

State Routes 94 and 188 Asset Management Project

San Diego County, California

11-SD-94,188-PM 15.3-65.3, 0.0-1.9

Project Number 11-43026 / 1118000083

Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

September 2024



General Information About This Document

What's in this document:

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has prepared this Initial Study, which examines the potential environmental impacts of alternatives being considered for the proposed project in San Diego County in California. The document explains why the project is being proposed, the alternatives being considered for the project, the existing environment that could be affected by the project, potential impacts of each of the alternatives, and proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures.

What you should do:

- Please read the document. Additional copies of the document and the related technical studies are available for review at the following locations:
 - Caltrans District 11 Office, 4050 Taylor St. San Diego, CA 92110
 - San Diego County Library Potrero Branch, 24883 Potrero Valley Road, Potrero, CA 91963
 - San Diego County Library – Campo-Morena Village Branch, 31356 CA-94, Campo, CA 91906
 - This document may be downloaded at the following website: <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-11/current-projects/sr94sr188-assetmanagement>
- Tell us what you think. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, please send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to: Matthew Voss, District 11 Environmental Division, California Department of Transportation, 4050 Taylor Street, San Diego, CA 92110. Submit comments via email to: matthew.voss@dot.ca.gov.
- Submit comments by the deadline: October 10, 2024

What happens next:

After comments are received from the public and the reviewing agencies, Caltrans may 1) give environmental approval to the proposed project, 2) do additional environmental studies, or 3) abandon the project. If the project is given environmental approval and funding is appropriated, Caltrans could design and construct all or part of the project.

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This project would construct improvements to various transportation assets along State Route 94 from postmiles 15.3 to 65.3 and State Route 188 from postmiles 0.0 to 1.9 in San Diego County.

**INITIAL STUDY
with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration**

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

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation



Tracey D'Arout Roberts
Acting Deputy District Director, Environmental
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

09/06/2024

Date

The following individual can be contacted for more information about this document:

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DRAFT
Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: pending

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 11-SD-94, 188-PM 15.3-65.3, 0.0-1.9

EA/Project Number: 11-43026 / 1118000083

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to restore drainage systems on State Route 94 (SR-94) and restore pavement on State Route 188 (SR-188) in San Diego County. Ancillary work for the project includes upgrades to pedestrian and public transit amenities, signage and street lighting.

Draft Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans District 11. On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action with the incorporation of the identified mitigation measures will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

- Caltrans would offset temporary impacts to arroyo toad habitat of up to 0.21 acre through the permanent conservation of 0.21 acre of habitat at the Rancho San Diego mitigation bank, or another off-site location or mitigation bank as reviewed and approved by the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office (CFWO), the Carlsbad office of the USFWS; and
- Caltrans would restore 0.76 acre of temporary impact area with native species of similar composition to the adjacent habitat. A restoration plan would be submitted to CFWO for review and approval 30 days prior to initiating project impacts. The plan would include information and conditions outlined in the Biological Opinion.

Tracey D'Aoust Roberts
Acting Deputy District Director, Environmental
California Department of Transportation

Date

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Chapter 1 **Proposed Project**

1.1 Introduction

The proposed State Route 94 and 188 Asset Management Project (project) intends to rehabilitate and enhance multiple transportation assets in eastern San Diego County along the unincorporated communities of Rancho San Diego, Spring Valley, Jamul, Dulzura, Barrett Junction, Potrero, Canyon City, Campo, Boulevard, Manzanita, and Tecate. On SR-94, the project is generally bounded on the western end by the intersection of SR-94 and the Sweetwater River Bridge and extends for 50 miles east to Avenue de Robles Verdes near Manzanita. On SR-188, the project extends south from SR-94 intersection for 1.9 miles to the Mexico border near Tecate. Within the project area, both state routes are two-lane highways. The primary land uses are rural, agricultural, open space and residential.

The proposed project is funded through the State Highway Operation Protection Program (SHOPP). The main asset is drainage with additional pavement, mobility, and safety elements.

Caltrans would act as lead agency for both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This CEQA Initial Study with proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) and NEPA Categorical Exclusion have been prepared in accordance with state and federal regulations, and Caltrans' environmental procedures.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this project is to rehabilitate drainage systems, preserve pavement and enhance mobility and safety along SR-94. Work on SR-188 would restore ride quality and enhance pedestrian mobility.

1.2.2 Need

The project is needed to restore serviceability of the deteriorated drainage systems and preserve driving surfaces. An assessment of existing culverts in the project area identified them with good, fair and poor condition. Culverts in fair and poor condition are most vulnerable to failure that would impact the paved surface by potentially causing erosion, instability, and sinkholes.

Additionally, buses that serve along the SR-94 need dedicated bus pads to appropriately serve the community and reduce strain on the highway

pavement. Curb ramps and pedestrian assets are also needed to enhance access to other forms of mobility. Guardrail would be installed to enhance safety.

Work on SR-188 is needed to repair existing distress on the roadway and enhance mobility.

1.3 Project Description

The project proposes to rehabilitate and enhance multiple transportation assets in eastern San Diego County on State Routes 94 and 188. The project includes post miles 15.3 to 65.3 on SR-94 and post miles 0.0 to 1.9 on SR-188 that pass by the unincorporated communities of Rancho San Diego, Spring Valley, Jamul, Dulzura, Barrett Junction, Potrero, Canyon City, Campo, Boulevard, Manzanita, and Tecate. The main asset is drainage rehabilitation that will include culvert replacement and culvert lining.

The project also proposes rehabilitating other assets related to pavement, mobility, signage, safety and street lighting.

Project vicinity and location maps are shown in Figures 1-1 and 1-2

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

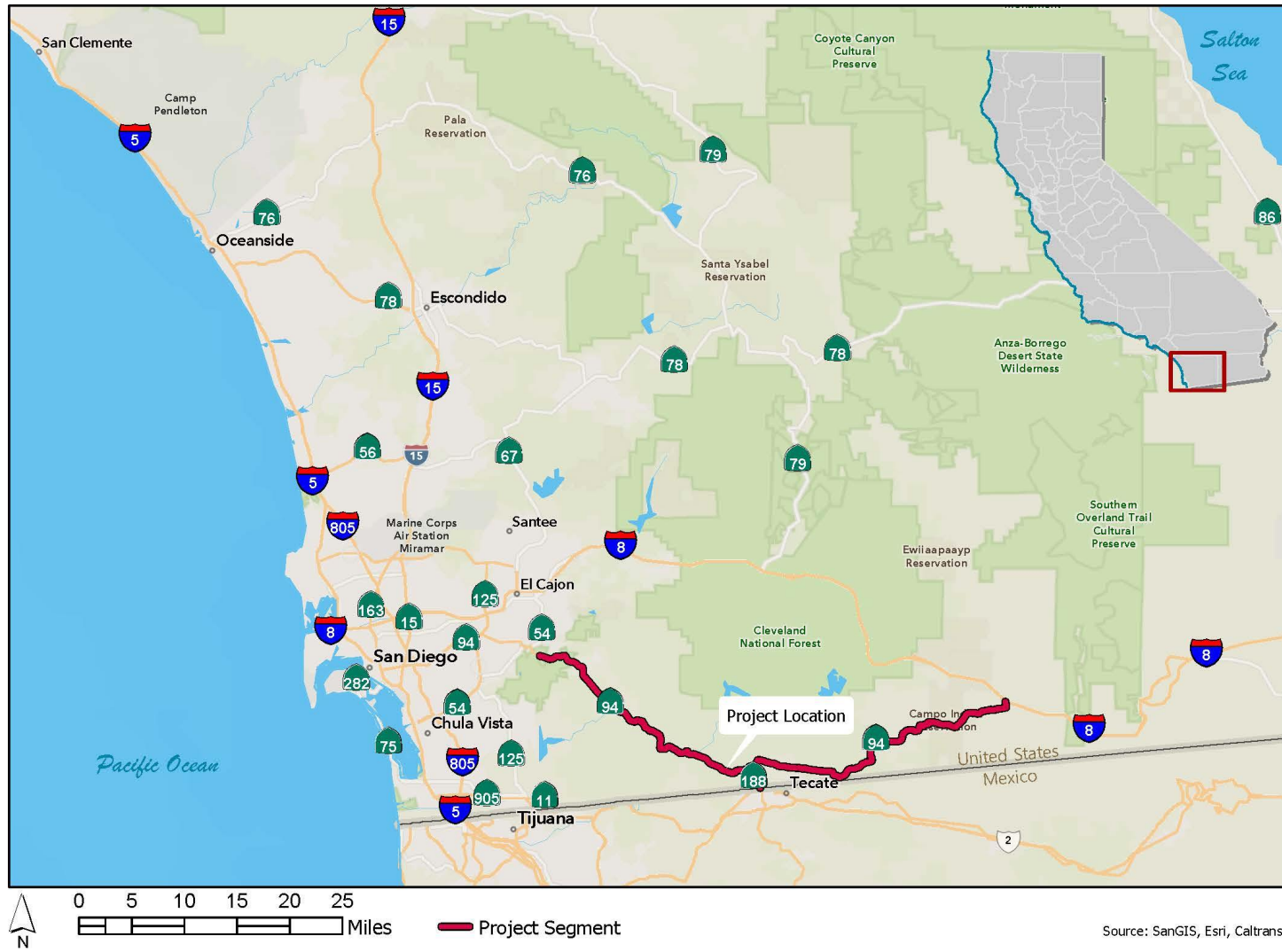
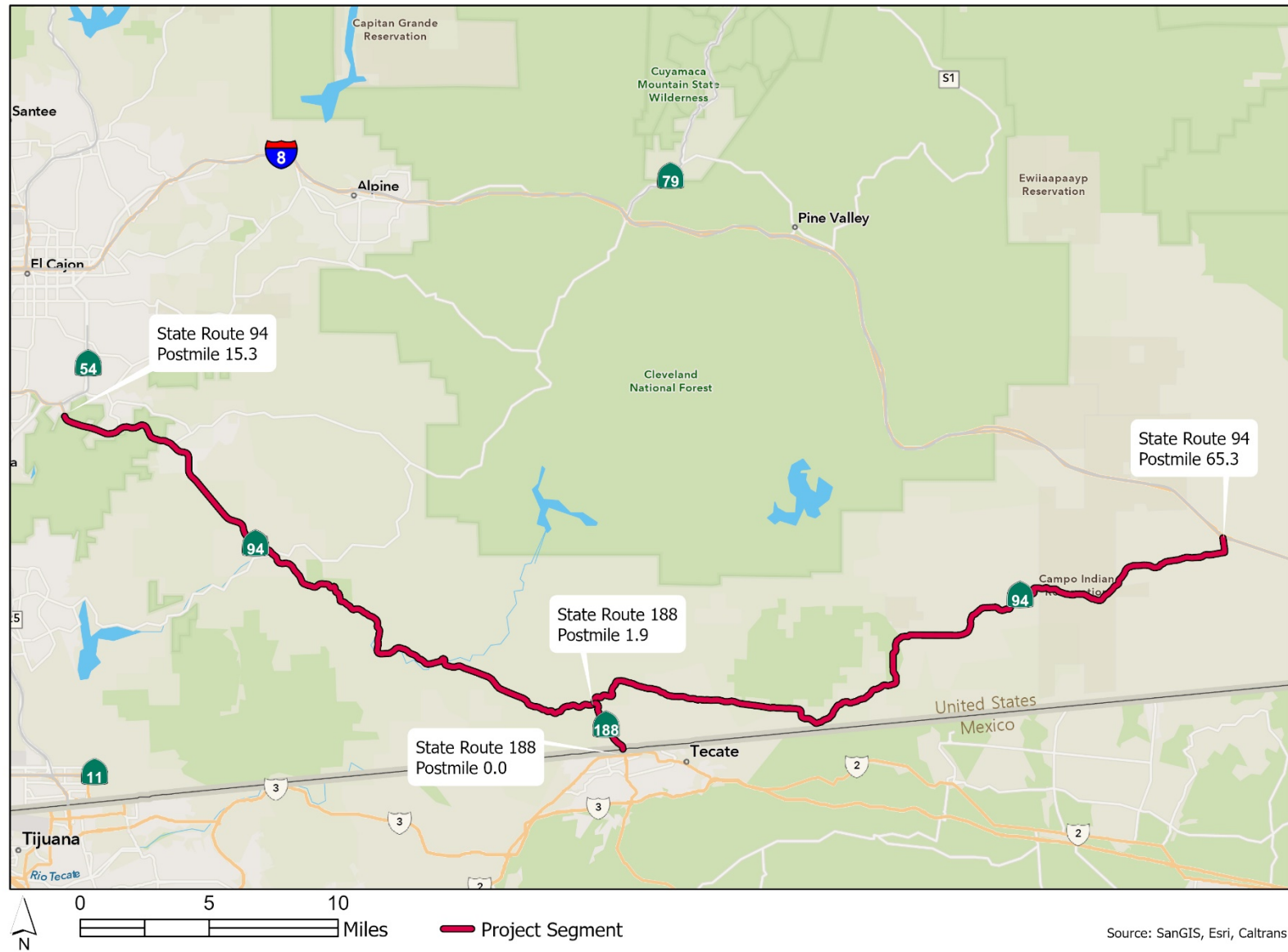


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



1.4 Project Alternatives

This section describes the proposed project alternatives that were developed to meet the project purpose and need while reducing environmental impacts. There are two (2) alternatives: the Build Alternative and the No-Build Alternative.

1.4.1 Build Alternatives

The Build Alternative, also known as the project, contains a number of standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project. These measures are listed later in this chapter under “Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives.”

The Build Alternative proposes to rehabilitate and enhance multiple assets along SR-94 and SR-188. The proposed assets are discussed below in greater detail.

Drainage Improvements (Anchor Asset)

Proposed drainage improvements would rehabilitate 33 pipe segments along the project route with a total length of 2,146 linear feet of culverts to be repaired. The proposed rehabilitation consists of 24 replacements and 9 culverts to be relined. Rehabilitated culverts are at the following post mile locations on SR-94:

Culvert post miles:		
20.60	33.86	55.57
31.23	34.14	55.70
31.64	43.14	61.16
31.79	43.51	61.27
32.08	43.61	61.40
32.92	43.66	61.45
33.44	43.70	62.29
33.64	45.66	62.50

33.63	51.85	63.34
33.77	54.28	64.03
33.83	55.10	64.23

Mobility

Bus Pads

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) operates bus lines 888 and 894 along SR-94. Bus pads adjacent to the highway would be installed to provide a dedicated area for public transit users and buses. The bus pads are located adjacent to the following locations:

<i>Bus Pad Post Mile</i>	<i>General Cross-street and Location</i>
16.25	Cougar Canyon Drive
17.35	Steele Canyon Road
19.6	Jefferson Road and Protor Valley Road
28.35	Dulzura
32.1	Summit Road

Pedestrian Facilities

The project would install, rehabilitate, or upgrade curb ramps to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and increase mobility. The project would improve six (6) curb ramps on SR-94 and five (5) curb ramps on SR-188.

Enhanced visibility crosswalks would also be installed as part of the pedestrian facilities. The project proposes to replace eight (8) high visibility crosswalks on SR-94 and install two (2) new high visibility crosswalks on SR-188.

Pavement Rehabilitation

The proposed project would rehabilitate 3.7 miles of pavement located on SR-188. No shoulder backing would be placed for this project.

Signage

Four (4) sign panels would be replaced on existing posts.

Street Lighting

Existing lighting at Cougar Canyon Drive and Proctor Valley Road intersections would be upgraded with LED lighting.

Guardrail

One (1) midwest guardrail system would be installed at post mile 61.4.

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative provides a baseline for considerations of the Build Alternative. It may be preferred if the other alternatives or variations proposed have substantial impacts to the environment, do not serve the project's purpose and need, or are not economically feasible.

The No-Build Alternative retains the existing conditions of the facilities and would not address the purpose and need of the project. This alternative would not rehabilitate the deteriorating assets, improve mobility or preserve pavement or ride quality.

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

This project would include standardized project measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) which are used on most Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from this proposed project.

- Water or dust palliative would be applied to the site and equipment as often as necessary to control fugitive dust emissions. Fugitive emissions generally must meet a “no visible dust” criterion either at the point of emissions or at the right-of-way line, depending on local regulations.
- Construction equipment and vehicles would be properly tuned and maintained, and would use low sulfur fuel as required by California Code of Regulations Title 17, Section 93114.
- Equipment and materials storage sites would be located as far away from residential and park uses as feasible, and construction areas would be kept clean and orderly.

- To the extent feasible, construction traffic would be scheduled and routed to reduce congestion and related air quality impacts caused by idling vehicles along local roads during peak travel times.
- Intelligent transportation systems and TMS elements would be implemented to smooth traffic flow and increase efficiency.
- TMS elements would be solar powered to the maximum extent feasible.
- The construction contract shall utilize alternative fuels such as renewable diesel for construction equipment when feasible.
- The contractor shall implement an idling limit of 5 minutes for delivery trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).
- The contractor shall schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours and implement a TMP to minimize the effects to traffic.
- The construction contractor shall reduce construction waste.
- The contractor shall encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment through ensuring that construction equipment is maintained and properly tuned and equipment has been correctly sized for the job.
- The contractor shall provide construction personnel with the knowledge to identify environmental issues and best practice methods to minimize impacts to the human and natural environment. Contractor shall supplement existing training with information regarding methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to construction.
- Construction crews would implement and maintain stormwater and erosion control Best Management Practices described in the Caltrans Construction Site (Best Management Practices) Manual (Caltrans 2017) and follow specifications in Section 13 of the Caltrans Standard Specifications and associated special provisions. At a minimum, protective measures would include:
 - Preventing pollutants generated by vehicle and equipment maintenance or cleaning from entering storm drains or aquatic resources.
 - Servicing or storing vehicles and equipment no less than 100 feet from storm drains or aquatic resources unless the features are protected by impermeable barriers.

- Capturing or controlling sediment with erosion control devices such as silt fence, fiber rolls, and appropriate erosion control netting, and covering temporary stockpiles.
- A Debris Containment and Collection Plan under SSP 14-11.13B(2) would be required.
- A lead compliance plan would be required during construction requiring paint disturbance.
- Minimization measures to ensure traffic impacts resulting from construction activities would be implemented with the TMP including appropriate staging, timing, and sequencing of activities; maintenance of traffic in both directions; and advanced notification to motorists and nearby communities to inform the public of potential delays.
- Prior to construction activities, Caltrans would contact utilities, DigAlert services, local agencies, and/or other applicable entities to mark underground facilities, as needed.
- The Biologist would conduct preconstruction nesting bird surveys no more than 72 hours prior to the start of construction activities between February 15 and August 31. The Biologist would conduct subsequent surveys if work does not occur within 72 hours. If an active nest is discovered, the Biologist would establish an appropriately sized Environmentally Sensitive Area buffer based on species, nest location, sensitivity to disturbance, and/or the intensity or type of construction activities. Work would not occur in the Environmentally Sensitive Area until the nest is inactive and fledglings are independent of adults.
- Emergency service providers and first responders would be notified of construction sequencing and the potential for temporary lane closures and/or changes to traffic circulation, as identified in the TMP.

1.6 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

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

1.7 Permits and Approvals Needed

The following permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications are required for project construction:

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act – Section 404 Nationwide Permit	Anticipated by June 2025
San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board	Clean Water Act – Section 401 Water Quality Certification	Anticipated by June 2025
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Fish and Game Code – 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement	Anticipated by June 2025

Chapter 2 **CEQA Evaluation**

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

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

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

On October 6, 2023, a Categorical Exemption for the project was issued based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project as well as the technical reports. The project was deemed to be exempt due to the proposed work located on existing facilities and having no impact to the natural environment. It was anticipated that temporary impacts would occur but would be limited to construction and returned to their previous condition when the project is completed.

On October 25, 2023, the Carlsbad office of U.S Fish and Wildlife Service determined that mitigation is necessary for temporary impacts. In addition, the project scope has expanded work areas that increase temporary impacts.

Based on the aforementioned information, Caltrans decided to focus the discussion on Biological Resources. Other resources on the checklist are considered “no impact” determinations based on the Categorical Exemption previously issued as well as the appropriate technical reports, and no further discussion is included in this document.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the Visual Impact Assessment Memorandum dated November 15, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	No Impact
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	No Impact
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?	No Impact
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	No Impact

2.1.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

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

No impact determination for Agriculture and Forestry Resources have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance and minor alterations that are isolated to Caltrans right-of-way.

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

2.1.3 Air Quality

No Impact determinations of Air Quality have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance and minor alterations that are on existing facilities.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
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?	No Impact
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	No Impact
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	No Impact

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the Natural Environmental Study dated October 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries?	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
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?	No Impact
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	No Impact
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	No Impact

Regulatory Framework

Sensitive natural resources are protected by local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and acts. Regulatory requirements that apply to the proposed project and are specific to biological resources are listed below.

Federal Endangered Species Act

The Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) provides legal framework for protection of threatened and endangered species that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) place on the federal list. An agency reviewing a proposed project with federal funding, authorization, and/or permits must determine whether any federally listed species may be present in the project's affected environment and if there is potential for impacts to act upon that species. Habitat loss for a listed species is also considered under FESA and would require mitigation.

California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) protects threatened and endangered species at state-level. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife place species on a list of species of special concern. An agency reviewing a proposed project within the state must determine whether any state listed species may be present in the project's affected environment and if there is potential for impacts on that species.

Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act (CWA) regulates the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters. The discharge of any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters is illegal unless a permit is provided by a responsible agency.

Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) regulates activities that would divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake. Projects are reviewed for any activity that has potential to alter or degrade and state-regulated waterways. Agreements are issued for any proposed actions in those regulated waterways.

Executive Order 13112 – Invasive Species

Executive Order 13112 requires agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. The order defines invasive species as "any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.". The California Invasive Species Council provides a list of state-specific invasive species for use on the proposed project.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) is a treaty with Canada, Mexico and Japan that makes it unlawful at any time, by any means or in any manner, to pursue, hunt, take, capture, or kill migratory birds. The law applies to the removal of nests that are occupied by migratory birds during the breeding season. Sections of California Fish and Game Code also prohibit the destruction of any nest, egg, or nestling.

Affected Environment

A Biological Study Area (BSA) was developed to include permanent and temporary areas that may be affected by the project. The BSA includes the length of the project plus a 500-foot buffer and proposed staging and/or storage areas. Other actions considered to develop the BSA project activities such as ground disturbance, equipment access, air quality impacts, lighting effects, and noise disturbances during culvert maintenance.

Within the BSA, there are a total of 2,307 acres. Approximately 1,629 acres of the total BSA acreage are plant communities of special concern. Ten communities of special concern occur within the project BSA: alkali/freshwater seep, southern riparian scrub, southern coast live oak riparian forest, riparian woodland, southern riparian forest, valley and foothill

grassland, nonnative grassland, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and oak woodland.

The plant communities of special concern are discussed in detail below and separated by habitat classification of wetland or upland. A breakdown of the existing areas of special concern communities within the BSA is available on Table 2-1.

Wetland Habitat

Wetland habitat is marked as areas where water covers the soil. The water can be present at or near the surface of the soil for all or portions of the year. The following habitat types are classified as wetland habitats.

Alkali/Freshwater Seep

Alkali seep consists of low-growing perennial herbs, including salt grass, alkali mallow, salt heliotrope, San Diego marsh-elder, and spiny rush, usually forming complete cover. Freshwater seep is similar, but the vegetation can grow taller.

Southern Riparian Scrub

Southern riparian scrub is a zone dominated by small trees, such as willows and shrubs, including mulefat.

Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest

Southern coast live oak riparian forests are dense and dominated by evergreen trees with a closed, or nearly closed, canopy. This vegetation type is richer in herbs, such as mugwort and poorer in understory shrubs than other riparian communities.

Southern Riparian Woodland

Riparian woodland community has moderate-density riparian woodlands that are dominated by small trees or shrubs with scattered taller riparian trees.

Streambed

Streambeds are terrestrial wetlands that have minimal vegetative cover on the bed and bank.

Upland Habitat

Upland habitat are land areas that are located above the elevation where flooding generally occurs. These are found beyond river and stream areas. The following habitat types are classified as upland habitats.

Southern Riparian Forest

Southern riparian forests are dense and dominated by western sycamore and cottonwood with other wetland plants.

Valley and Foothill Grassland

Valley and foothill grassland is a mid-height (up to 2-foot high) grassland dominated by perennial needlegrass. Native and introduced annuals occur between the perennials, often actually exceeding the bunchgrasses in cover. The percentage cover of native species at any one time may be quite low but is considered native grassland if 20 percent aerial cover of native species is present.

Nonnative Grassland

Nonnative grassland usually has a dense to sparse cover of annual grasses. Oat, brome, stork's bill, and mustard are common indicators.

Coastal Sage Scrub

Coastal sage scrub consists of low, soft-woody subshrubs (to approximately 1 meter high) that are most active in winter and early spring. The vegetation community is dominated by California sagebrush, California buckwheat, laurel sumac, white sage, and black sage.

Chaparral

Chaparral habitat consists of broad-leaved shrubs (approximately 1.5 meters to 4 meters high) usually on dry, rocky, and often steep slopes. Dominated by chamise, manzanita, ceanothus, toyon, scrub oak, sugar bush, and Mojave yucca. Southern mixed chaparral usually has patches of bare soil, while northern mixed chaparral has dense vegetation.

Oak Woodland

Coast live oak woodland is woodland dominated by coast live oak with a canopy cover ranging from less than 50 percent to 50 to 75 percent with a usually poorly developed shrub layer with toyon, laurel sumac, and blue elderberry. Engelmann oak woodland consists of an evergreen woodland dominated with Engelmann oak and is either open with an understory of typical grassland species, like needlegrass or dense with coast live oak being a significant constituent.

Table 2-1: Plant Communities in Biological Study Area

Plant community	Acreage
Alkali/freshwater seep	33
Southern riparian scrub	20
Southern coast live oak riparian forest	143
Southern riparian woodland	27
Southern riparian forest	10
Valley and foothill grassland	35
Nonnative grasslands	56
Coastal sage scrub	352
Chaparral	786
Oak woodland	167

Special Status Plant Species

Within the BSA there are 28 special status plant species. Special status is based on federal, state, or local laws, limited distribution, and/or the presence of habitat required by the special status plant occurs on site. Most sensitive plants identified as potentially located in the BSA did not have suitable habitat or were not found within the project footprint. One (1) plant species was found to have critical habitat within the project BSA: San Diego Ambrosia.

San Diego Ambrosia

The federally endangered San Diego ambrosia was identified in the BSA with critical habitat located within the project's footprint. The San Diego ambrosia is a perennial herb that is distributed from the western portions of Riverside and San Diego Counties with scattered populations south along the west coast of Baja California. San Diego ambrosia was listed as endangered on July 2, 2002.

Special Status Animal Species

Within the BSA there are also 24 special status animal species. Special status is based on federal, state, or local laws, limited distribution, and/or the presence of habitat required by the special status animals occurs on site. Most sensitive animals identified as potentially located in the BSA did not have suitable habitat or were not found within the project footprint. The project

footprint contains designated critical habitat for the following species: Quino checkerspot butterfly, Hermes copper butterfly, least Bell's vireo, coastal California gnatcatcher, and arroyo toad. Special status animal species are discussed in detail below.

Quino Checkerspot Butterfly

The federally endangered Quino checkerspot butterfly is a butterfly that used to be widespread and abundant in the region but now has its populations scattered in isolated locations in southern San Diego County, western Riverside County and Baja California.

Hermes Copper Butterfly

The federally threatened Hermes copper butterfly is a small, brightly colored butterfly that ranged from the vicinity of northern, eastern, and western San Diego County south to Baja California.

Least Bell's Vireo

The federally and state endangered least Bell's vireo is a small, gray, migratory songbird that ranged throughout California but are now limited to smaller areas including small populations in southern California and northwestern Baja California.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher

The federally and state endangered coastal California gnatcatcher is a small, long-tailed bird that ranges from coastal southern California and northwestern Baja California.

Arroyo Toad

The federally and state endangered arroyo toad is a small, light green-gray or tan toad with warty skin and dark spots with a light-colored stripe crossing the head and eyelids. Most existing populations occur within or adjacent to the Cleveland National Forest.

Western Spadefoot

The western spadefoot was proposed as a species of concern after the NES was completed. The federally proposed threatened western spadefoot is small (1.5 to 2.5 inches), with dusky green or gray on their backs and often have four irregular light-colored stripes, with the central pair of stripes sometimes distinguished by a dark, hourglass-shaped area. Western spadefoots typically require aquatic breeding pools dependent on seasonal rains that occur in the winter and spring with a depth of 1 to 19 inches, underground burrows in upland areas surrounding their aquatic (breeding) habitat, and a variety of small invertebrate prey.

Environmental Consequences

Although there are 10 plant communities of special concern within the BSA, the project would not cause permanent impacts to any community. The project would have temporary impacts to alkali seep, southern coast live oak riparian forest, nonnative grasslands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodland. Impacts to streambed areas would also occur. No permanent or temporary impacts would occur to valley and foothill grassland, southern riparian forest and riparian woodland. A breakdown of temporary impacts to each habitat type is available on Table 2-2.

Table 2-2: Temporary Impacts on Habitats

Habitat Type	Temporary Impacts (Acreage)
Alkali seep	0.03
Southern coast live oak riparian forest	0.04
Streambed	0.21
Wetland Total	0.28
Coastal sage scrub	0.06
Chaparral	0.28
Oak woodland	0.12
Nonnative grasslands	0.02
Upland Total	0.48
Grand Total	0.76

Special Status Plant Species

San Diego Ambrosia

Based on surveys for San Diego ambrosia, approximately 22 acres of designated critical habitat occur within the BSA. However, no impacts are anticipated to occur to the plant species. The project has approximately 0.07 acre of designated critical habitat, but the area is on disturbed habitat that serves as a dirt path for pedestrians accessing Sweetwater Bridge and Steele Canyon High School.

Special Status Animal Species

Quino Checkerspot Butterfly

Based on surveys for Quino checkerspot butterfly, approximately 180 acres of designated critical habitat occur within the BSA. No permanent impacts are anticipated to occur to the butterfly. Temporary impacts are anticipated to occur to preferred habitat, coastal sage scrub and chaparral, from access to 15 culverts. Avoidance and minimization measures would be followed to ensure the butterfly is not impacted by the proposed project.

Hermes Copper Butterfly

Based on surveys for Hermes copper butterfly, approximately 196 acres of designated critical habitat occur within the BSA. However, no impacts are anticipated to occur to the butterfly nor its designated critical habitat. The project area has designated critical habitat on disturbed habitat that serves as a dirt path for pedestrians that lacks features to support the species. Avoidance and minimization measures would be followed to ensure the butterfly is not impacted by the proposed project.

Least Bell's Vireo

Based on surveys for least Bell's vireo, approximately 27 acres of designated critical habitat occur within the BSA adjacent to the Sweetwater River. However, no impacts are anticipated to occur to the bird nor its designated critical habitat. The project area has designated critical habitat in areas that serve as a dirt path for pedestrians that is highly disturbed, and lacks features to support the species. Avoidance and minimization measures would be followed to ensure the least Bell's vireo is not impacted by the proposed project.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher

Based on surveys for coastal California gnatcatcher, approximately 78 acres of designated critical habitat occur within the BSA. No permanent or temporary impacts are anticipated to occur to the gnatcatcher nor its designated critical habitat. Avoidance and minimization measures would be followed to ensure the gnatcatcher is not impacted by the proposed project.

Arroyo Toad

Based on surveys of arroyo toad, designated critical habitat occurs in the BSA on approximately 1 acre of Cottonwood Creek, 103 acres of Potrero Creek and 90 acres of Campo Creek. Permanent impacts are not anticipated. Temporary impacts to 0.21 acre of suitable habitat for arroyo toad would occur from proposed work at 26 culverts. Permanent conservation of 0.21 acre of habitat would be established by the project to preserve habitat for arroyo toad.

Western Spadefoot

Western spadefoot have been detected in a temporary pond in chaparral habitat near Campo Creek. Temporary impacts to 0.05 acre of suitable habitat for western spadefoot would occur at four (4) culvert locations.

Jurisdictional Waters

The project would not permanently impact jurisdictional waters. Temporary impacts to jurisdictional waters of the United States and jurisdictional waters of the State would require permits. The project proposes to replace 24 culverts that would require permits prior to construction.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The project would implement the following conservation measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate the temporary impacts to biological resources:

- Permanent conservation of 0.21 acres of habitat at mitigation bank must be established with review and approval from Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office (CFWO). Documentation of habitat preservation must be provided to CFWO prior to commencement of vegetation removal and project construction.
- Restore 0.76 acres of temporary impacts with native species of similar composition to adjacent habitats. Restoration plan must be approved by CFWO at least 30 days prior to initiating project impacts. Additional details on planting palettes, planting installation, plant survival rates, implementation schedules, maintenance and monitoring
- Project biologist, approved by CFWO, will be on site: (a) during all vegetation clearing, and (b) weekly during project construction within 500 feet of arroyo toad habitat to monitor compliance with all conservation measures. Caltrans will submit the biologist's name, contact information, and work schedule on the project to the CFWO at least 15 working days prior to initiating project impacts. The Project Biologist will be available during pre-construction and construction phases to address protection of sensitive biological resources, monitor ongoing work, and maintain communications with construction personnel to facilitate the appropriate and lawful management of issues relating to biological resources.
- The Project Biologist will submit a final report to the CFWO within 120 days of project completion including photographs of impact areas and adjacent habitat, documentation that authorized impacts were not exceeded, and documentation that general compliance with all conservation measures was achieved. The report will specify numbers and locations of listed species (if observed); observed listed species behavior (especially in relation to project activities); and remedial measures employed to avoid and minimize impacts to listed species

and critical habitat. Raw field notes should be available upon request by the CFWO.

- An employee education program will be developed and implemented by the Project Biologist. Each employee (including temporary, contractors, and subcontractors) will receive a training/awareness program prior to working on the proposed project. They will be advised of the potential impact to the listed species and the potential penalties for taking such species. At a minimum, the program will include the following topics: occurrence of the listed and sensitive species in the area (including photographs), their general ecology, sensitivity of the species to human activities, legal protection afforded these species, penalties for violations of Federal and State laws, reporting requirements, and project features designed to reduce the impacts to these species and promote continued successful occupation of the project area.
- If nighttime construction is necessary, all project lighting (e.g., staging areas, equipment storage sites, roadway) will be selectively placed and directed toward the construction site and away from adjacent habitats. Construction lighting will be of the lowest illumination necessary for safety, and light glare shields will be used to reduce the extent of illumination into adjacent habitats.
- Permanent project lighting will be of the lowest illumination necessary for safety and will be directed toward the paved roadway and away from sensitive habitats. Light glare shields will be used to reduce the extent of illumination into sensitive habitats. Caltrans will review the permanent lighting plans for the project and submit to CFWO.
- Impacts from fugitive dust will be avoided and minimized through watering and other appropriate measures.
- All equipment maintenance, staging, and dispensing of fuel, oil, coolant, or any other such activities will be restricted to designated staging areas located such that runoff from the designated areas will not enter riparian habitat.
- A construction Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and soil erosion and sedimentation plan will be developed to identify best management practices that will be implemented during construction to minimize erosion, prevent sediment and debris from entering drainages, and maintain water quality. Sediment will not be stockpiled in areas where material could be washed into drainages by rainfall. Erosion and sediment control devices used for the proposed project, including fiber rolls and bonded fiber matrix, will be made from biodegradable materials such as jute, with no plastic mesh, to avoid creating a wildlife entanglement hazard.

- The project site will be kept as clear of debris as possible. All food-related trash items will be enclosed in sealed containers and regularly removed from the site. All spoils, invasive plant cuttings, and material disposal will be disposed of properly.
- During project construction all invasive species included on the National Invasive Species Management Plan, the State of California Noxious Weed List, and the California Invasive Plant Council's Invasive Plant Inventory list (Cal-IPC 2006) found growing within the project impact area will be identified and removed at least once a month. Special care will be taken during transport, use, and disposal of soils containing invasive weed seeds, and all weedy vegetation removed during construction will be properly disposed of to prevent spread into areas outside of the construction area. All heavy equipment will be washed and cleaned of debris prior to entering a new area to minimize the spread of invasive weeds.
- No invasive species listed in the National Invasive Species Management Plan, State of California Noxious Weed List, or Cal-IPC Invasive Plant Inventory list (Cal-IPC 2006) will be used in the landscaping plans for the project. Landscaping plans for the project will be submitted to the CFWO for review and approval at least 15 days prior to commencing vegetation clearing and construction work.
- Project personnel will be prohibited from bringing domestic pets to construction sites to ensure that domestic pets do not disturb or depredate wildlife in adjacent native habitats.
- Fire suppression equipment, including extinguishers and shovels, will be available on site during construction.
- If fill must be borrowed from, or disposed of offsite, the construction contractor will identify any necessary borrow and disposal sites and provide this information to Caltrans for review. Caltrans will review borrow and disposal site information and submit the information to the CFWO. If borrow or disposal activities directly related to this project may affect a listed species or critical habitat, Caltrans will reinitiate section 7 consultation.
- Prior to the work, a habitat assessment of the 26 culvert locations in Cottonwood Creek, Potrero Creek, and Campo Creek will be conducted to determine whether suitable habitat for the arroyo toad or western spadefoot is present within or adjacent to the work areas.
- To the extent feasible, work within or adjacent to occupied arroyo toad and western spadefoot breeding habitat will occur between August 16 and February 28, which is outside of the arroyo toad breeding season

at 26 culvert locations and between May 1 through October 31, which is outside of the western spadefoot breeding season at 4 culvert locations, to avoid impacts to breeding arroyo toads and western spadefoot, egg masses, tadpoles, and juveniles. Vegetation clearing may commence earlier in the fall if the Project Biologist demonstrates to the satisfaction of the CFWO that all breeding within adjacent habitat is complete.

- Any culvert sliplining or other culvert work that may result in increased turbidity or material leakage downstream of the culvert will occur with no water flow present in the culverts and adjacent channels. If a noticeable spill occurs, the spill will immediately be contained, contaminated soil will be placed in barrels and removed from the site, and the spill will be documented and reported to the CFWO.
- An arroyo toad and western spadefoot translocation monitoring program will be developed and implemented for project work in the vicinity of Cottonwood, Portrero, and Campo Creeks. The program will be provided to the CFWO for review and approval. The program will include the following requirements:
 - Prior to clearing, grubbing, and construction activities, the Project Biologist will monitor arroyo toad and western spadefoot breeding activity in those project areas containing, or adjacent to, breeding habitat. The biologist will determine when egg clutches or larvae are no longer present in the waterway. When sign of breeding is no longer evident, an exclusionary fence will be installed and clearance surveys will be initiated.
 - Prior to clearing, grubbing, and construction activities, exclusionary fencing will be installed around the perimeter of all work areas within potential arroyo toad and western spadefoot habitat, except for areas where topography is such that the Project Biologist, using their best judgement, believes that occupancy by arroyo toads and western spadefoot is unlikely, and installation of fencing is not practical. In areas without water flows, the exclusion fence will consist of woven nylon fabric or similar material at least 2 feet high, staked firmly to the ground. In areas where soils are suitable for aestivation, the lower 1 foot of material will stretch outward along the ground and be secured with a continuous line of sandbags to prevent burrowing beneath the fence. Doubling this line (i.e., stacking sand or gravel bags two-deep) may reduce maintenance and should be considered in order to improve the integrity of the fencing. In areas where soils are

not suitable for aestivation, (i.e., hardpack soils), fencing may be buried to reduce maintenance concerns and improve the integrity of the fencing over time. Mechanized installation of buried portions of the fencing may be considered as it may reduce foot-traffic and disturbance of adjacent habitat. In areas where there is existing or potential inundation, wire mesh held in place with t-posts and secured with sand or gravel bags should be utilized to allow for the passage of water flows without compromising the integrity of the fencing. A small amount of vegetation may be removed to facilitate installation of the fencing, so long as it is conducted without disturbing the soil in areas where soils are suitable for aestivation and does not impact habitats to be avoided. In areas with challenging topography where arroyo toad and western spadefoot occupancy is deemed unlikely by the Project Biologist, the limits of work will be clearly delineated using other means (e.g., stakes with bright orange flagging). Fence ends will tie into areas with challenging topography in a manner designed to keep arroyo toads and western spadefoot out of the project footprint.

Decisions on the appropriate fencing installation method for a given reach will be made by the Project Biologist. Fencing will be clearly visible to personnel on foot and operating heavy equipment. Caltrans will submit to the CFWO for approval, at least 5 days prior to initiating project impacts (except for impacts resulting from clearing to install exclusion fencing), the final plans for initial clearing and grubbing of habitat and project construction. These final plans will include photographs that show the fenced limits of impact, the flagged project limits in areas with challenging topography where occupancy was deemed unlikely, and all areas to be impacted or avoided. Exclusionary fencing will be maintained in good repair until the completion of project construction and removed upon project completion.

- Prior to the initiation of construction activities, but after exclusionary fencing has been installed, a minimum of 6 consecutive night surveys for arroyo toads and western spadefoot will be conducted within the fenced project area by the Project Biologist. Surveys will continue until there have been 2 consecutive nights without arroyo toads and western spadefoot inside the fence. Arroyo toads and western spadefoot will be excluded from the fenced project footprint before large-scale vegetation removal efforts commence; however, some vegetation removal may occur to improve visibility for salvage of arroyo toads and western spadefoot, so

long as it is conducted without disturbing the soil and within the fenced project footprint. Surveys will be conducted during the appropriate climatic conditions and during the appropriate time of night to maximize the likelihood of encountering arroyo toads or western spadefoot. If climatic conditions are not appropriate for arroyo toad or western spadefoot movement during the surveys, the biologist may attempt to illicit a response from the arroyo toads or western spadefoot, during nights (i.e., at least 1 hour after sunset) with temperatures above 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees Fahrenheit), by spraying the project area with water to simulate a rain event. If it is not feasible to spray the entire project area with water, then spraying would occur in the areas of greatest concern under the direction of the Project Biologist.

- Capture methods will follow commonly accepted techniques for amphibian field sampling, including capture by hand and pitfall trapping. All pitfall traps will be covered or removed when clearance surveys are not occurring. Arroyo toads and western spadefoot will be handled in an expedient manner with minimal harm. Captured arroyo toads and western spadefoot will not be handled for more than 15 minutes. Any arroyo toad or western spadefoot exhibiting signs of physiological distress will be immediately released in the most proximal and safe suitable habitat. Any arroyo toads captured will be checked for a Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag with a PIT-tag reader by the Project Biologist.
- If the exclusion fencing is found to be damaged during weekly monitoring conducted by the Project Biologist during the active season for the arroyo toad (March 1 to August 15) or western spadefoot (November 1 to April 30), allowing arroyo toads or western spadefoot access to the impact area, exclusion surveys will be repeated by the Project Biologist for a minimum of 3 consecutive nights prior to any additional construction activities occurring in the area.
- The approved Project Biologist will monitor all groundbreaking activities that occur within areas demarcated with exclusion fencing to salvage and relocate arroyo toads and western spadefoot and to quantify take of arroyo toads and western spadefoot.
- To avoid transferring disease or pathogens between aquatic habitats during surveys and handling of arroyo toads, the

Project Biologist will follow the Declining Amphibian Population Task Force's Fieldwork Code of Practice (DAPTF 1998), or newer version when available.

- American bullfrogs (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) and other exotic animal species that prey upon or compete with arroyo toads for resources will be excluded, destroyed, or otherwise permanently removed from the habitat by the Project Biologist if encountered.
- The Project Biologist will maintain a complete record of all arroyo toads and western spadefoot encountered and relocated in association with the project. The date and time of observation, sex, physical dimensions, PIT-tag code, coordinates/specific location of capture and release, and photographs (when possible) will be recorded and provided to CFWO, within 30 days of the completion of translocation.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Screened Undertaking dated October 6, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.6 Energy

No Impact determinations have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance, and minor alterations of existing facilities.

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

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

No Impact determinations for Geology and Soils have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance and minor alterations of existing facilities.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	No Impact
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	No Impact
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	No Impact
iv) Landslides?	No Impact
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	No Impact
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	No Impact
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	No Impact
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	No Impact

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

No Impact determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance and minor alterations of existing facilities.

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

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Hazardous Waste Memorandum dated October 6, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	No Impact
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	No Impact

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	No Impact
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	No Impact
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 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
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	No Impact
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	No Impact

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

No Impact determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance and minor alterations of existing facilities.

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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	No Impact
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: (i) result in substantial erosion or siltation onsite or offsite;	No Impact
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding onsite or offsite;	No Impact
(iii) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	No Impact
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	No Impact
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	No Impact
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	No Impact

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

No Impact determinations for Land Use and Planning have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance and minor alterations of existing facilities.

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

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

No Impact determinations for Mineral Resources have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance and minor alterations of existing facilities.

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

2.1.13 Noise

No Impact determinations for Noise have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance and minor alterations of existing facilities.

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	No Impact
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	No Impact

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
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

2.1.14 Population and Housing

No Impact determination for Population and Housing have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance, and minor alterations of existing facilities.

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

2.1.15 Public Services

No Impact determinations for Public Services have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance, and minor alterations to existing facilities.

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

2.1.16 Recreation

No Impact determinations for Recreation have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance, and minor alterations of existing facilities.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Recreation
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	No Impact
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	No Impact

2.1.17 Transportation

No Impact determinations for Transportation have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance, and minor alterations to existing facilities.

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

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Screened Undertaking dated October 6, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	No Impact

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	No Impact

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

No Impact determinations for Utilities and Service Systems have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance, and minor alterations to existing facilities.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	No Impact
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	No Impact
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	No Impact
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	No Impact

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

2.1.20 Wildfire

No Impact determinations for Wildfire have been made due to the project consisting of repair, maintenance, and minor alterations of existing facilities.

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	No Impact
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	No Impact
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	No Impact
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	No Impact

2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

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

Affected Environment

The proposed project aims to rehabilitate and enhance multiple existing transportation assets along State Routes 94 and 188. The project would repair, maintain, and consist of minor alterations to an existing highway that would have temporary impacts to biological resources. Temporary impacts to habitat and special status animals would be mitigated with compensatory measures that would make the impact less than significant.

Further, actions along the project route are meant to maintain the existing transportation assets through the proposed project and routine maintenance that would not cause cumulative impacts. The project’s repair and maintenance of the existing highway system and assets would not cause adverse effects on human beings, directly or indirectly.

Environmental Consequences

As described in this Initial Study, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the environment or cause other impacts. The level of construction required by the proposed project would result in temporary impacts, which would not substantially reduce habitat or restrict the range of special-status plant or animal species. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures would be implemented during construction to limit the potential for significant impacts. Therefore, these impacts would be less than significant with mitigation and permits.

Chapter 3 Coordination

Caltrans requested technical assistance from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services on March 28, 2022 with subsequent updates on August 15, 2023 and October 25, 2023. The provided information is available in the Natural Environmental Study available in Volume 2.

Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
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September 2023

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Tavares'.

TONY TAVARES
Director

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

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately

The following studies and/or technical analyses have been prepared and are incorporated by reference into this Initial Study. These documents are available upon request by emailing matthew.voss@dot.ca.gov.

- Natural Environment Study
- Hazardous Waste Memorandum
- Screened Undertaking
- Visual Impact Assessment Memorandum