMPs, Caltrans is required to follow the conditions of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, issued by the State Water Resources Control Board. Adherence to Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 13 is also required to prevent receiving water pollution as a result of construction activities and/or project activities.

Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation Measures

Based on the determinations made in the CEQA Environmental Checklist, no mitigation measures are proposed for this project.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.10—Hydrology and Water Quality

a) Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Less than Significant Impact. The project will comply with the conditions of Caltrans' MS4 NPDES Permit (Stormwater Permit) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Construction General Permit (CGP). Caltrans' Stormwater Permit requires Caltrans implement Best Management Practices (BMPs), to the maximum extent practicable, and adhere to the conditions of the CGP if a project is expected to have 1 acre or more of soil disturbance. The CGP requires the construction contractor to prepare a project-specific Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) which identifies construction site BMPs. These site-specific BMPs are meant to reduce construction impacts on receiving water quality based on potential pollutants and their sources with consideration to the Best Available Technology/Best Conventional Technology (BAT/BCT) criteria defined in the permit. Additionally, during construction, inspectors are required to conduct field assessments that include identifying deficiencies, verifying BMP functionality, and making BMP corrections to protect water resources within the project limits. Therefore, with proper implementation of the Standard Measures and corresponding BMPs (Section 1.6), less than significant impacts are anticipated.

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

No Impact. With consideration to the construction operations anticipated and the natural fluctuations of groundwater within the project corridor, the likelihood of prolonged groundwater contact is low. Therefore, it is anticipated the proposed project would not interfere with regional groundwater supplies or recharge; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

c) Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

(i) result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Less than Significant Impact. Per Caltrans MS4 Permit and the CGP, the project will be required to implement minimization and avoidance measures and BMPs that integrate low impact development features meant to preserve natural infiltration and eliminate the potential for sedimentation and erosion within the project limits. Field inspections will also be required to verify BMP functionality and make corrections where appropriate for stormwater permit and stormwater programmatic compliance. Therefore, less than significant impacts are anticipated.

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

No Impact. The rehabilitation of the existing drainage systems is anticipated to preserve and perpetuate the existing stormwater flow patterns and volumetric flow rates. Treatment BMPs and low impact development (LID) features will be implemented, where applicable and feasible, to minimize potential impacts due to new impervious areas. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

(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?

No Impact. It is anticipated that rehabilitation of the existing drainage systems would perpetuate existing flow patterns and volumetric flow rates–not to exceed current capacities. As required by Caltrans MS4 Permit and the CGP, appropriate and applicable temporary and permanent design BMPs will be implemented to address potential impacts resulting from construction operations and new design features constructed within the project limits. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?

No Impact. Drainage system functionality and stormwater flow characteristics are not anticipated to change from what is existing now within the project limits. As a result, no impacts are anticipated.

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

No Impact. The proposed project is not in an area at risk of seiches or tsunamis. The project would not store pollutants and would not be constructed with hazardous materials that would threaten the public if disturbed by a flood event. Therefore, there would be no impact.

e) Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

No Impact. The implementation of Caltrans Standard Measures and BMPs (Section 1.6), in addition to compliance with all applicable NPDES regulatory permits, will protect water quality resources within the project limits. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

2.11 Land Use and Planning

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: a) Physically divide an established community?				✓
Would the project: 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?				✓

"No Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project. Potential impacts to Land Use and Planning are not anticipated as there would be no conflicts with any land use plan, policy, or regulation relating to land use, nor would the proposed project physically divide an established community. The project is consistent with existing zoning, plans, and other applicable land use controls. As the project proposes to maintain and upgrade existing facilities, there would be no impact on land use and planning.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.11—Land Use and Planning

a) Would the project physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The project would improve the safety, reliability, and freight mobility in this area for the traveling public. The project is in El Dorado County on US 50. The proposed project does not include construction of housing. Therefore, the project would neither physically divide an established community nor cause a significant environmental impact due to conflict with any land use plans or policies. No impacts would occur, and no mitigation measures are required. Therefore, there would be no impact to an established community.

b) Would the project 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?

No Impact. The proposed project would not 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 as the proposed project would comply with the goals of the El Dorado County General Plan. Therefore, there would be no impact.

2.12 Mineral Resources

Question:	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				✓
Would the project: 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" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project. Potential impacts to mineral resources are not anticipated.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.12—Mineral Resources

a) Would the project 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. There are no known economically viable mineral sources within the project limits that would be affected by the proposed project. The project activities would involve work on highway features that are located within or immediately next to the Caltrans right of way along US 50. The project would not be involved in the removal or extraction of mineral resources. Therefore, there would be no impact to mineral resources.

b) Would the project 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. The project would not result in the loss of locally-important mineral resources. The determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, as well as the mineral resource maps from the California Department of Conservation (California Department of Conservation 2024b and c.) As no mineral resources were identified within the project limits or would be affected by the proposed project, potential impacts to mineral resources are not anticipated.

2.13 Noise

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

"No Impact" and "Less than Significant" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, as well as the *Air Quality and Noise Analysis Report* (Caltrans 2024a) dated February 28, 2024.

Regulatory Setting

The primary laws governing noise are NEPA and CEQA.

Affected Environment

The *Air Quality and Noise Analysis Report* was completed in February 2024. This project is located in El Dorado County. The project area is surrounded by a mix of commercial, vacant land, and residential land uses. Numerous residences are located along US 50 within the project limits. This project is exempt from all air quality conformity analysis requirements per Table 2 of 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 93.126, subsection "Safety-Hazard Elimination Program" and no further air quality analysis is required.

Environmental Consequences

The purpose of this project is to preserve the existing facility and prevent further deterioration of the roadway. The proposed modifications would not result in changes to the traffic volume, fleet mix, speed, location of existing facility or any other factor that would cause an increase in emissions relative to the no build alternative; therefore, this project would not cause an increase in operational emissions.

During construction, noise may be generated from the contractors' equipment and vehicles. Caltrans requires the contractor to conform to the provisions of Standard Specification, Section 14-8.02 "Noise Control" which states "Control and monitor noise from work activities." and "Do not exceed 86 dBA Lmax at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m."

Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation Measures

Based on the determinations made in the CEQA Environmental Checklist, no mitigation measures are proposed for this project.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.13—Noise

a) Would the project result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project is not expected to result in substantial increases in noise. Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local General Plan or noise ordinance or applicable standards of other agencies is not anticipated. Based on the scope of work, this project is not a Type I project.

Traffic noise impact is not anticipated to occur from the proposed project; therefore, noise abatement is not considered.

During construction, noise may be generated from the contractors' equipment and vehicles. Caltrans requires the Contractor to conform to the provisions of 2018 Caltrans' Standard Specification, Section 14-8.02 "Noise Control" which states, "Control and monitor noise from work activities." and "Do not exceed 86 dBA Lmax at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m."

b) Would the project result in generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than Significant Impact. During construction, noise may be generated from the contractors' equipment and vehicles. Construction noise would be short-term and is not anticipated to have adverse noise impacts from construction because construction would conform with Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14.8-02 "Noise Control," which states:

1. Control and monitor noise from work activities.
2. Do not exceed 86 A-weighted decibels (dBA) maximum sound level (Lmax) at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Given that construction noise would be short-term, and the proposed project would follow standard measures regarding noise during construction, a less than significant impact is anticipated.

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

No Impact. The nearest airport is the Placerville Airport, located approximately half a mile south of the project site. Due to the distance between the airport and the project site, the project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels. Thus, there would be no impact.

2.14 Population and Housing

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

"No Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project. Potential impacts to population and housing are not anticipated as the project would not increase roadway capacity or access, nor would the project add new homes or businesses. There are residences and businesses along the project corridor; however, no replacement housing or businesses would be necessary to construct the proposed project.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.14—Population and Housing

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

No Impact. The project would preserve and extend the service life of the existing pavement by addressing pavement in fair condition. The project does not involve any residential development nor would it extend roadways or infrastructure which could induce population growth in an area. Therefore, the proposed project would not directly or indirectly induce population growth in the area and there would be no impact.

b) Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The project would occur entirely within the existing Caltrans right of way. There is no housing on-site. The proposed project would not alter proposed land uses and complies with the County of El Dorado General Plan. The implementation of the project would not result in the displacement of housing, nor would it necessitate the construction of replacement housing. Therefore, there would be no impact to housing.

2.15 Public Services

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

"No Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project. Potential impacts to public services are not anticipated.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.15—Public Services

Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public facilities.

Fire protection?

No Impact. Caltrans is aware that with any roadway construction project, construction-related vehicles and activities could potentially temporarily interfere with safe access during construction. To maintain fire emergency access through construction, Caltrans would coordinate any road closures with emergency services providers so that response times would not be substantially affected. The closest fire stations to the proposed project are the El Dorado County Fire District–Station 26, El Dorado County Fire Protection District, and El Dorado County Fire Protection District–Station 17. Therefore, there would be no impact to fire protection during project construction and operation.

Once the project is complete, the proposed project would improve movement and decrease safety concerns at the project site. This would include improved movement for emergency vehicles. The proposed project would not increase the resident population in the project area and is not expected to result in a substantial increase in demand for any community facilities or services. Therefore, there would be no impact to fire protection.

Police protection?

No Impact. The closest police station is Placerville Police Station, located at 730 Main Street, Placerville, CA 95667, which is located over 800 feet southwest from the project site. The proposed project would result in no permanent increase in population and would introduce no new uses to the project site that would generate increased long-term demand for police protection services.

During project construction, Caltrans would coordinate any road closures with emergency service providers so that response times would not be affected. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on police protection services in El Dorado County.

Schools and Parks?

No Impact. The proposed project would not directly or indirectly result in an increase in population, which is typically a factor that increases the demand for schools and public parks. As there are no schools and parks that would be impacted as a result of the project, there would be no impact.

Other public facilities?

No Impact. The proposed project would not result in substantial adverse impacts related to other types of public facilities (e.g., public libraries, hospitals, or other civic uses) because the proposed project would not result in an increase of local population or housing, which is typically associated with increased demand for public facilities. The proposed project would provide safe and serviceable facilities for the traveling public and would not directly or indirectly induce growth or create a need for additional public services. Therefore, there would be no impact.

2.16 Recreation

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				✓
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				✓

"No Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project. Potential impacts to recreation are not anticipated. The project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood parks, regional parks, or other recreational facilities.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.16—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. The proposed project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood parks, regional parks, or other recreational facilities as no neighborhood parks, regional parks, or other recreational facilities are present within the project limits. The purpose of the project is to improve the existing roadway. Therefore, there would be 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. The proposed project does not include recreational facilities, and there would be no population growth caused by the project. The project would not require expansion or construction of new recreation facilities. No neighborhood parks, regional parks, or other recreational facilities are present within the project limits. Therefore, there would be no impact.

2.17 Transportation

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

"No Impact" and Less Than Significant" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project. Potential impacts to transportation are not anticipated.

Regulatory Setting

The primary laws and regulations governing transportation and traffic are CEQA, 23 CFR 652, 49 CFR 27, 29 USC 794, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 USC § 12101).

Affected Environment

Determinations in this section are based on the scope of work. The proposed project would maintain and upgrade existing facilities. Potential impacts to Transportation are not anticipated as there would be no scope elements that would conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or transportation policy. This project is not a capacity increasing project; therefore, its construction would not conflict with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b). No hazards would be created by a geometric design feature or incompatible uses due to

the construction of this project. Emergency access would not be changed due to the construction of this project.

Environmental Consequences

Potential impacts to Transportation are not anticipated due to the temporary and low volume of construction-related traffic. The project is not capacity increasing, and would result in an operational condition that is similar to the existing condition. No lane closures or delays on public roads would occur as a result of project construction, and public roads and maintenance station access roads would remain open to emergency vehicles at all times. The proposed project would utilize existing roads to access existing Caltrans facilities; no roads or other transportation features would be constructed. The proposed project would not conflict with local plans and ordinances for ensuring a safe and effective transportation system and will be consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064. The project would not result in impacts to Transportation.

Avoidance, Minimization and Mitigation Measures

Based on the determinations made in the CEQA Environmental Checklist, no mitigation measures are proposed for this project.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.17—Transportation and Traffic

a) Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

Less than Significant Impact. The project would preserve and enhance the useful life of existing pavement and improve the ride quality along US 50. The construction of the proposed project would temporarily result in a negligible increase in traffic volumes in the project area. Vehicular trips from construction would consist of worker trips, deliveries of equipment, and materials to and from the project. The temporary increase in trips due to construction would not cause a significant change to roadway level of service. There would be a less than significant impact.

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

No Impact. The proposed project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b). The proposed project is an improvement project and would not increase vehicular capacity. Therefore, the impacts to CEQA Guidelines would have no impact.

c) Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include modification to the existing roadways or design features that would increase hazards due to geometric design. The construction of the project would occur within the project site boundary and would not result in lane closures. No sharp curves, dangerous intersections, or incompatible uses would be introduced by the proposed project. Therefore, there would be no impact.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Less than Significant Impact. The proposed project does not include any work that would impede emergency access. The project would not block any roadways or require temporary closures of roadways. Project plans also would be reviewed by the appropriate Caltrans staff to ensure conformance with all applicable fire safety code and ordinance requirements for emergency access. Standard management practices, such as communication with the department, providing flag persons, minimizing closures, and having unobstructed alternate routes (although not anticipated) would maintain the efficiency of emergency access. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant

2.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code § 5020.1(k), or				✓
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 § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.				✓

"No Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.18—Tribal Cultural Resources

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in the Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

> ***a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code § 5020.1(k).***

No Impact. The project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource 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). Therefore, there would be no impact.

> ***b) 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 § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.***

No Impact. Caltrans has not identified any resources in the project limits that would be significant to a California Native American tribe. Any potentially significant resources with cultural value to California Native American tribes within the APE will be protected in place; therefore, there would be no impact.

2.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Question	Significant and Unavoidable Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities—the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?				✓
Would the project: b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?				✓
Would the project: 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?				✓
Would the project: 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?				✓
Would the project: e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				✓

"No Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project. Potential impacts to utilities and service systems are not anticipated.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.19—Utilities and Service Systems

a) Would the project 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?

No Impact. The proposed project would not result in intensification of land use or require the addition of structures or any uses that would increase demand for water, wastewater, stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities. Caltrans would verify the location of any underground gas, electric water, or sewer lines within the project area before construction. Therefore, there would be no impact.

b) Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?

No Impact. The proposed project would rehabilitate the pavement and drainage system of the highway. The project would not require the addition of structure or any uses that would increase long term demand for water. Short-term water demand would increase to provide for dust control and construction needs; however, it would be relatively small. No new or expanded water entitlements would be required resulting in no impacts to water supplies. Therefore, there would be no impact.

c) Would the project 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. As described above, the proposed project includes rehabilitation and improvements to US 50 and does not include uses that would generate wastewater. Short-term wastewater would be generated during construction but would be nominal. Therefore, there would be no impact.

d) Would the project 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. As previously stated, the proposed project would not result in an intensification of land use, or the addition of structures or uses that would result in an increased demand for waste services. Construction of the proposed project, however, would result in the generation of minor volumes of solid waste from construction debris. The scope of work of the proposed project mainly consists of paving. No new structures would be constructed that require additional building materials; therefore, waste generation would be minimal. Removed hardscape materials would be recycled to the extent feasible. Waste would be recycled as possible. Therefore, there would be no impact.

e) Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact. As noted above, the proposed project would generate a small volume of construction waste during the construction phase. The proposed project would be required to comply with all State-mandated waste reduction. As the proposed project would comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to management and reduction of solid waste, there would be no impact.

2.20 Wildfire

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

"No Impact" determinations in this section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project.

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.20—Wildfire

If located in or near State Responsibility Areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

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

No Impact. The proposed project is in the *high* Fire Hazard Severity Zone (Figure 2). The purpose of the project is to preserve and extend the service life of the existing pavement and extend the service life of drainage systems by replacing fair or poor condition systems. The project would not substantially impair emergency response or emergency evacuation in this area as the existing structures and roadway would remain open to one-way traffic during construction. Therefore, there would be 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. The proposed project would incorporate design features to prevent the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire within the project area. Project activities are limited to road rehabilitation activities; site occupancy is not applicable. Therefore, project implementation would not expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Thus, there would be no impact.

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 may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

No Impact. The proposed project is an infrastructure project. Project activities primarily comprise pavement rehabilitation, culvert replacement, and sign panels, as well as Transportation Management System (TMS) elements (e.g., signals, signs and sensors). The project does not include fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities that may exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Thus, there would be 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. The project would not expose people or structures to significant risks. The drainage features of the proposed would not change the receiving waters. The project would improve the conditions of the roadway. Furthermore, the work would primarily be within the existing roadway and within Caltrans right of way. It would not expose people to fire-related landslides and flooding. Therefore, there would be no impact to people or structures regarding flooding, landslides, and/or slope instability.

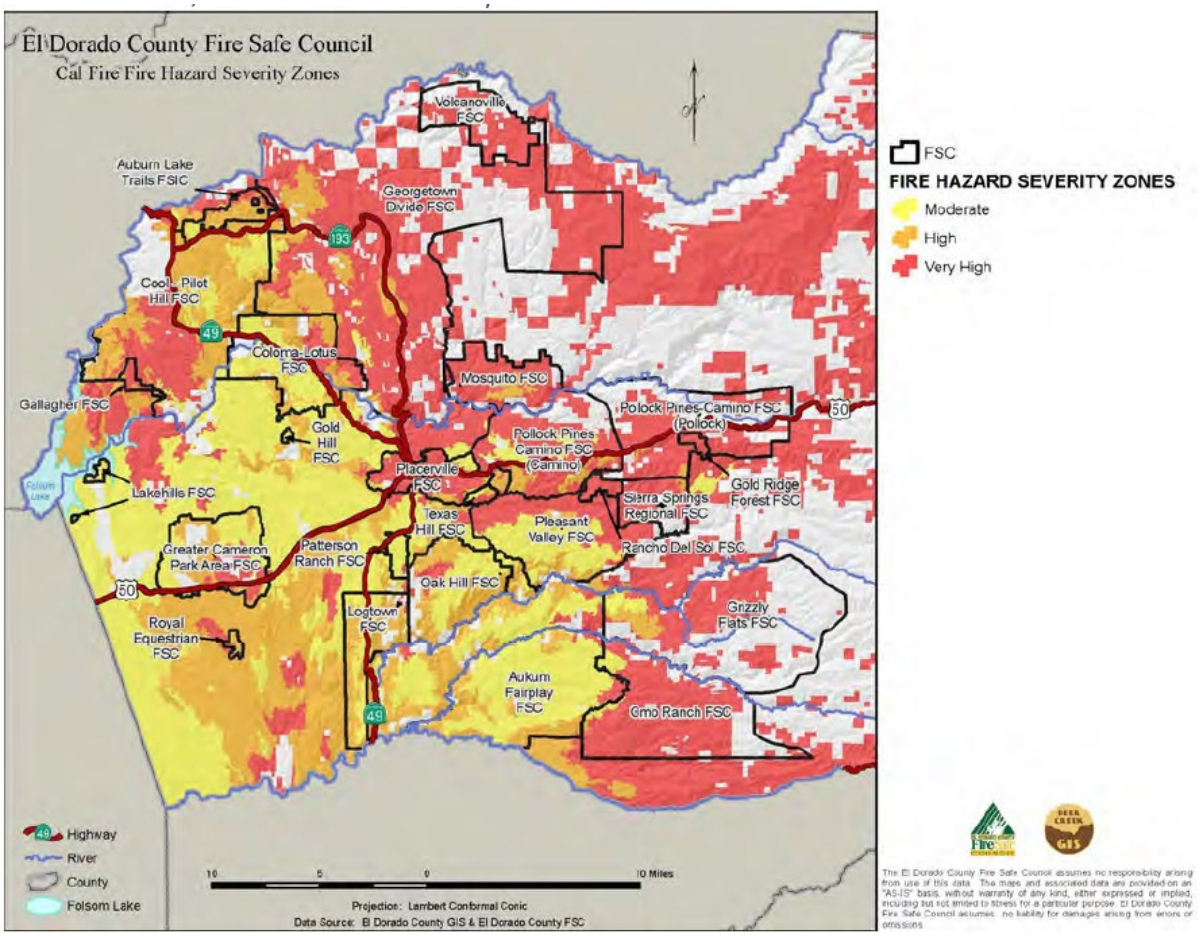

Figure 5. CAL FIRE Hazard Severity Zone

2.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

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

Discussion of CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.21—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?

No Impact. Due to the limited scope of the project, the project does not have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment or substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means 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.)

No Impact. There is one project along US 50 currently in construction. Any construction activities that have the potential to contribute to cumulative impacts would either be mitigated through permitting or minimized or avoided using standard measures; therefore, the proposed project would not result in any adverse effects that, when considered in connection with other projects, would be considered cumulatively considerable. Therefore, there would be no impact.

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

No Impact. Based on studies completed for the proposed project to analyze potential impacts, the project would not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly, by exposing the public to hazards or hazardous materials, requiring right of way acquisitions, interfering with the movement of emergency services through the project area, impeding access to public facilities, causing changes to land use, or by other means described in this document. With implementation of the Standard Measures and Best Management Practices (Section 1.6) that would help minimize or avoid impacts to people; there would be no adverse effects to people within or near the project area. As no substantial adverse effects on humans would occur as a result of the project, there would be no impact.

2.22 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are those that result from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, combined with the potential impacts of this proposed project. A cumulative impact assessment looks at the collective impacts posed by individual land use plans and projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively substantial impacts taking place over a period of time (CEQA § 15355).

Cumulative impacts to resources may result from residential, commercial, industrial, and highway development, as well as from agricultural development and the conversion to more intensive agricultural cultivation. These land use activities can degrade habitat and species diversity through consequences such as displacement and fragmentation of habitats and populations, alteration of hydrology, contamination, erosion, sedimentation, disruption of migration corridors, changes in water quality, and introduction or promotion of predators. They can also contribute to potential community impacts identified for the project, such as changes in community character, traffic patterns, housing availability, and employment.

Per Section 15130 of CEQA, a Cumulative Impact Analysis (CIA) discussion is only required in "…situations where the cumulative effects are found to be significant." Given this, an EIR and CIA were not required for this project.

Chapter 3. Agency and Public Coordination

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process. It helps planners determine the necessary scope of environmental documentation and the level of analysis required, and to identify potential impacts and avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures and related environmental requirements. Agency consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including Project Development Team (PDT) meetings, interagency coordination meetings. This chapter summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

The following agencies, organizations, and individuals were consulted in the preparation of this environmental document.

Coordination with Resource Agencies

Date	Entity	Comments
10/12/2022	United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (UAIC)	Sent formal letter requesting consultation on 03-0J400 Project to UAIC online submission page. Included shapefiles. Received email
10/12/2022	Wilton Rancheria	Sent formal letter requesting consultation on 03-0J400 project.
10/12/2022	Colfax-Todd's Valley Consolidated Tribe	Sent formal letter requesting consultation on 03-0J400 project.
10/12/2022	Nashville-El Dorado Miwok	Sent formal letter requesting consultation on 03-0J400 project.
10/12/2022	T'si Akim Maidu	Sent formal letter requesting consultation on 03-0J400 project.
10/12/2022	Ione Band of Miwok Indians	Sent formal letter requesting consultation on 03-0J400 project.
10/12/2022	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians	Sent formal letter requesting consultation on 03-0J400 project.
10/12/2022	NAHC	SLF and contact list request sent to NAHC.
10/12/2022	NAHC	Received confirmation of receipt of request from NAHC, who said not to expect a response for 6-8 weeks.

Date	Entity	Comments
10/21/2022	UAIC	Responded to consultation request: wants to review the results of the survey and comment/coordinate on any potential treatment, avoidance, or testing plans as part of the consultation.
11/22/2022	Wilton Rancheria	Sent follow up email regarding consultation request.
11/22/2022	Colfax-Todd's Valley Consolidated Tribe	Sent follow up email regarding consultation request.
11/22/2022	Nashville-El Dorado Miwok	Sent follow up email regarding consultation request.
11/22/2022	T'si Akim Maidu	Sent follow up email regarding consultation request.
11/22/2022	Ione Band of Miwok Indians	Sent follow up email regarding consultation request.
11/22/2022	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians	Sent follow up email regarding consultation request.
11/22/2022	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians	Kara Perry replied that they are looking at the project and will get back to me next week.
12/2/2022	NAHC	Received response from NAHC stating the project location is Negative for Sacred Lands. NAHC also sent tribal contact list.
3/28/2023	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians	Sent follow up email to Kara Perry regarding Shingle Springs consideration of the project and if there were any concerns since Caltrans had not heard back from the tribe.
9/19/2023	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians	Sent email to Shingle Springs (Kara Perry) regarding the added scope to the project and solicited comments on the newly proposed work. Provided new mapping and description of work.
9/19/2023	United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria	Sent email to UAIC (Anna Starkey) regarding the added scope to the project and solicited comments on the newly proposed work. Provided new mapping and description of work.

Date	Entity	Comments
10/5/2023	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians	Sent follow-up email to Kara Perry asking if there were any comments about the added scope Caltrans had emailed about in September 2023.
10/5/2023	Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians	Sent follow-up email to Anna Starkey asking if there were any comments about the added scope Caltrans had emailed about in September 2023.
1/8/2024	Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California	Met with THPO Burtt from Washoe Tribe to discuss projects in tribal territory. Discussed Placerville CAPM and if the tribe had any concerns. THPO Burtt never expressed any concerns but requested to view the cultural documents when they were completed.
2/23/2024	Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California	Met with THPO Burtt from Washoe Tribe to discuss projects in tribal territory. Discussed Placerville CAPM and if the tribe had any concerns. THPO Burtt never expressed any concerns but requested to view the cultural documents when they were completed.
3/8/2024	Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California	Met with THPO Burtt from Washoe Tribe to discuss projects in tribal territory. Discussed Placerville CAPM and if the tribe had any concerns. THPO Burtt never expressed any concerns but requested to view the cultural documents when they were completed.
4/3/2024	Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California	Sent formal letter requesting consultation on 03-0J400 project since Caltrans didn't have a receipt of ever sending formal request.
4/4/2024	El Dorado County Historical Society	Sent formal letter requesting consultation on 03-0J400 project.

Coordination with Property Owners

Caltrans staff met with the owner of parcel APN 048-160-042. The landowner met Caltrans on site to show Caltrans staff how to access the property while avoiding the vineyard (the property was gated). At that time, he voiced concern with the animal crossing that had been constructed previously. The crossing creates a route through his vineyard that is creating issues for him.

Caltrans staff also met with the owner of APN 048-471-058. The Caltrans archaeologist called the landowner to notify her of Caltrans plan to enter her property as instructed prior to the field visit. At that time, she told Caltrans that a previous project worked on a culvert that

outputs onto her driveway. The volume of water during a rain event is so great that her driveway and the surrounding soil is starting to erode. She is upset and is hoping this project will correct the issue with this culvert. She is very willing to meet and direct Caltrans to the issue and offered to meet Caltrans staff on a field visit and show the culvert location.

Circulation

The Initial Study/Negative Declaration will be made available for public and agency review and comment for 30 days from May 29, 2024–June 27, 2024. Caltrans will ensure the document is made available to all appropriate parties and agencies, including:

1) Responsible agencies
2) Trustee agencies that have resources affected by the project
3) Other state, federal and local agencies which have regulatory jurisdiction, or that exercise authority over resources which may be affected by the project
4) Public. The document is available online at https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-3/d3-programs/d3-environmental/d3-environmental-docs. Additional copies of the document are available at:
    - El Dorado County Library–Pollock Pine Branch
      6210 Pony Express Trail, Pollock Pines, CA

      Caltrans District 3 Office: 703 B Street, Marysville, CA 95901
      available to send via postal mail by submitting a request to the project email address at Placerville.CAPM@dot.ca.gov

Chapter 4. List of Preparers

The following individuals performed the environmental work and contributed to the preparation of the Initial Study / Proposed Negative Declaration for this project:

California Department of Transportation–District 3

Cara Lambirth	Senior Environmental Planner
Marta Martinez-Topete	Environmental Planner
Sarah-Jane Gerstman	Biologist
Catherine Davis	Archaeologist
Katherine Jorgensen	Native American Coordinator
Sean Cross	Water Specialist
Barbora Hoagland	Landscape Architect
Sonia Miller	Architecture Historian
Aaron Bali	Air and Noise Specialist
Mark Melani	Hazardous Waste Specialist
Jer Vang	Engineer

Chapter 5. Distribution List

Federal and State Agencies

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
1416 9th Street, 12th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Regional Water Quality Control Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, #200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Office of Historic Preservation
1725 23rd Street,
Sacramento, CA 95816

Native American Heritage Commission
1550 Harbor Blvd, Suite 100
West Sacramento, CA 95691

Regional/County/Local Agencies

El Dorado County Library Pollock Pine Branch
6210 Pony Express Trail
Pollock Pines, CA

El Dorado County Transportation Commission
2828 Easy Street, Suite 1
Placerville, CA 95667

Del Dorado County Planning Department
2850 Fairlane Court, Building "C"
Placerville, CA 95667

Chapter 6. References

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_____. 2023c. Initial Site Assessment for the Placerville CAPM Project.

_____. 2023d. Natural Environment Study for the Placerville CAPM Project.

_____. 2023e. Visual Impact Assessment for the Placerville CAPM Project.

_____. 2023f. Water Quality Assessment for the Placerville CAPM Project.

_____. 2023g. Paleontological Identification Report/Paleontological Evaluation Report for the Placerville CAPM Project.

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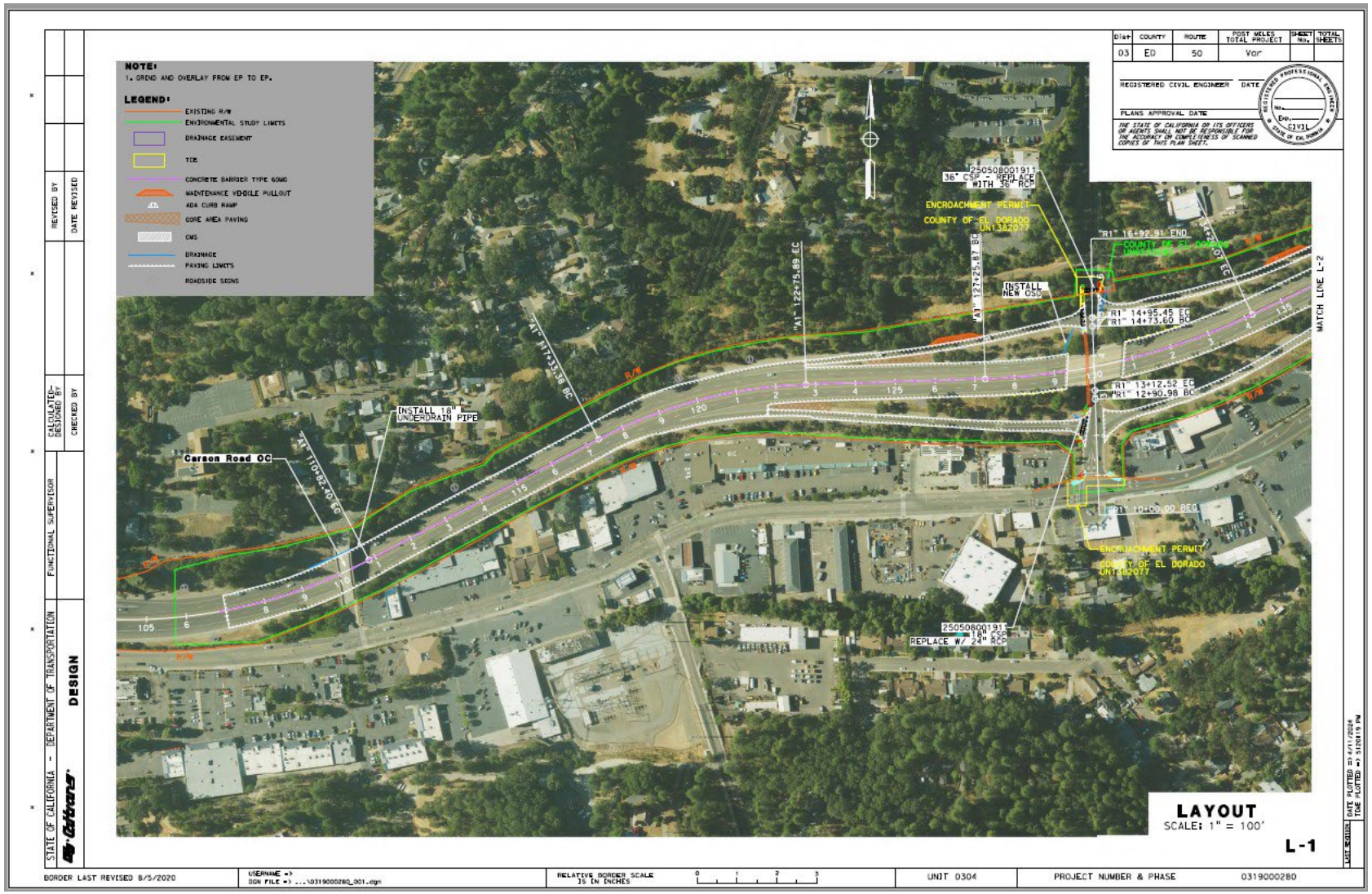
Appendix A. Project Layouts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1. GRIND AND OVERLAY FROM EP TO EP.
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TCE
CONCRETE BARRIER TYPE 60MG
MAINTENANCE VEHICLE PULLOUT
ADA CURB RAMP
CORE AREA PAVING
CMS
DRAINAGE
PAVING LIMITS
ROADSIDE SIGNS
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SHEET No.
TOTAL SHEETS
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REVISED BY
DATE REVISED
CALCULATED-DESIGNED BY
CHECKED BY
FUNCTIONAL SUPERVISOR
STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DESIGN
Caltrans
Carson Road OC
INSTALL 18" UNDERDRAIN PIPE
"A1" 110+82.40 EC
"A1" 117+33.38 BC
"A1" 122+75.89 EC
"A1" 127+25.87 BC
25050800191 36" CSP - REPLACE WITH 36" RCP
ENCROACHMENT PERMIT
COUNTY OF EL DORADO
UN1382077
INSTALL NEW OSD
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"R1" 14+95.45 EC
"R1" 14+73.60 BC
"R1" 13+12.52 EC
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"R1" 10+00.00 BEG
25050800191 18" CSP REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
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R/W
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UNIT 0304
PROJECT NUMBER & PHASE
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250508001961
Exist 14" CSP
CEMENTITIOUS LINER
250508001945
12" CSP
REPLACE W/
OS FLUME
250508001945
12" CSP
REPLACE W/
OS FLUME
COUNTY OF EL DORADO
COUNTY OF EL DORADO
COUNTY OF EL DORADO
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Exist 24" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
250504001984
Exist 24" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
250508001981
6'x6' BOX CULVERT
CONCRETE INVERT PAVING
Smith Flat Road UC
250504001984
Exist 24" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
UPRAISE CMS
250504001975
Exist 24" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
MATCH LINE L-1
MATCH LINE L-3
LAYOUT
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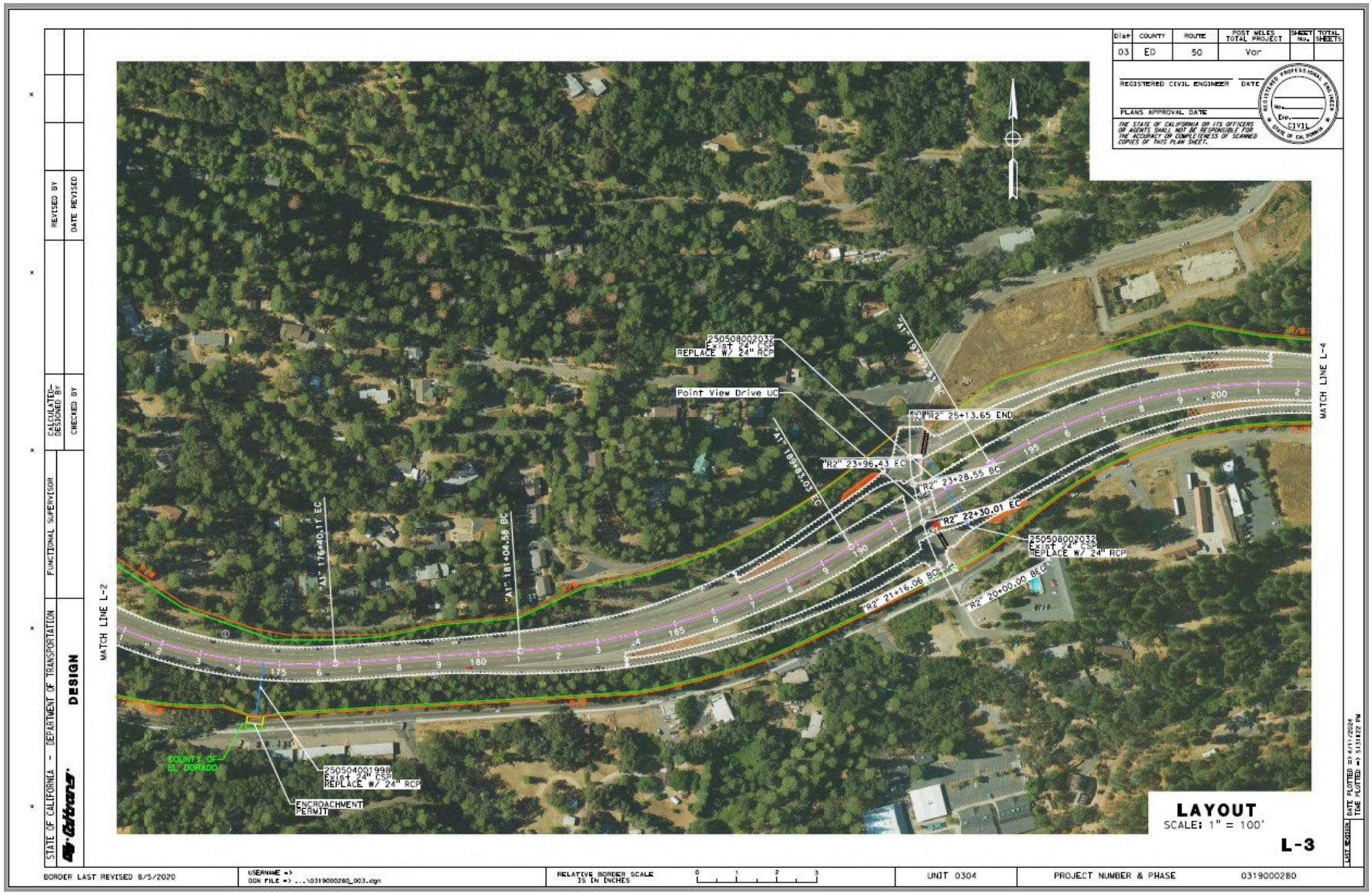

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THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA OR ITS OFFICERS OR AGENTS SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF SCANNED COPIES OF THIS PLAN SHEET.
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MATCH LINE L-4
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Point View Drive UC
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"R2" 23+96.43 EC
"R2" 23+28.55 BC
"R2" 22+30.01 EC
"R2" 21+16.06 BC
"R2" 20+00.00 BEC
"A1" 176+40.11 EC
"A1" 181+04.58 BC
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"A1" 193+89.93 BC
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LAYOUT
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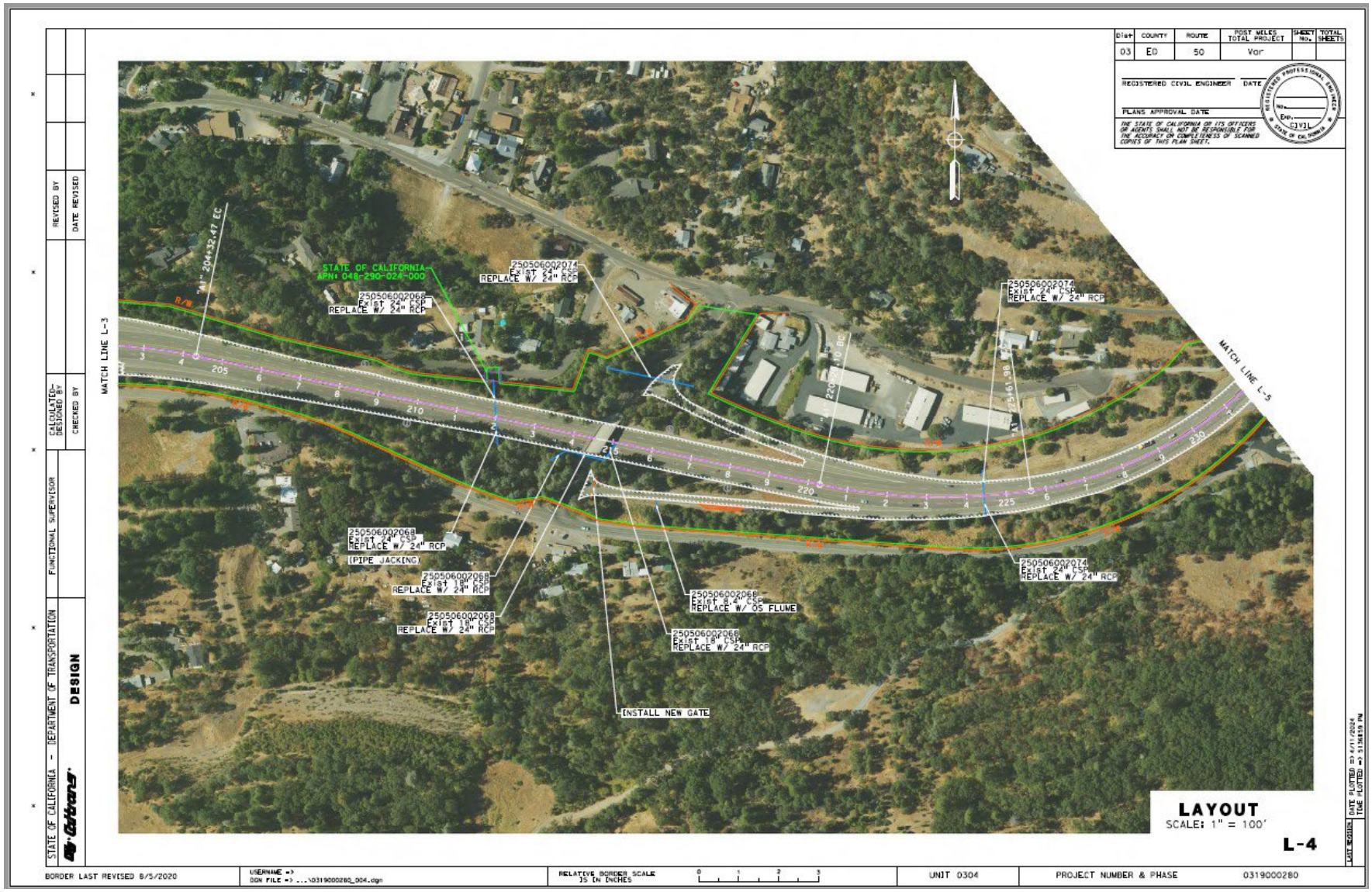

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THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA OR ITS OFFICERS OR AGENTS SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF SCANNED COPIES OF THIS PLAN SHEET.
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Exist 24" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
250506002074
Exist 24" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
250506002068
Exist 24" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
(PIPE JACKING)
250506002068
Exist 18" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
250506002068
Exist 18" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
250506002068
Exist 8.4" CSP
REPLACE W/ OS FLUME
250506002068
Exist 18" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
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REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
INSTALL NEW GATE
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STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Caltrans
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250504002133
Exist 18" CSP
REPLACE WITH 24" RCP
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REPLACE WITH 24" RCP
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Exist 24" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
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REPLACE WITH 24" RCP
250504002119
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PRIVATE
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L-5
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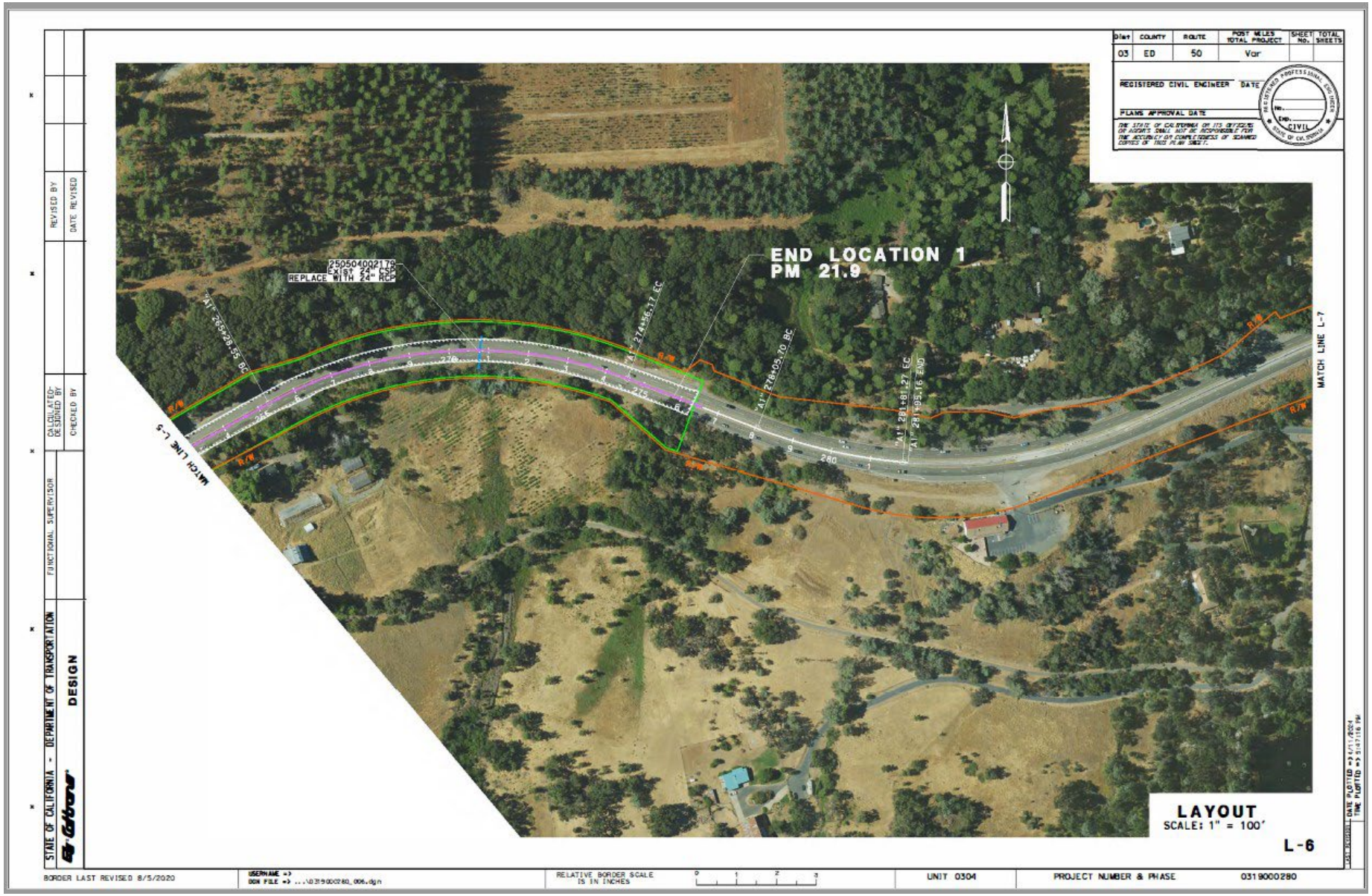
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"A1" 274+86.17 EC
"A1" 276+05.70 BC
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MATCH LINE L-5
MATCH LINE L-7
R/W
LAYOUT
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L-6
STATE OF CALIFORNIA - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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BEGIN ACCELERATION LANE PM 22.47
END SOIL-NAIL WALL STA 320+00
END ACCELERATION LANE PM 22.84
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MATCH LINE L-8
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L-7
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MATCH LINE L-9
R/W
395
400
405
410
415
420
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CEMENTITIOUS LINER
LAYOUT
SCALE: 1" = 100'
L-8
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Caltrans
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TOTAL SHEETS
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THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA OR ITS OFFICERS OR AGENTS SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF SCANNED COPIES OF THIS PLAN SHEET.
REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER
No.
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CIVIL
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
MATCH LINE L-9
MATCH LINE L-11
250500002526
Exist 36" CSP
REPLACE W/ 36" RCP
(OPEN TRENCH OR JACK/BORE)
250500002526
Exist 12" CSP
REPLACE W/ OS FLUME
250500002560
Exist 24" CSP
REPLACE W/ 24" RCP
"A3" 464+57.50 BC
R/W
450
455
460
465
470
475
LAYOUT
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L-10
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PROJECT NUMBER & PHASE
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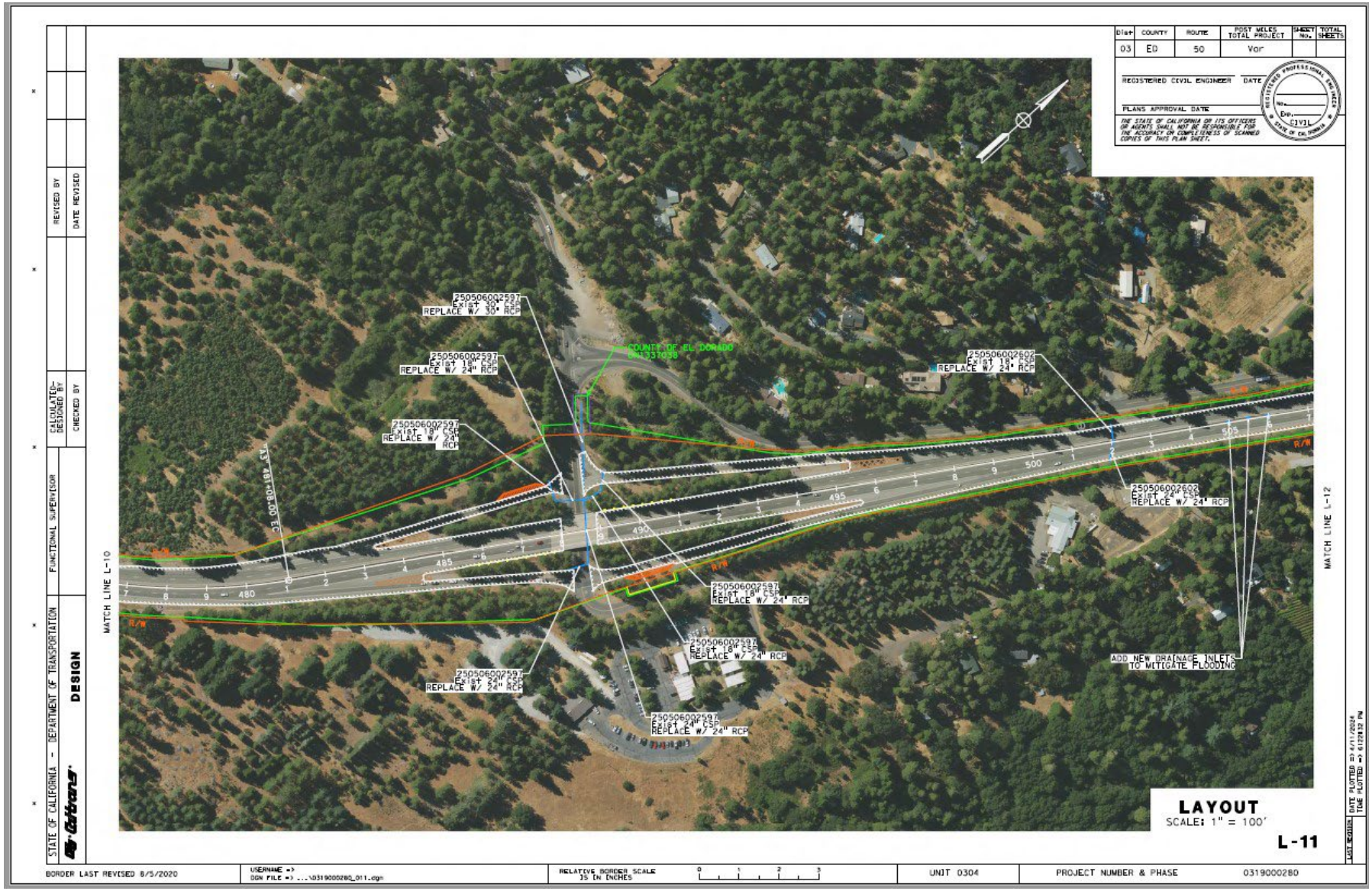

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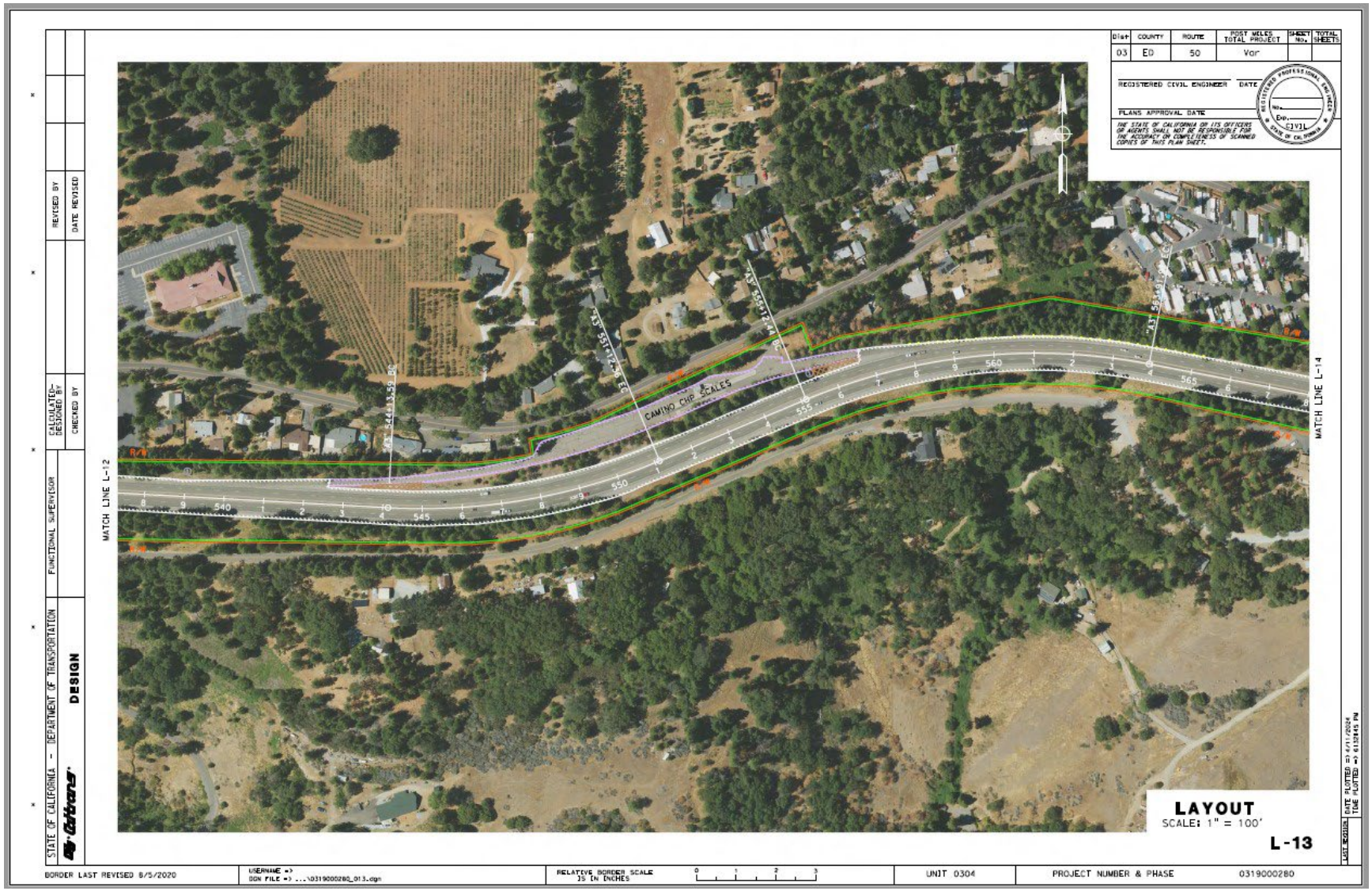
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Appendix B. Title VI Policy Statement

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 2022

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

TONY TAVARES
Director

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

Appendix C. USFWS, CNDDB, and CNPS Species Lists

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Sacramento Fish And Wildlife Office
Federal Building
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846
Phone: (916) 414-6600 Fax: (916) 414-6713

In Reply Refer To: 04/05/2024 21:56:07 UTC
Project Code: 2023-0077086
Project Name: ED 50 CAP M

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through IPaC by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)

(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at: https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/endangered-species-consultation-handbook.pdf

Migratory Birds: In addition to responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), there are additional responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) to protect native birds from project-related impacts. Any activity, intentional or unintentional, resulting in take of migratory birds, including eagles, is prohibited unless otherwise permitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)). For more information regarding these Acts, see Migratory Bird Permit | What We Do | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (fws.gov).

The MBTA has no provision for allowing take of migratory birds that may be unintentionally killed or injured by otherwise lawful activities. It is the responsibility of the project proponent to comply with these Acts by identifying potential impacts to migratory birds and eagles within applicable NEPA documents (when there is a federal nexus) or a Bird/Eagle Conservation Plan (when there is no federal nexus). Proponents should implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize the production of project-related stressors or minimize the exposure of birds and their resources to the project-related stressors. For more information on avian stressors and recommended conservation measures, see https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/threats-birds.

In addition to MBTA and BGEPA, Executive Order 13186: *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*, obligates all Federal agencies that engage in or authorize activities that might affect migratory birds, to minimize those effects and encourage conservation measures that will improve bird populations. Executive Order 13186 provides for the protection of both migratory birds and migratory bird habitat. For information regarding the implementation of Executive Order 13186, please visit https://www.fws.gov/partner/council-conservation-migratory-birds.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Code in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

OFFICIAL SPECIES LIST

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Sacramento Fish And Wildlife Office
Federal Building
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846
(916) 414-6600

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Code: 2023-0077086
Project Name: ED 50 CAP M
Project Type: Road/Hwy - New Construction
Project Description: Overlay, culvert work, and maintenance vehicle pullouts
Project Location:

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: https://www.google.com/maps/@38.74302875,-120.6602954327114,14z

Counties: El Dorado County, California

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT SPECIES

There is a total of 6 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries[1], as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

---

1. NOAA Fisheries, also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

BIRDS

NAME	STATUS
California Spotted Owl *Strix occidentalis occidentalis* Population: Sierra Nevada No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7266	Proposed Threatened

REPTILES

NAME	STATUS
Northwestern Pond Turtle *Actinemys marmorata* No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1111	Proposed Threatened

AMPHIBIANS

NAME	STATUS
California Red-legged Frog *Rana draytonii* There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location overlaps the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2891	Threatened
Foothill Yellow-legged Frog *Rana boylii* Population: South Sierra Distinct Population Segment (South Sierra DPS) No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5133	Endangered

INSECTS

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus* No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Candidate

FLOWERING PLANTS

NAME	STATUS
Layne's Butterweed *Senecio layneae* No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4062	Threatened

CRITICAL HABITATS

There is 1 critical habitat wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction.

NAME	STATUS
California Red-legged Frog *Rana draytonii*	Final

NAME	STATUS
https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2891#crithab	

IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency: California Department of Transportation District 3
Name: Sarah-Jane Gerstman
Address: 703 B St.
City: Marysville
State: CA
Zip: 95901
Email sarah-jane.gerstman@dot.ca.gov
Phone: 5307205869

Selected Elements by Common Name

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

California Natural Diversity Database

Query Criteria: Quad IS (Placerville (3812067) OR Camino (3812066) OR Sly Park (3812065) OR Pollock Pines (3812075))

Species	Element Code	Federal Status	State Status	Global Rank	State Rank	Rare Plant Rank/CDFW SSC or FP
American bumble bee *Bombus pensylvanicus*	IIHYM24260	None	None	G3G4	S2	
bank swallow *Riparia riparia*	ABPAU08010	None	Threatened	G5	S3	
Brandegee's clarkia *Clarkia biloba ssp. brandegeeae*	PDONA05053	None	None	G4G5T4	S4	4.2
brownish beaked-rush *Rhynchospora capitellata*	PMCYP0N080	None	None	G5	S1	2B.2
California red-legged frog *Rana draytonii*	AAABH01022	Threatened	None	G2G3	S2S3	SSC
Central Valley Drainage Hardhead/Squawfish Stream *Central Valley Drainage Hardhead/Squawfish Stream*	CARA2443CA	None	None	GNR	SNR	
Central Valley Drainage Resident Rainbow Trout Stream *Central Valley Drainage Resident Rainbow Trout Stream*	CARA2421CA	None	None	GNR	SNR	
Cosumnes stripetail *Cosumnoperla hypocrena*	IIPLE23020	None	None	G2	S2	
Fisher *Pekania pennanti*	AMAJF01020	None	None	G5	S2S3	SSC
foothill yellow-legged frog - south Sierra DPS *Rana boylii pop. 5*	AAABH01055	Endangered	Endangered	G3T2	S2	
fringed myotis *Myotis thysanodes*	AMACC01090	None	None	G4	S3	
grassland suncup *Camissonia lacustris*	PDONA030W0	None	None	G2	S2	1B.2
great egret *Ardea alba*	ABNGA04040	None	None	G5	S4	
Layne's ragwort *Packera layneae*	PDAST8H1V0	Threatened	Rare	G2	S2	1B.2
long-legged myotis *Myotis volans*	AMACC01110	None	None	G4G5	S3	
Nissenan manzanita *Arctostaphylos nissenana*	PDERI040V0	None	None	G1	S1	1B.2
North American porcupine *Erethizon dorsatum*	AMAFJ01010	None	None	G5	S3	
oval-leaved viburnum *Viburnum ellipticum*	PDCPR07080	None	None	G4G5	S3	2B.3
Parry's horkelia *Horkelia parryi*	PDROS0W0C0	None	None	G2	S2	1B.2

Selected Elements by Common Name

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

California Natural Diversity Database

Species	Element Code	Federal Status	State Status	Global Rank	State Rank	Rare Plant Rank/CDFW SSC or FP
Pleasant Valley mariposa-lily *Calochortus clavatus var. avius*	PMLIL0D095	None	None	G4T2	S2	1B.2
Red Hills soaproot *Chlorogalum grandiflorum*	PMLIL0G020	None	None	G3	S3	1B.2
Sacramento-San Joaquin Foothill/Valley Ephemeral Stream *Sacramento-San Joaquin Foothill/Valley Ephemeral Stream*	CARA2130CA	None	None	GNR	SNR	
saw-toothed lewisia *Lewisia serrata*	PDPOR040E0	None	None	G1G2	S1S2	1B.1
Sierra arching sedge *Carex cyrtostachya*	PMCYP03M00	None	None	G2	S2	1B.2
Sierra Nevada mountain beaver *Aplodontia rufa californica*	AMAFA01013	None	None	G5T3T4	S2S3	SSC
silver-haired bat *Lasionycteris noctivagans*	AMACC02010	None	None	G3G4	S3S4	
South Forks ground beetle *Nebria darlingtoni*	IICOL6L100	None	None	G1	S1	
Sphagnum Bog *Sphagnum Bog*	CTT51110CA	None	None	G3	S1.2	
Stebbins' phacelia *Phacelia stebbinsii*	PDHYD0C4D0	None	None	G3	S3	1B.2
western pond turtle *Emys marmorata*	ARAAD02030	Proposed Threatened	None	G3G4	S3	SSC
Yuma myotis *Myotis yumanensis*	AMACC01020	None	None	G5	S4	

Record Count: 31

Amphibians

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1] Federal/State	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Rana boylii (pop. 5)	Foothill yellow-legged frog– South Sierra DPS	T/T	Creeks or rivers in woodlands or forests with rock and gravel substrate and low overhanging vegetation along the edge.	Absent	None. The ESL does not have the rocky gravel substrate or open sunny areas needed for breeding/tadpole development The nearest occurrences of this species are from 1938 on CNDDB, 4 miles west of the project in Weber Creek. This species has been extirpated from Weber Creek (CNDDB). There are more recent occurrences of this species approximately 4 miles north of the project in the South Fork American River, however this more suitable habitat is within several canyons and does not connect hydrologically with Hangtown Creek (El Dorado Irrigation Ditch) or China Creek.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1] Federal/State	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Rana draytonii	California red-legged frog	T/SSC	Permanent and semi-permanent aquatic habitats such as creeks and cold-water ponds, with emergent and submergent vegetation.	Present	Although the project overlaps with identified Critical Habitat for CRLF, there are no occurrences of CRLF reported on CNDDB within this critical habitat. The nearest CRLF occurrence is 15 miles from the project site and is within a different watershed. The closest occurrence within the HUC 8 watershed (South Fork American River) is approximately 18 miles away from the project site and is in a different sub-watershed (Bear Creek) than the project site.

Birds

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Riparia riparia	Bank swallow	-/T	Open and partly open situations, frequently near flowing water. Colonial nester in steep sand, dirt, or gravel banks, in burrows dug near the top of the bank, along the edge of inland water or along the coast, or in gravel pits, road embankments, etc.	Absent	There is no suitable bank swallow nesting habitat within or adjacent to the ESL.
Strix occidentalis occidentalis	California spotted owl	FPT/-	Dense old-growth or mature forests dominated by conifers with topped trees or oaks available for nesting crevices.	Absent	Although habitat occurs in the greater vicinity northeast of the project site there is no suitable habitat within the ESL. No noise impacts would occur; Protected Activity Centers within the region are located over two ridges from the project limits within Brushy Canyon and Iowa Canyon.

Fish

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Oncorhynchus mykiss	Central Valley ESU Steelhead	T/-	Anadromous. Spawn in cool, clear streams featuring suitable water depth, gravel size, and current velocity. Intermittent streams may be used for spawning.	Absent	Surface waters in project area are inaccessible to anadromous fish due to downstream barrier (Folsom Dam).

Invertebrates

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Danaus plexippus	Monarch butterfly	FC/-	Open habitats including fields, meadows, weedy areas, marshes, and roadsides.	Absent	Milkweed (host plant) was not present within the ESL

Mammals

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Aplodontia rufa californica	Sierra Nevada mountain beaver	-/SSC	Typical habitat in the Sierra Nevada is montane riparian; in the Coast Ranges, most populations occur below 2950 feet. Burrows and dense understory provide cover. Frequents dense riparian-deciduous vegetation.	Absent	Appropriate denning habitat is not available within project ESL. Species typically occurs at higher elevations than project ESL.
Lasionycteris noctivagans	Silver-haired bat	-/-	Primarily a coastal and montane forest dweller feeding over streams, ponds, and open brushy areas. Roosts in hollow trees, beneath exfoliating bark, abandoned woodpecker holes and rarely under rocks. Needs drinking water.	Present	Although the project ESL exists within the species range, suitable maternity roosting sites do not exist within the project area.
Myotis thysanodes	Fringed myotis	-/-	In a wide variety of habitats, optimal habitats are pinyon-juniper, valley foothill hardwood, and hardwood-conifer. Uses caves, mines, buildings, or crevices for maternity colonies and roosts.	Absent	Although the project ESL exists within the species range, suitable maternity roosting sites do not exist within the project area.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Myotis yumanensis	Yuma myotis	-/-	Optimal habitats are open forests and woodlands with sources of water over which to feed. Distribution is closely tied to bodies of water. Maternity colonies in caves, mines, buildings or crevices.	Absent	Potential roosting habitat (man-made structures) appropriate from day and maternity roosts are absent from the ESL.
Myotis volans	Long-legged myotis	-/-	Most common in woodland & forest habitats above 4000 ft. Trees are important day roosts; caves & mines are night roosts. Nursery colonies usually under bark or in hollow trees, but occasionally in crevices or buildings.	Present	Potential day and maternity roosting habitat (mature trees) and appropriate foraging habitat are available within ESL.
Pekania pennanti	Fisher	-/SSC	Intermediate to large-tree stages of coniferous forests & deciduous- riparian areas with high percent canopy closure. Uses cavities, snags, logs & rocky areas for cover & denning. Needs large areas of mature, dense forest.	Present	Project area is within suspected gap in distribution for this species. Potential foraging habitat occurs within the ESL, potential denning habitat is not available within the ESL.

Reptiles

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Emys marmorata	Western pond turtle	PT/SSC	Permanent or mostly permanent waters in a variety of habitats.	Absent	Suitable aquatic habitat for this species is absent from the ESL.

[1]Status Explanations:

Federal Status (pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended)

FE = endangered. Listed as being in danger of extinction.

FT = threatened. Listed as likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.

FP = proposed. Proposed for listing as threatened or endangered, or for delisting.

FC = candidate. Candidate that may become a proposed species.

D = delisted.

-- = no listing status under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

State Status (pursuant to § 1904 (Native Plant Protection Act of 1977) and § 2074.2 and § 2075.5 (California Endangered Species Act of 1984) of the Fish and Game Code)

SE = listed as endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

ST = listed as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act.

SC = candidate. Candidate that may become threatened, endangered, or delisted.

D = delisted.

-- = no listing.

SSC = Species of Special Concern. Animals not listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act or the California Endangered Species Act but which are declining at a rate that could result in listing, or historically occurred in low numbers and known threats to their persistence currently exist.

FP = Fully Protected. Fully Protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time and no licenses or permits may be issued for their take except for collecting these species for necessary scientific research and relocation of the bird species for the protection of livestock.

WL = Watch List. Species that do not meet the criteria of SC, but for which there is concern and a need for additional information to clarify status.

Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Arctostaphylos nissenana	Nissenan manzanita	-/-/1B.2	Rocky, closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral	Absent	ESL lacks appropriate rocky substrate, closed cone conifer forest, or chaparral habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Bolandra californica	Sierra bolandra	-/-/4.3	Grows on mossy rocks in shaded, humid places in woodland habitats, usually close to a water source.	Absent	ESL outside of the species elevation range.
Calochortus clavatus var. avius	Pleasant Valley mariposa-lily	-/-1B.2	Lower montane coniferous forest (Josephine silt loam and volcanic soils)	Present	ESL contains volcanic soils that could support this species; however, species was not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL
Camissonia lacustris	Grassland suncup	-/-/1B.2	Chaparral, Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest, Valley, and foothill grassland. Found in. Granitic, Gravelly, Serpentinite substrate.	Absent	ESL does not have the appropriate substrate. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL
Campylopodiella stenocarpa	Flagella-like atractylocarpus	-/-/CBR	Cismontane woodland at 330-1640 feet above sea level.,	Absent	ESL outside of the species elevation range.
Carex cyrtostachya	Sierra arching sedge	-/-/1B.2	Lower montane coniferous forest, meadows, seeps, marshes, swamps, riparian forest margins	Present	Mesic habitat is available within ESL, however not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Ceanothus fresnensis	Fresno ceanothus	-/-/4.3	Perennial evergreen shrub found in Cismontane woodland (openings), Lower montane coniferous forest	Present	ESL contains suitable habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Chlorogalum grandiflorum	Red Hills soaproot	-/-/1B.2	Serpentinite, gabbroic and other soils, chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest	Absent	ESL lacks serpentine or gabbroic soils. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Clarkia biloba ssp. brandegeeae	Brandegee's clarkia	-/-/4.2	Often roadcuts, chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest	Present	ESL contains suitable habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL
Clarkia virgata	Sierra clarkia	-/-/4.3	Found in cismontane woodland and lower montane coniferous forest.	Present	ESL contains suitable habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL
Claytonia parviflora ssp. grandiflora	Streambank spring beauty	-/-/4.2	Rocky, cismontane woodland, vernally moist, generally restricted to scree slopes, rock ledges, and decomposing granite outcrops.	Absent	ESL lacks appropriate substrate. Not detected during botanical surveys.
Erigeron petrophilus var. sierrensis	Northern Sierra daisy	-/-/4.3	Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest, Upper montane coniferous forest. Sometimes found in serpentinite soils.	Present	ESL contains suitable habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL
Eriogonum tripodum	Tripod buckwheat	-/-/4.2	A perennial deciduous shrub found in Chaparral, Cismontane woodland often in serpentinite soils.	Absent	ESL lacks serpentinite soils. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Githopsis pulchella ssp. serpentinicola	Serpentine bluecup	-/-/4.3	Annual herb found in Cismontane woodland (loam, serpentinite)	Present	ESL contains suitable habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Hesperocyparis bakeri	Baker cypress	-/-/4.2	Perennial evergreen tree found in Chaparral, Lower montane coniferous forest sometimes in serpentinite or volcanic soils.	Present	ESL contains suitable habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL
Horkelia parryi	Parry's horkelia	-/-/1B.2	Ione formation and other soils, chaparral, cismontane woodland	Absent	ESL lacks Ione formation soils. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Jensia yosemitana	Yosemite tarplant	-/-/3.2	Annual herb Lower montane coniferous forest, Meadows and seeps.	Present	ESL contains suitable habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Juncus digitatus	Finger rush	-/-/1B.1	Cismontane woodland (openings), Lower montane coniferous forest (openings), Vernal pools (xeric)	Absent	ESL lacks micro-habitat and vernal pools. No suitable habitat within the ESL.
Lewisia serrata	Serrated Lewisia	-/-/1B.1	Broadleaf upland forest, lower montane coniferous forest, riparian forest, rocky, mesic	Absent	ESL lacks suitable rocky habitat for this species. Species occurs at higher elevations than project ESL. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Lilium humboldtii ssp. humboldtii	Humboldt lily	-/-/4.2	Yellow-pine Forest, chaparral openings	Present	ESL contains suitable habitat for this species, however not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Myrica hartwegii	Sierra sweet bay	-/-/4.3	Perennial deciduous shrub found in Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest, riparian forest	Present	ESL contains suitable habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Navarretia prolifera ssp. lutea	Yellow bur navarretia	-/-/4.3	Dry, rocky flats near drainage channels	Absent	ESL lacks suitable rocky habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	Habitat	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Packera layneae	Layne's ragwort	T/CR/1B.2	Chaparral, cis-montane woodland, serpentine or gabbroic soils	Absent	ESL lacks serpentine or gabbroic soils. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Peltigera gowardii	Western waterfan lichen	-/-/4.2	Riparian forest in elevations of 3495- 8595 feet	Absent	ESL outside of the species elevation range.
Phacelia stebbinsii	Stebbins' phacelia	-/-/1B.2	Cis-montane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps	Present	ESL contains suitable habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Piperia colemanii	Coleman's rein orchid	-/-/4.3	Often found in sandy soils in Chaparral, Lower montane coniferous forest	Absent	ESL does not contain sandy soils.
Primula pauciflora	Beautiful shootingstar	-/-/4.2	Great Basin scrub, Meadows and seeps, Pinyon and juniper woodland	Absent	ESL does not contain suitable habitat and most of the ESL is outside the elevational range for the species.
Rhynchospora capitellata	Brownish beaked-rush	-/-/2B.2	Mesic. Lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, marshes and swamps, upper montane coniferous forest	Present	Mesic habitat is available within ESL, however not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Streptanthus longisiliquus	Long-fruit jewelflower	-/-/4.3	Found in openings in Cismontane woodland, Lower montane coniferous forest	Present	ESL contains suitable habitat for this species. Not detected during botanical surveys within the ESL.
Viburnum ellipticum	Oval-leaved viburnum	-/-/2B.3	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest	Present	CNDDB occurrence near ESL is based on collection from 1901. No recent occurrences in vicinity of ESL. Not detected during botanical surveys.

Scientific Name	*Common Name*	*Status*[1]	*Habitat*	*Habitat Present/ Absent*	*Rationale*

[1]Status Explanations:

Federal Status (pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended)

- = no listing under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

State Status (pursuant to §1904 (Native Plant Protection Act of 1977) and §2074.2 and §2075.5 (California Endangered Species Act of 1984) of the Fish and Game Code)

- = no listing under the California Endangered Species Act.

California Native Plant Society (CNPS)

List 1A	=	Presumed extinct in California.
List 1B	=	Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere.
List 2	=	Rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere.
List 3	=	More information is needed about the plant species.
List 4	=	Limited distribution (Watch List).

.1 = seriously threatened in California.

.2 = in California. moderately threatened

.3 = Not very threatened in California.

Appendix D. Public Comments

Comment 1. Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.

CALIFORNIA Water Boards

GAVIN NEWSOM GOVERNOR

YANA GARCIA SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

25 June 2024

Marta Martinez-Topete
California Department of Transportation, District 3
703 B Street
Marysville, CA 95901
Marta.Martinez-Topete@dot.ca.gov

COMMENTS TO REQUEST FOR REVIEW FOR THE NEGATIVE DECLARATION, PLACERVILLE CAPM PROJECT, SCH#2024051181, EL DORADO COUNTY

Pursuant to the State Clearinghouse's 28 May 2024 request, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) has reviewed the *Request for Review for the Negative Declaration* for the Placerville CAPM Project, located in El Dorado County.

Our agency is delegated with the responsibility of protecting the quality of surface and groundwaters of the state; therefore our comments will address concerns surrounding those issues.

I. Regulatory Setting

Basin Plan

The Central Valley Water Board is required to formulate and adopt Basin Plans for all areas within the Central Valley region under Section 13240 of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Each Basin Plan must contain water quality objectives to ensure the reasonable protection of beneficial uses, as well as a program of implementation for achieving water quality objectives with the Basin Plans. Federal regulations require each state to adopt water quality standards to protect the public health or welfare, enhance the quality of water and serve the purposes of the Clean Water Act. In California, the beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and the Antidegradation Policy are the State's water quality standards. Water quality standards are also contained in the National Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.36, and the California Toxics Rule, 40 CFR Section 131.38.

The Basin Plan is subject to modification as necessary, considering applicable laws, policies, technologies, water quality conditions and priorities. The original Basin Plans were adopted in 1975, and have been updated and revised periodically as required, using Basin Plan amendments. Once the Central Valley Water Board has adopted a Basin Plan amendment in noticed public hearings, it must be approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), Office of

MARK BRADFORD, CHAIR | PATRICK PULUPA, ESQ., EXECUTIVE OFFICER

11020 Sun Center Drive #200, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670 | www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley

Administrative Law (OAL) and in some cases, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Basin Plan amendments only become effective after they have been approved by the OAL and in some cases, the USEPA. Every three (3) years, a review of the Basin Plan is completed that assesses the appropriateness of existing standards and evaluates and prioritizes Basin Planning issues. For more information on the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins*, please visit our website:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/

Antidegradation Considerations
All wastewater discharges must comply with the Antidegradation Policy (State Water Board Resolution 68-16) and the Antidegradation Implementation Policy contained in the Basin Plan. The Antidegradation Implementation Policy is available on page 74 at:
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/basin_plans/sacsjr_201805.pdf

In part it states:

Any discharge of waste to high quality waters must apply best practicable treatment or control not only to prevent a condition of pollution or nuisance from occurring, but also to maintain the highest water quality possible consistent with the maximum benefit to the people of the State.

This information must be presented as an analysis of the impacts and potential impacts of the discharge on water quality, as measured by background concentrations and applicable water quality objectives.

The antidegradation analysis is a mandatory element in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and land discharge Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) permitting processes. The environmental review document should evaluate potential impacts to both surface and groundwater quality.

II. Permitting Requirements

Construction Storm Water General Permit
Dischargers whose project disturb one or more acres of soil or where projects disturb less than one acre but are part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs one or more acres, are required to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Construction General Permit), Construction General Permit Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ. Construction activity subject to this permit includes clearing, grading, grubbing, disturbances to the ground, such as stockpiling, or excavation, but does not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility. The Construction General Permit requires the development and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). For more information on the Construction General Permit, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/constpermits.shtml

Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit

If the project will involve the discharge of dredged or fill material in navigable waters or wetlands, a permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act may be needed from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). If a Section 404 permit is required by the USACE, the Central Valley Water Board will review the permit application to ensure that discharge will not violate water quality standards. If the project requires surface water drainage realignment, the applicant is advised to contact the Department of Fish and Game for information on Streambed Alteration Permit requirements. If you have any questions regarding the Clean Water Act Section 404 permits, please contact the Regulatory Division of the Sacramento District of USACE at (916) 557-5250.

Clean Water Act Section 401 Permit – Water Quality Certification

If an USACE permit (e.g., Non-Reporting Nationwide Permit, Nationwide Permit, Letter of Permission, Individual Permit, Regional General Permit, Programmatic General Permit), or any other federal permit (e.g., Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act or Section 9 from the United States Coast Guard), is required for this project due to the disturbance of waters of the United States (such as streams and wetlands), then a Water Quality Certification must be obtained from the Central Valley Water Board prior to initiation of project activities. There are no waivers for 401 Water Quality Certifications. For more information on the Water Quality Certification, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/water_quality_certification/

Waste Discharge Requirements – Discharges to Waters of the State

If USACE determines that only non-jurisdictional waters of the State (i.e., "non-federal" waters of the State) are present in the proposed project area, the proposed project may require a Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) permit to be issued by Central Valley Water Board. Under the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, discharges to all waters of the State, including all wetlands and other waters of the State including, but not limited to, isolated wetlands, are subject to State regulation. For more information on the Waste Discharges to Surface Water NPDES Program and WDR processes, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at:https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/waste_to_surface_water/

Projects involving excavation or fill activities impacting less than 0.2 acre or 400 linear feet of non-jurisdictional waters of the state and projects involving dredging activities impacting less than 50 cubic yards of non-jurisdictional waters of the state may be eligible for coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ (General Order 2004-0004). For more information on the General Order 2004-0004, visit the State Water Resources Control Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2004/wqo/wqo2004-0004.pdf

Dewatering Permit

If the proposed project includes construction or groundwater dewatering to be discharged to land, the proponent may apply for coverage under State Water Board General Water Quality Order (Low Threat General Order) 2003-0003 or the Central Valley Water Board's Waiver of Report of Waste Discharge and Waste Discharge Requirements (Low Threat Waiver) R5-2018-0085. Small temporary construction dewatering projects are projects that discharge groundwater to land from excavation activities or dewatering of underground utility vaults. Dischargers seeking coverage under the General Order or Waiver must file a Notice of Intent with the Central Valley Water Board prior to beginning discharge.

For more information regarding the Low Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2003/wqo/wqo2003-0003.pdf

For more information regarding the Low Threat Waiver and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/waivers/r5-2018-0085.pdf

Limited Threat General NPDES Permit

If the proposed project includes construction dewatering and it is necessary to discharge the groundwater to waters of the United States, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Dewatering discharges are typically considered a low or limited threat to water quality and may be covered under the General Order for *Limited Threat Discharges to Surface Water* (Limited Threat General Order). A complete Notice of Intent must be submitted to the Central Valley Water Board to obtain coverage under the Limited Threat General Order. For more information regarding the Limited Threat General Order and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/board_decisions/adopted_orders/general_orders/r5-2016-0076-01.pdf

NPDES Permit

If the proposed project discharges waste that could affect the quality of surface waters of the State, other than into a community sewer system, the proposed project will require coverage under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. A complete Report of Waste Discharge must be submitted with the Central Valley Water Board to obtain a NPDES Permit. For more information regarding the NPDES Permit and the application process, visit the Central Valley Water Board website at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/help/permit/

If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (916) 464-4684 or Peter.Minkel2@waterboards.ca.gov.

Peter G. Minkel
Engineering Geologist

cc: State Clearinghouse unit, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, Sacramento

Response to Comment 1. Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Thank you for submitting Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board's concerns regarding the Placerville CAPM Project. Caltrans would comply with the requirements of all applicable permits. Appropriate best management practices would be implemented.

Comment 2. California Department of Fish and Wildlife

From:	Moseby, Nicholas@Wildlife
To:	Placerville CAPM@DOT
Cc:	Wildlife R2 CEQA; Stanfield, Melissa@Wildlife; Boyd, Ian@Wildlife; Sheya, Tanya@Wildlife; Kilgour, Morgan@Wildlife
Subject:	Review: DUE June 27 2024, CEQA Comment email Placerville CAPM / Project Tracking # 2024-0184-0000
Date:	Thursday, June 27, 2024 12:25:07 PM
Attachments:	image001.png

EXTERNAL EMAIL. Links/attachments may not be safe.

Dear Marta Martinez-Topete:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received and reviewed the Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration (ND) from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for the Placerville Capital Prevention Maintenance (CAPM) Project (Project) pursuant the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) statute and guidelines.[1]

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish, wildlife, native plants, and their habitat. Likewise, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may need to exercise its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code.

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California's Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State (Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a).) CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species. (Fish & G. Code, § 1802.) Similarly for purposes of CEQA, CDFW provides, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW may also act as a Responsible Agency under CEQA. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381.) CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As proposed, for example, the Project may be subject to CDFW's lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority. (Fish & G. Code, § 1600 et seq.) Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in "take" as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.), the project proponent may seek related take authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The Project site is located in El Dorado County on US 50 from west of the Carson

Road Overcrossing to west of Still Meadow Road (post mile (PM) 18.7 to 21.19); at Five Mile Road in the westbound direction (PM 22.6 to 22.9); and near Camino, from 1.1 miles west of the Snows Road Undercrossing to east of the Ridgeway Drive Undercrossing (PM 24.2 to R29.1).

The Project consists of the replacement of existing pavement; improvement of existing drainage systems; upgrade of existing curb ramps to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, overhead signs and two-post, ground-mounted signs, Transportation Management System element, non-standard guardrails and median concrete barriers; pavement beyond the gore areas; and construction of new maintenance vehicle pullouts and one new acceleration lane that will require a soil-nail wall and Type 7 retaining wall.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CDFW offers the comments and recommendations below to assist Caltrans in adequately identifying and, where appropriate, mitigating the Project's significant, or potentially significant, direct, and indirect impacts on fish and wildlife (biological) resources. Editorial comments or other suggestions may also be included to improve the document.
CDFW is primarily concerned with the Project impacts to:

1. California Native Plant Society (CNPS) rare plants
2. California red-legged frog (CRLF) *(Rana draytonii)*
3. Western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*)
4. Wildlife Connectivity
5. Bats: Fringed myotis *(myotis thysanodes),* Yuma myotis *(Myotis yumanensis)*, Silver-haired bat *(Lasionycteris noctivagans), long-legged myotis (Myotis volans)*
6. California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*)

Comment 1: Incomplete Plant Species Lists and Analysis; Section 2.4 Biological Resources, pages 42-43.

Issue: The Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND) should adequately analyze potential Project impacts to all plant species which meet the CEQA definition of endangered, threatened, or rare (CEQA Guidelines § 15380) with special emphasis on resources that are rare or unique to the region (CEQA Guidelines § 15125(c)). Inadequate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures for impacts to special-status plant species may result in the Project having a significant impact on those species. Special-status species include, but are not limited to, those considered eithe rare or regionally unique throughout their range, identified as threatened, endangered, rare, or candidate by CDFW or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or plants that have a CNPS California Rare Plant Rank of 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3 and 4. Impacts to these species or their habitat must be analyzed during preparation of environmental documents relating to CEQA.
CDFW identified the following issues with the Plant Species section of the IS/ND.

1a) To determine the presence or absence of special-status species that may be directly or indirectly impacted by Project activities, botanical field surveys should be conducted in a manner which maximizes the likelihood of locating special-status plants and sensitive natural communities that may be present. For accurate results, botanical field surveys need be conducted at the times of year when plants will be both evident and identifiable (i.e., blooming period). Additionally, botanical field survey visits should be spaced throughout the growing season to accurately determine what plants exist in the Project area. This usually involves multiple visits to the Project area (e.g., in early, mid, and late season) to capture the floristic diversity at a level necessary to determine.

The Plant Species section of the IS/ND includes the results of botanical surveys conducted on May 15 and June 22, 2023. These surveys were conducted outside the blooming period for Brownish beaked-rush (*Rhynchospora capitellata*) which blooms July – August; this plant is a S1 state and a rare 2B.2 plant species which was identified as having suitable habitat within the Project area.

1b) The Special-Status Plants section of the IS/ND concludes, "As no special-status plants were identified within the Project Environmental Study Limits (ESL), there would be no impact to special-status plants." The IS/ND should include appropriate and adequate avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures for all direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts that are expected to occur as a result of the construction and long-term operation and maintenance of the Project.

Recommendation: CDFW recommends the following measure be included in the IS/ND:

Protocol-level surveys in accordance with CDFW's, *Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities* (March 2018) will be conducted during the appropriate blooming period for all special-status and rare plant species with suitable habitat present, and the survey shall be performed by a qualified botanist. A protocol-level survey for the brownish beaked-rush shall also be conducted since suitable habitat may be present and it was not addressed surveys were not conducted during its blooming period. If any special-status plant species are present and will be affected by the Project, adequate avoidance measures shall be incorporated into the Project. If special-status plant species cannot be avoided, suitable species-specific mitigation must be developed in consultation with CDFW, which may include a combination of on-site and off-site plant preservation and compensation measures.

COMMENT 2: Mitigation Measures are needed to reduce impacts to California red-legged frog (CRLF) *(Rana draytonii)* to less-than-significant; Section 2.4 Biological Resources, Threatened and Endangered Species, page 47.

Issue: California red-legged frog *(Rana draytonii)* is a federally threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and a California Species of Special

Concern (SSC). The IS/ND acknowledges that there is suitable habitat onsite and known occurrences on adjacent Bureau of Land Management land; however, the IS/ND does not list avoidance or minimization measures for CRLF. Hangtown Creek, China Creek and their tributaries provide suitable habitat. In addition, there are California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) occurrences of CRLF within 5 miles of PM 24.6 and PM 24.8. In-water work and other Project activities have the potential to result in "take" of CRLF. Pursuant to Fish and Game code section 86, "'take'" means hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." Without incorporation of avoidance and minimization measures, the Project may have a significant impact on CRLF.

Recommendation: To reduce potential Project impacts on CRLF to a less-than-significant level, CRLF avoidance and minimization measures should be incorporated into the IS/ND. CDFW recommends the following measures be incorporated into the IS/ND:

1. Whenever possible, construction at drainages shall be conducted when the drainage is dry and does not contain flowing or ponded water.
2. Environmental Awareness Training shall be incorporated into the IS/ND and implemented throughout the entire Project site to include life history information and avoidance and minimization measures for CRLF and other special-status species.
3. CDFW recommends that the IS/ND include a pre-construction survey measure for CRLF including that the multiple surveys should be conducted prior to the start of construction to avoid and minimize impacts to this species. Surveys should be performed using visual encounter survey methodology, either during daylight hours or at night by walking entirely around the aquatic area of the creek or along the entire length of the creek or stream while repeatedly scanning for frogs. Surveys should be conducted by a qualified biologist with experience in CRLF and other amphibians.

COMMENT 3: Western Pond Turtle (WPT) (*Emys marmorata*), Section 2.4 Biological Resources, Threatened and Endangered Species, page 47.

Issue: WPT is designated as a California SSC and is a proposed threatened species under the ESA. The IS/ND states WPT either did not have suitable habitat present and/or the Project is out of the geographical range of the species; therefore, they will not be discussed further as there would be no effect/no impact to these species. There are known CNDDB occurrences of WPT in 2019, 2016 and 2002 within 0.05 miles of PM 19.6, 20.74, 21.2, 21.3, 21.6 (perennial) and PM 19.75, 21.8 (intermittent), and 24.6, 24.8 (ephemeral) drainage systems. CDFW believes WPT could be present within the Project areas. WPT are known to nest in the spring or early summer within 100 meters of a water body, although nest sites as far away as 500 meters have also been reported (Thomson et al. 2016).

Recommendation: Without appropriate avoidance and minimization measures for WPT, potentially significant impacts associated with Project activities could include nest reduction, inadvertent entrapment, reduced reproductive success, reduction in health or vigor of eggs and/or young, and direct mortality.

To reduce Project impacts to a less-than-significant level, CDFW recommends the following mitigation measure be incorporated into the IS/ND: "A qualified biologist shall conduct focused surveys for WPT within 3 days prior to Project implementation. In addition, focused surveys for nests shall occur during the egg-laying season (March through August). If WPT or their nests are discovered where they may be impacted by construction activities, Caltrans shall suspend work and establish a no-disturbance buffer in consultation with CDFW and the qualified biologist."

COMMENT 4: Wildlife connectivity, CEQA Environmental Checklist Question 2.4d) Biological Resources, page 51.

Issue: The IS/ND does not adequately address wildlife connectivity or wildlife vehicle collision mortality for deer (resident motherload blacktail deer herd), black bear, fox or bobcats that migrate in the vicinity of the Project area. CDFW expects cumulative impacts to their populations to continue if the wildlife connectivity issue is not addressed. Lack of wildlife connectivity continues to make it difficult for the wildlife to cross for seasonal or daily use.

Species occurrence data, road mortality data, linkage designs, and adjacent suitable habitat should inform the CEQA analysis regarding potential for impacts and the development of mitigation measures to improve or enhance wildlife movement as a result of the Project. In weighing the impacts of the Project on wildlife movement, beyond regional wildlife "corridors", analysis should address other common movement patterns. Food sources, water sources, migration routes, and breeding and sheltering areas that may be disconnected should be included in the impact analysis and considered when developing mitigation concepts. CDFW recommends incorporating survey data from sources such as the California Roadkill Observation System to establish scientific reasoning for crossing locations and improvements for wildlife crossings as appropriate. CDFW also recommends surveys are done before, during, and after construction to identify keys areas where wildlife is crossing, observe how wildlife migration is affected by the Project, and assess the effectiveness of any newly constructed wildlife crossings.

In addition, CDFW recognizes the value of wildlife crossing structures being incorporated into the design plans to mitigate for the disturbance (permanent and temporary stream and riparian impacts, impediment to migration, etc.) or offset the impacts of the Project. CDFW may consider reducing mitigation required for Project impacts based upon how the crossings protect and/or improve wildlife connectivity.

Recommendation: CDFW recommends that Caltrans identify suitable locations and incorporate wildlife crossing structures/features into their design plans, with fences and jump-outs where geographically feasible. CDFW recommends considering PM

19.6 which has a 6' x 6' box culvert to be upsized for wildlife connectivity. CDFW also recommends upsizing and adding wildlife shelving for small mammals at perennial drainages PM 19.6 and 20.74 or wherever animal shelving is feasible. Caltrans may consult with CDFW to identify locations where wildlife fencing could be used to direct wildlife to safely cross under the highway. Culverts that can be feasibly modified to increase headroom and conveyance capacity should also be identified and incorporated into the design plans.

COMMENT 5: Fringed myotis *(myotis thysanodes),* Yuma myotis *(Myotis yumanensis)*, silver-haired bat *(Lasionycteris noctivagans),* long-legged myotis *(Myotis volans), Chapter 2.4 Biological Resources, Special Status Animal Species* - pages 44 - 46.
Issue: The IS/ND states there are no suitable maternity roosting sites within the Project area but also states later in the document that no directed surveys have been conducted for bats within the ESL. In addition, the IS/ND states that snags and suitable trees were observed throughout the ESL that may provide roosting habitat for bats. Removal of this habitat outside of the appropriate work window could result in the injury or mortality of bats if they are roosting in these trees at the time of the removal. A CNDDB desktop review shows several occurrences of Yuma myotis and silver-haired bat within 0.2 miles of the proposed drainage work sites. Although there are protective measures for bats in the IS/ND, the measures lack maternity and torpor avoidance during tree removal, specific times of avoidance, and details for bat exclusion devices, and there are no compensatory mitigation measures proposed for the loss of bat roosting habitat.

Bats are considered non-game mammals and are protected by state law from take and/or harassment (Fish & G. Code, § 4150, CCR § 251.1). The IS/ND also does not have sufficient and enforceable avoidance measures to reduce impacts to bats to a less than significant level. For mitigation measures to be effective, they must be specific, enforceable, and feasible actions that will reduce the environmental impacts from the project to a less than significant level.

Recommendation: CDFW recommends Caltrans refer to *Caltrans Bat Mitigation: A Guide to Developing Feasible and Effective Solutions* (Johnston et. al, 2019) when analyzing and mitigating the Project impacts to bats and their habitat. To reduce the Project impacts to bats and native nursery sites to a less than significant level, CDFW makes the following recommendations:

Disturbance of roost sites during the maternity (April 15 – August 30) and hibernation (October 15 to March 1) seasons, are considered primary factors that may negatively impact bats and have the potential to result in take. During the hibernation period, bats are very slow to respond to disturbance and can lose fat stores needed to survive the winter while pups in the maternity colony may not have the ability to fly. CDFW recommends that tree removal occur outside of the maternity and hibernation seasons.

Prior to vegetation removal, a Designated Bat Biologist should determine the species of bats roosting in the ESL and quantify the available roosting habitat within the

Project vicinity. Replacement roost habitat should be installed and designed to accommodate the displaced and impacted bat species.

Impacted roost and maternity habitat on the trees removed should be mitigated at a ratio sufficient to compensate for the significant impacts to the colony. Bat replacement habitat should be designed generally following the guidelines in *Caltrans Bat Mitigation: A Guide to Developing Feasible and Effective Solutions (Johnston et. al, 2019)*, which provides a review of mitigation options for bats in relation to Caltrans projects. Caltrans should coordinate with CDFW on the final plans for bat habitat replacement.

CDFW recommends that the Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation section be revised to include bat pre-construction surveys and ensure they are conducted prior to the start of construction activities as well as including a bat exclusion plan along with specific details for bat exclusion devices, all consistent with *Caltrans Bat Mitigation: A Guide to Developing Feasible and Effective Solutions (Johnston et. al, 2019)*.

COMMENT 6: California spotted owl *(Strix occidentalis occidentalis)*, *Chapter 2.4 Biological Resources*, Threatened and Endangered Species section, page 47.

Issue: The IS/ND states that California spotted owl (CSO) *(Strix occidentalis occidentalis)*, which is a federal fully protected species and a California SSC, either did not have suitable habitat present and/or the Project is out of the geographical range of the species; therefore, they will not be discussed further as there would be no effect/no impact to these species. The survey results on page Appendix C-14 of the IS/ND for California spotted owl state that although habitat occurs in the greater vicinity northeast of the project site, there is no suitable habitat within the ESL. A CNDDB desktop review shows that there are nest and activity occurrences for California spotted owl *(Strix occidentalis occidentalis)* within two miles of the proposed work at the PM 24.6 and 24.8 drainage systems.

Recommendation: The Project area may contain suitable habitat for CSO. To reduce potential Project impacts on CSO to a less-than-significant level, CDFW recommends the following avoidance and minimization measures to be incorporated into the IS/ND:

1. A qualified biologist will be present on-site to conduct monitoring during removal of the suitable California spotted owl *(Strix occidentalis occidentalis)* habitat identified during pre-construction surveys.
2. Environmental Awareness Training for CSO shall be incorporated into the IS/ND and implemented throughout all workers on the project site.
3. The IS/ND should include a CSO survey measure to determine species presence. If an active nest is observed within the project area, an appropriate and adequate buffer should be established by the qualified biologist between the construction activities and the active nest so that nesting activities are not

Response to Comment 2. California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Comment 1.

Rhynchospora capitellata, brownish beaked rush is known to occur in swampy, marshy areas such as fens, soggy meadows, seeps, etc. This habitat was not observed within project limits. Habitat within potentially impacted areas is characterized by disturbed, weedy, dry soil that may only be moist during a period restricted to the rainy season, and therefore not providing the perennial sedge's physiological and biochemical requirements.

Although mesic habitat in the form of seeps do occur in the Environmental Study Limits (ESL), these seeps are small in nature, flow out of the hillside immediately adjacent to the roadway in a narrow strip of area. There is not much of a vegetative community in that area, and no similar species were found. Please see photos of seeps for Comment 3. Protocol surveys do require conducting botanical field surveys at all times of year when sensitive plants will be evident and identifiable. In the past, California Department of Fish Wildlife (CDFW) has accepted limited surveys when habitat for sensitive species is not present within work areas.

In the Initial Study/Negative Declaration and Natural Environment Study this rationale should have been described as detailed above other than not detected during botanical surveys. Project biologist and botanist conducted additional botanical surveys within the project limits on June 6, 2024. There is another botanical survey scheduled for July 31, 2024. The seeps will be surveyed at this time for presence of brownish beaked rush.

Comment 2.

The Initial Study/Negative Declaration acknowledges that there is suitable habitat for CRLF in the general vicinity of the project. There are no known documented occurrences or known populations within the ESL. The Placerville CAPM Project is in an urban, residential, and an agricultural area with culverts located in fragmented areas of habitat between frontage roads and on/off ramps. Towards the east end of the project (Location 3), there is adjacent undisturbed federal land. However, in this area project scope is limited to pavement overlay and culvert replacement in stormwater and dry drainages. There is no breeding habitat or designated critical habitat within the ESL. There is critical habitat adjacent to the project area. However, it does not overlap the ESL, and there is no in water work on the east end of the project within Location 3. Location 3 is from postmiles (PM) 22-29; the critical habitat is adjacent to Caltrans right-of-way starting at approximately PM 25.6. There is no work proposed in any waters that directly connect to CRLF critical habitat within the distance that CRLF travel/migrate/disperse from breeding habitat. In the dry summer months, CRLF will move into neighboring upland areas to seek refuge if a breeding pool becomes dry, however

typically only do so 100-500 m from breeding sites. CRLF can be encountered living within streams approximately 2 miles from breeding sites (Federal Register).

Only a few drainages in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada are known to support CRLF (Jennings and Hayes 1992, Barry 1999). In El Dorado County near Placerville, a confirmed population of red-legged frogs were discovered in an impoundment, Spivey Pond in the North Fork of Weber Creek prompting the designation of this critical habitat. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service based designation of critical habitat on areas of high-quality habitat that were determined to provide for persistence of CRLF populations and allow for dispersal within, and in most cases between, populations. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not designate areas subject to anthropogenic activities (e.g., urban development) or those that were fragmented or unlikely to be restorable (poor quality habitat) unless it was determined that these areas were unique for the species.

There are no culverts associated with waters in Location 3 of the project and no direct connectivity to any of the tributaries to North Weber Creek. There is no work proposed in China Creek in this pavement overlay/culvert replacement project. There are no documented occurrences of CRLF in China Creek or its tributaries. At PM 24.6 and 24.8, ephemeral tributaries to China Creek, cementitious liner is proposed, however these are ephemeral drainages with no water present during the construction season. During dry periods, the CRLF is rarely encountered far from water, unless their breeding habitat dries up or recedes (Jennings *et al. in litt.* 1992). If CRLF are present in China Creek, there is no reason to believe that CRLF would leave China Creek to disperse into dry ephemeral drainages. The likelihood of CRLF being present in China Creek is extremely low- China Creek confluences with Weber Creek and is part of the El Dorado Irrigation District allocation of water. China Creek originates northwest of U.S. 50, flows under the highway and southwest where it confluences with Weber Creek, from there water flows into Weber Reservoir where water is dammed, controlled, and released. On the eastern side of Weber Reservoir is where North Fork Weber Creek flows into the reservoir. China Creek and Weber Reservoir are not included in CRLF designated critical habitat and are part of the El Dorado Irrigation District.

Hangtown Creek originates west of Placerville and confluences with Weber Creek 15 miles (straight line; approximately 18 miles of stream channel) west of the CRLF critical habitat, runs through the urban town of Placerville and ends at Smith Flat Road, which is 8 miles from the designated critical habitat. The work that is proposed at Hangtown Creek (PM 19.6) is concrete invert paving at an existing box culvert and culvert lining of the corrugated steel pipe. There would be no ground disturbance where work is proposed at Hangtown Creek (PM 20.74) is located right next to an on/off ramp in an urbanized/residential area. There is no direct connection from Hangtown Creek to North Weber Creek and Spivey Pond (Weber

Reservoir transects these stream channels) which are the only known CRLF current occurrences in the area.

The project biologist has over 10 years of experience with amphibians and reptiles and has conducted amphibian surveys for many years across the United States working for the United States Geological Survey Northeast Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative, Illinois Natural History Survey, and the Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. The biologist has also surveyed for CRLF and collected samples for eDNA analysis while employed by Washington State University working on the Plumas National Forest, in conjunction with the Oroville USFWS office. No CRLF were encountered during studies at waters associated with culverts. The project biologist has determined that there would be no impact to CRLF or its habitat based on stream locations, proximity to urban habitats, timing of construction season and status of waters during the dry season, proximity to breeding sites, proximity to critical habitat, and presence of dammed reservoirs and controlled drainages reducing connectivity for the species in the project environmental study limits. Adding avoidance and minimization measures for a federally listed species, would imply that there is an impact to that species and potential for take- consultation with USFWS would be required. During the Design phase of the project, the biologist will reach out to U.S. Fish Wildlife Service for technical assistance, conduct visual encounter surveys, and nocturnal call surveys for the species at the stream locations where work is proposed. If CRLF presence is determined, USFWS consultation would be required. A field review and pre-application meeting for the Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA) will be conducted with CDFW at all the stream locations, and further discussions on CRLF would be incorporated. CRLF is a state species of concern, however, it is federally listed.

Comment 3.

The ESL consists of the Caltrans right-of-way which consists of a narrow strip on either side of the highway approximately 40-50 feet from the edge of pavement. At the start of the project (Location 1), U.S. 50 runs through the urban town of Placerville. As the highway continues east it is situated between frontage roads; Broadway, Smith Flat Rd. and Cemetery Road run parallel on either side of the highway making habitat extremely fragmented within the Caltrans right-of-way where the outlets are located. As U.S. 50 continues east it is situated between a 300-foot upward slope on the westbound side and a 300-foot downward slope on the eastbound side.

At Hangtown Creek (PM 19.6), the work is proposed under the overpass and at (PM 20.74) adjacent to the on/off ramp. Work is limited to concrete invert paving and culvert lining at PM 19.6. No ground disturbance would occur. The inlet of 19.75 is located on a very narrow portion of the side of the road. The outlet is situated on a small slope east of the highway situated between Broadway and the highway. See photos below.

Hangtown Creek PM 19.6 Invert paving at box culvert and culvert lining from inlet

PM 19.75 outlet in small area between Broadway and U.S. 50

The perennial waters at PM 21.2, 21.3, and 21.6 are all associated with a seep that comes out of the 300-foot hillside on the westbound side of U.S. 50 and runs down the roadway in a ditch, just outside of urban Placerville. These culvert inlets and outlets that are waters are associated with seeps that comes out of the hillside and flow down and under the roadway and dissipate down the slope into adjacent properties. They are perennial special aquatic sites. They do not provide much in the way of habitat for Western Pond Turtle. See photos below.

PM 21.2 inlet

PM 21.6

PM 21.8

The work proposed is pavement overlay which occurs within the current roadway pavement, culvert replacement where work occurs in a 20 x 20 ft area around the inlet and outlet of a culvert, and an acceleration lane which would be constructed in a disturbed and upland area (see mapping Location 2). At Location 3, most culverts except for two (PM 24.6 and 24.8) where work is proposed convey stormwater. Work is proposed at Location 3 in two

ephemeral streams which would be dry at the time of construction. Caltrans does not believe that Western Pond Turtle could be present and that nesting sites are not located within 500 meters of areas in where ground disturbance work is proposed. A field review and pre-application meeting for the Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement will be conducted with CDFW at all the stream locations, and further discussions on Western Pond Turtle would be incorporated and would be determined if measures for Western Pond Turtle are necessary, especially at the Hangtown Creek locations.

Comment 4.

This is a pavement overlay project with culvert replacement and an acceleration lane where no new impacts to wildlife connectivity occur as a result of this project. Concrete median barrier is limited to areas in which concrete barrier already exist near the urban section of Placerville. Caltrans acknowledges that there is a wildlife connectivity issue in the vicinity of the project, however this capitol maintenance project does not cause any additional impacts than what exists currently as baseline. Caltrans biologist conducted a meeting with Caltrans mitigation specialist and Caltrans Design on June 10, 2024 to discuss opportunities on site where wildlife connectivity can be improved to be proposed for out-of-kind mitigation for 1602 resources. The mitigation specialist was on a previous project in the Camino area that did install new concrete median barrier and a wildlife undercrossing and associated features for deer passage. The mitigation specialist has been working with CDFW to document areas in which additional improvements can be made. Caltrans will take CDFW and local resident recommendations into consideration for implementation during the design phase of the project to improve wildlife connectivity in the area. Coordination with CDFW would occur during fall and winter of 2024 and 2025.

Comment 5.

The Initial Study/Negative Declaration states that there are no suitable maternity roost sites for fringed myotis and Yuma myotis as these species use caves, mines, and crevices. There are some manmade structures within the ESL, but they do not provide the crevices needed for a maternity roost. No directed surveys were conducted for bats, as tree removal is limited in this project and final areas of tree removal are still being developed. The final areas of tree removal will be determined throughout the design phase and will be minimized from the current areas of proposed tree removal. The biologist did observe snags and suitable trees within the ESL that may provide roosting habitat, however tree removal is limited. Measures are incorporated into the project to determine if bat roosting habitat is located within the final areas of tree removal prior to construction by a Designated Bat Biologist which would occur in the dry season when bats are not in hibernation and torpor. The work window of April 15-August 30 would be incorporated into the measure as suggested by CDFW as well as the 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement. If bat roosting habitat is determined to exist

within the areas of tree removal by the designated bat biologist, then the snags/trees would be removed using the two-step method. If the suitable bat roosting habitat is determined to be occupied, then the designated bat biologist would determine the species of bat and quantify the available bat roosting habitat within the project vicinity and would determine mitigation measures with CDFW at that time. Since tree removal is limited to conduct the culvert work and the trees to be removed are mostly located on the shoulder of a narrow highway between two slopes, Caltrans does not anticipate any maternity roosts to be located within the areas of tree removal. Caltrans Environmental and Design are also committed to limiting tree removal where practical and greatly reducing the area of tree removal at Hangtown Creek location at PM 20.74.

Response to Comment 6

Vegetation and trees within the ESL are mostly located within areas of fragmented habitat between the frontage roads and on and off ramps. There is no suitable nesting habitat within the ESL, and it seems unlikely that California spotted owl would use these fragmented areas for foraging. Protected Activity Centers (PAC) are within 2 miles of Location 3 of the project; however, these PAC are located in more remote canyon habitat within ridges of Brushy Canyon, Iowa Canyon, and Long Canyon. With more pristine and undisturbed habitat surrounding these nesting sites, potential for foraging within the ESL is low. There is no tree removal proposed at the culverts located at PM 24.6 and 24.8. Tree removal areas in Location 3 are minimal and limited to fragmented areas near on and off ramps. Caltrans acknowledges that there is low potential for California spotted owl foraging within the ESL based on proximity of known occurrences and will incorporate the following measures into the project at CDFW recommendations:

If California spotted owl presence is determined:

1. A qualified biologist will be present on-site to conduct monitoring during removal of the suitable California spotted owl *(Strix occidentalis occidentalis)* habitat identified during pre-construction surveys.

2. Environmental Awareness Training for California spotted owl shall be incorporated into the Initial Study/Negative Declaration and implemented throughout all workers on the project site.

3. Pre-construction surveys for California spotted owl nesting if an active nest is observed within the project area, an appropriate and adequate buffer should be established by the qualified biologist between the construction activities and the active nest so that nesting activities are not interrupted.

Comment 3.

EXTERNAL EMAIL. Links/attachments may not be safe.

Greetings,

I have viewed the ED_Placerville CAPM Project and have 2 points that I would like to make.

- I live in the area, am a retired FS-PSW research biologist and work in Landscape Connectivity. I have been traveling Highway 50 since 1973. My place of employment for 27 years was located directly north of PM 21.8 at the Institute of Forest Genetics, a 116-acre parcel of forested land – land where fox, bear, deer, bobcat and mountain lion have been observed. The Institute has SHPO status and there is a binding agreement that the property will not be sold, which makes PM 21.8 a good location for wildlife movement. The WB turnout at PM 21.8 is wet terrain that is routinely frequented by deer and other wildlife. Motion-sensor IR cameras have captured many occurrences from 2016-2018. If at all possible, a larger culvert should be constructed at this site.
- A second area that should receive consideration for an enlarged culvert is the area near China Creek. The landowner to the north is Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI). Last week, the Director gave me a tour of their land which included the culvert at PM 24.8. The terrain at this location is below grade and conducive to an enlarged culvert to accommodate deer or other wildlife. Any work in this area should include a larger culvert to allow wildlife passage under the highway. While on the tour, an abundant amount of scat and tracks were observed for deer, coyote, fox. SPI's acreage is large (attachment) and undeveloped. Furthermore, the Director was supportive of enhancing wildlife welfare and said that there are no plans to sell their property. The land to the south, leading to Weber Reservoir is undeveloped. Currently, wildlife is using the Snows Rd OC to get under Highway 50 (tracks documented in a recent visit to the site).

21.8	38.738501, -120.736849	Unnamed stream that flows from freshwater pond northeast of the culvert; stream flows south of the ROW where it dissipates into wetland on private property	Intermittent	24" CSP	Replace with 24" CSP, RSP
24.6	38.737075, -120.687558	Unnamed tributary to China Creek	Ephemeral	24" CSP	Lined with cementitious liner
24.8	38.735880, -120.684267	Unnamed tributary to China Creek	Ephemeral	24" CSP	Lined with cementitious liner

Please consider my comments and see the attached supporting files.

Thank you,

Response to Comment from Local Resident

Caltrans values the information provided by local resident and biologist. Please see response to CDFW Comment 4.