State Route 78
Julian Asset Management Project

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

11-SD-78 Post Miles 37.2/60.0

Project Number: 11-43089/1119000197

Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Prepared by the

State of California Department of Transportation

October 2024

This Page Intentionally Left Blank

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 State Route 78 Julian Asset Management Project (project) in San Diego County in California. Caltrans is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act, for which a separate Categorical Exclusion has been prepared, and is also the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act. The document explains why the project is being proposed and describes 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 are available for review at the following locations:
  - Caltrans District 11 Office, 4050 Taylor Street, San Diego, CA 92110
  - Julian Branch Library, 1850 CA-78, Julian, CA 92036
  - Ramona Branch Library, 1275 Main Street, Ramona, CA 92065
  - On the project website at: https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-11/current-projects/sr78-projects/sr78assetmgmt-julian
- 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, Environmental Division MS 242, California Department of Transportation, District 11 Office at 4050 Taylor Street, San Diego, CA 92110. Submit comments via email to: matthew.voss@dot.ca.gov
- Submit comments by the deadline: November 18, 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.

Accessibility Assistance
Caltrans makes every attempt to ensure that our documents are accessible. Due to variances between assistive technologies, there may be portions of this document that are not accessible. Where documents cannot be made accessible, we are committed to providing alternative access to the content. Should you need additional assistance, please contact us at the phone number in the box below.

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: Matthew Voss, Environmental Division MS 242, Caltrans District 11 Office at 4050 Taylor Street, San Diego, CA 92110; phone 1-858-289-1276 (Voice), or use the California Relay Service 1-800-735-2929 (Teletype to Voice), 1-800-735-2922 (Voice to Teletype), 1-800-855-3000 (Spanish Teletype to Voice and Voice to Teletype), 1-800-854-7784 (Spanish and English Speech-to-Speech), or 711.

This Page Intentionally Left Blank

11-SD-78 Post Miles 37.2/60.0
Project Number 11-43089/1119000197

The proposed project would construct improvements to various transportation assets along State Route 78 (from post miles 37.2 through 60.0) in eastern San Diego County, including pavement rehabilitation, culvert rehabilitation, Complete Streets and mobility elements, and safety/roadside elements.

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'Aoust Roberts
Acting Deputy District Director, Environmental
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

10/17/2024
Date

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

Matthew Voss, Environmental Division MS 242, Caltrans District 11 Office at
4050 Taylor Street, San Diego, CA 92110; 1-858-289-1276; matthew.voss@dot.ca.gov

This Page Intentionally Left Blank

DRAFT
Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: [pending]

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 11-SD-78 Post Miles 37.2/60.0

EA/Project Number: EA-43089/1119000197

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to rehabilitate and enhance various assets on State Route 78 in eastern San Diego County, between post miles 37.2 and 60.0. Proposed improvements include pavement rehabilitation; culvert rehabilitation; Complete Streets and mobility elements, such as Americans with Disabilities Act curb ramps; and safety/roadside element improvements, including sign panels, guardrails, rumble strips, and dikes.

DRAFT Determination

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

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:

- Compensatory mitigation is anticipated for approximately 0.006 acres of permanent impact to coastal sage scrub. Caltrans has several mitigation banks with available credits for all habitats and impacts associated with the project. Credits are available at Rancho San Diego, Rutherford Ranch, and Go Cart mitigation banks.

- Compensatory mitigation is anticipated for approximately 0.001 impacts to jurisdictional wetlands resulting from culvert replacement work. Caltrans has several mitigation banks with available credits for all habitats and impacts associated with the project. Credits are available at Rancho San Diego, Rutherford Ranch, and Go Cart mitigation banks. Coordination with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Army Corps of Engineers, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife during acquisition of permits and Section 7 consultation may determine additional protective measures to be implemented by the project.

- Where permanent impacts to large oak trees and jurisdictional areas (State Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.) cannot be avoided, they will be mitigated using existing mitigation bank credits. Caltrans has several mitigation banks with available credits for all impacts associated with the project. Credits are available at Rancho San Diego, Rutherford Ranch and Go Cart mitigation banks. Temporary impact areas where grading, clearing and/or grubbing results in the removal of native vegetation will require hydroseeding of the impact area with an appropriate seed mix for the existing plant community.

- Temporary impacts to 0.40 acre would be restored with native wetland or upland species of similar composition to the adjacent habitat.

_____

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

_____

Date

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Proposed Project 1
1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Purpose and Need 1
1.2.1 Purpose 1
1.2.2 Need 2
1.3 Project Description 2
1.4 Project Alternatives 2
1.4.1 Build Alternative 5
1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative 8
1.5 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Build Alternatives 9
1.6 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion 13
1.7 Permits and Approvals Needed 13
Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation 14
2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist 14
2.1.1 Aesthetics 14
2.1.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources 18
2.1.3 Air Quality 19
2.1.4 Biological Resources 25
2.1.5 Cultural Resources 47
2.1.6 Energy 52
2.1.7 Geology and Soils 53
2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions 54
2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials 57
2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality 62
2.1.11 Land Use and Planning 63
2.1.12 Mineral Resources 64
2.1.13 Noise 64
2.1.14 Population and Housing 65
2.1.15 Public Services 66
2.1.16 Recreation 67
2.1.17 Transportation 68
2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources 69
2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems 71
2.1.20 Wildfire 72
2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance 73
Chapter 3 Coordination 77
Chapter 4 References 78
Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement 82

List of Figures

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map 3
Figure 1-2 Project Location Map 4

List of Tables

Table 1-1 Culvert Replacements 6
Table 2-1 San Diego Air Basin Attainment Status 21
Table 2-2 Daily Construction Emissions 22
Table 2-3 Land Cover and Plant Communities in the Biological Study Area 27
Table 2-4 Special-Status Plants and Animal Species with the Potential to Occur in the Biological Study Area 32
Table 2-5 Total Upland Vegetation Impacts 40
Table 2-6 Potential Impacts to State Wetland Habitats and Water of the U.S. 41
Table 2-7 Built Historical Resources in the Study Area 49
Table 2-8 Total Construction-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions 56

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AB	Assembly Bill
AC	asphaltic concrete
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AMM	avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measure
AQIA	Air Quality Impact Analysis
ARB	California Air Resources Board
ASR	Archaeologist Survey Report
BC	black carbon
BMP	best management practice
BSA	Biological Study Area
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CH_4	methane
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
ESA	environmentally sensitive area
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FESA	federal Endangered Species Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
HFC	hydrofluorocarbon
HPSR	Historic Property Survey Report
HRER	Historical Resources Evaluation Report
mgd	million gallons per day
$MMTCO_2e$	million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS4	municipal separate storm sewer system

NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	United States National Marine Fisheries Service
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NO_X	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
PA	Programmatic Agreement
PM_{10}	particulate matter 10 micrometers or smaller
$PM_{2.5}$	particulate matter 2.5 micrometers and smaller
Porter-Cologne Act	Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act
PRC	Public Resource Code
project	State Route 78 Julian Asset Management Project
RAQS	Regional Air Quality Strategy
ROG	reactive organic gases
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SANDAG	San Diego Association of Governments
SDAB	San Diego Air Basin
SDAPCD	San Diego Air Pollution Control District
Section 106 PA	January 2014 First Amended PA among the FHWA, the ACHP, the California SHPO, and the Caltrans regarding compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA
SHOPP	State Highway Operation and Protection Program
SHPO	California State Historic Preservation Officer
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
TCM	Transportation Control Measure
TMP	Traffic Management Plan
TOG	total organic gases
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VOC	volatile organic compound

Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The proposed State Route 78 Julian Asset Management Project (project) intends to rehabilitate and enhance multiple transportation assets on State Route 78 in unincorporated areas of eastern San Diego County, including the communities of Ramona, Ballena, Witch Creek, Santa Ysabel, Wynola, Whispering Pines, and Julian. The project is generally bounded on the western end by the intersection of State Route 78 and Magnolia Avenue, and on the eastern end by the intersection of State Route 78 and Wynola Road. The project area extends along State Route 78 for approximately 22.5 miles. In the project area, State Route 78 is a two-lane highway and briefly becomes a local road (Main Street) with a reduced speed limit through downtown Julian. The primary land uses in the area include rural residential, agricultural, industrial, retail, service commercial, and open space uses.

The proposed project is a State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) project with pavement rehabilitation as the main asset. The proposed project would be funded through the SHOPP. The project also proposes to rehabilitate other assets related to drainage, safety, signs, roadside safety, mobility, and Complete Streets.

The California Department of Transportation (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 and the NEPA Categorical Exclusion have been prepared in accordance with Caltrans' environmental procedures, as well as state and federal environmental regulations.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the proposed project is to:

- Restore the facility to a state of good repair;
- Improve ride quality, minimize maintenance, and extend the service life of the existing roadway; and
- Complete upgrades to existing facilities to meet current standards and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to enhance mobility for pedestrians.

1.2.2 Need

The project is needed to improve deteriorated pavement. An assessment of the pavement in 2018 identified 45.6 lane miles prone to cracking and distress.

Drainage features within the project boundaries include culverts that are in poor condition. Improvements to drainage systems would protect the traveling public by maintaining the water flow in the area and preventing deterioration of the roadway.

Curb ramps, sidewalks, and crosswalks need to be upgraded to meet current standards and to comply with the ADA to enhance mobility for pedestrians.

Safety elements, such as signage and guardrail upgrades, are included in the project. Existing signs would be upgraded to increase visibility. Existing guardrails do not meet current standards and would be upgraded to improve safety for errant vehicles.

1.3 Project Description

The proposed project intends to rehabilitate and enhance multiple transportation assets on State Route 78 between post miles 37.2 and 60.0 in San Diego County, including rehabilitation of pavement and other assets related to drainage, mobility, complete streets, and safety.

Project vicinity and location maps are shown in Figures 1-1 and 1-2, respectively, on the following pages.

1.4 Project Alternatives

This section describes the proposed project that was developed to achieve the project purpose and need while reducing environmental impacts. There are two alternatives: the Build Alternative and the No-Build Alternative.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

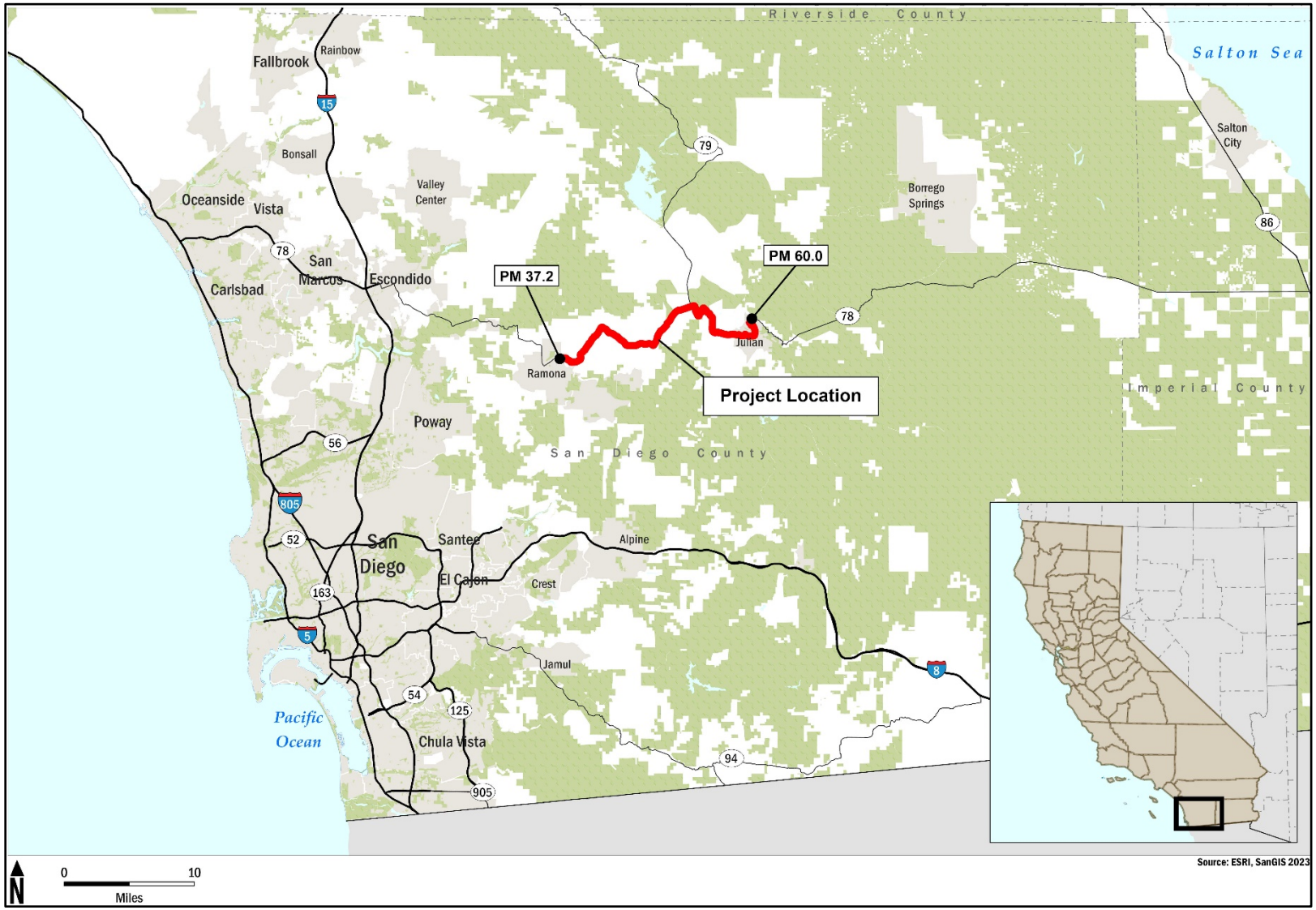
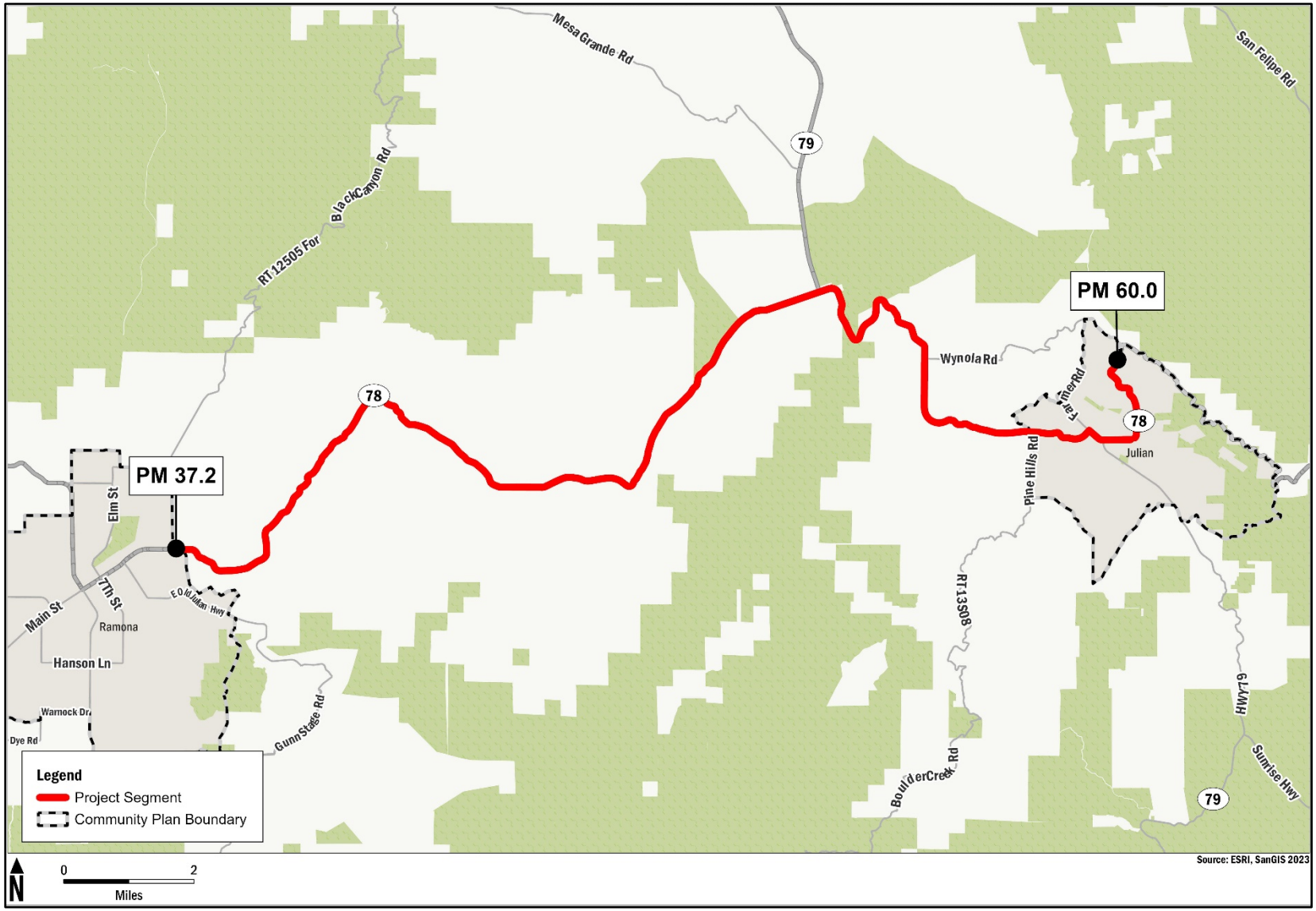


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



1.4.1 Build Alternative

The Build Alternative, also referred to as the proposed project, contains a number of standardized project measures that are used on most, if not all, Caltrans projects and were not developed in response to any specific environmental impact resulting from the proposed project. These measures are listed in Section 1.5.

The Build Alternative proposes to rehabilitate and enhance multiple assets on State Route 78, from post miles 37.2 through 60.0, in unincorporated areas of eastern San Diego County. The main asset for the proposed project is pavement rehabilitation, which would repair or replace distressed pavement on State Route 78 that is in fair, poor, or critical condition. Improvements to other assets are also included in the Build Alternative. The proposed improvements under the Build Alternative are discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

Pavement Rehabilitation (Anchor Asset)

The Build Alternative would rehabilitate pavement along 45.6 lane miles of State Route 78 (one lane in each direction for the 22.8-mile-long project area). The proposed pavement rehabilitation includes removal of distressed pavement; replacement with new asphalt; and replacement and enhancement of shoulders, dikes that are used to carry runoff, traffic stripes, and pavement markings. Pavement rehabilitation methods would include the following:

- Rubberized hot mix asphalt overlay involves the application of 0.2 feet of new asphalt over existing asphaltic concrete (AC) pavement. This technique would be used for most of the project length on travel lanes and shoulders (from post miles 37.2 through 57.7, and from post miles 58.1 through 60.0).

- Cold planing is a technique used to grind away existing AC pavement to a specific depth and replace it with base and top layers of new asphalt. This technique would be used in specific locations where curb and gutter are present (from post miles 57.7 through 58.1).

- Digout is a strategy used for pavement areas that have localized distress which would remove partial depth of the existing AC pavement and recompact a base material at specific locations.

- Dike replacement involves replacing existing AC dikes that carry runoff away from the roadway.

- Shoulder rehabilitation involves improving graded areas on the side of the roadway to prevent erosion and avoid uneven surfaces at the edge of pavement. Shoulder rehabilitation would be conducted up to 4 feet from the edge of pavement.

Culvert Replacements and Drainage Improvements

The Build Alternative would replace 20 culvert pipe segments within the project limits. Culvert replacement entails replacing existing pipes and requires trenching, ground disturbance, and vegetation removal. Additional end treatment repairs may be needed, including repairing flared end sections and/or headwalls, joint sealing/repair, stabilizing embankments, debris removal or sediment flushing, and removing vegetation. Culvert replacement locations are shown below in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 Culvert Replacements

Culvert Number	Post Mile Location	Length (linear feet)	Temporary Impact Area (square feet)	Permanent Impact Area (square feet)
1	37.55	49.5	3,640	500
2	39.84	47.9	3,705	300
3	41.01	42.57	3,170	0
4	41.13	47.59	3,020	0
5	41.55	41.39	2,600	0
6	46.32	47.43	3,330	0
7	47.71	40.46	2,170	0
8	48.00	41.59	3,045	150
9	48.82	62.94	4,390	0
10	51.62	57.63	4,035	0
11	51.76	61.41	5,020	0
12	51.85	55.41	3,730	0
13	54.40	42.67	2,405	0
14	54.61	47.04	3,080	0
15	55.20	54.53	3,730	0
16	57.76	78.70	4,900	0
17	58.08	64.89	4,030	0
18	58.44	54.32	2,570	0
19	58.66	44.39	3,420	0
20	59.48	51.63	3,720	0

Mobility Improvements

The Build Alternative would upgrade 15 curb ramps to meet ADA standards. The existing curb ramps, curbs, and gutters would be upgraded, and a

detectable warning surface (a distinctive surface pattern that alerts people with vision impairments to potential hazards) would be installed in each curb ramp. Curb ramps would be upgraded on State Route 78 at intersections with Washington Street, Coleman Circle, Fourth Street, B Street, C Street, Porter Lane, and State Route 79. Decorative crosswalks would be installed at select locations.

At the intersection of Main Street and Washington Street in downtown Julian, the Build Alternative would construct curb extensions to meet ADA standards. The curb extension would increase the visibility of pedestrians crossing the roadway with fewer pavement markings and signs, in addition to shortening the crossing length to improve traffic operations. The existing curb ramp at the northwestern corner of the intersection (where Julian Market & Deli is located) currently has building columns in the middle of the nonstandard curb ramp; the building columns would be retained, and no alterations would be made to the existing building.

Safety Improvements

The Build Alternative would replace existing nonstandard metal beam guardrail with Midwest Guardrail Systems at 18 locations. The proposed guardrail and end treatments would extend or add new elements to the roadside. In two locations (the bridge over Hatfield Creek at post miles 37.2 and 45.0), concrete anchor blocks and crash cushions would also be installed as part of guardrail replacements. The work would require grading and vegetation removal.

A total of 64 roadside sign panel replacements would be completed at 40 locations within the project limits. Existing signposts would be used for the replacements.

Additionally, centerline and shoulder rumble strips would be installed or upgraded between post miles 37.4-57.75 and 58.6-60.0.

Complete Streets Improvements

The Build Alternative would install decorative crosswalks on State Route 78 at eight locations to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Construction Activities and Schedule

Construction of the Build Alternative is expected to begin in Winter 2026 and last approximately 25 months, with an opening year of 2029. Typical construction processes would involve vegetation removal, grading, excavation, pavement removal/repaving, trenching for culvert installation, lane restriping, and end treatment repairs to project elements such as culverts. Anticipated construction equipment includes dump trucks, backhoes, concrete mixer trucks, street sweepers, air compressors, generators, an auger drill rig, pneumatic tools (e.g., jack hammer or impact wrenches), concrete saws,

vacuums, and hand tools. Contractors may use additional equipment depending on logistics and timing. Nighttime construction may occur in select areas. Construction would only occur in downtown Julian between May and August, as determined through community outreach. Vegetation removal would be limited to minor clearing/grubbing in the right-of-way and immediately adjacent areas as necessary to complete culvert installations. Soil off-site removal and disposal of construction debris would also be required.

Construction staging would occur in various areas along State Route 78, depending on the type of activities occurring. Staging areas are under consideration for the following locations:

- Caltrans maintenance facility in Julian, off State Route 78 at post mile 58.6;
- at the southern end of State Route 78 at post mile 40.8;
- at the northern and southern side of State Route 78 at post miles 41.70 and 41.75, respectively;
- at the northern side of State Route 78 at post mile 45.47;
- at the southern side of the intersection of State Route 78 and Julian Road between post miles 46.15 and 46.17;
- at the northern side of State Route 78 at post mile 46.25;
- at the southern side of State Route 78 at post mile 51.78; and
- at the southern side of State Route 78 at post mile 51.90.

To the extent feasible, staging areas would be in the Caltrans right-of-way. Temporary construction easements with private property owners may be required due to site constraints, access limitations, or safety needs. Any temporary easements would be negotiated by Caltrans pending project approval and after final design. The Build Alternative would not result in any residential or commercial property relocations or permanent property acquisitions.

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 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 transportation assets and would not address the purpose and need of the project. This alternative would not rehabilitate the deteriorating assets, improve driver and worker safety, or enhance mobility and Complete Streets.

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

This project would incorporate standardized 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. These measures are addressed in more detail by resource area in the Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation sections found in Chapter 2.

- The construction contractor must comply with San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) Rule 55 and Caltrans' Standard Specifications 14-9 (Caltrans 2023). Section 14-9 requires compliance with applicable laws and regulations related to air quality, including air pollution control district regulations and local ordinances. In accordance with Section 14-9, waste or material generated from construction activities would not be disposed of by burning.
- Water 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.
- The construction contractor shall use alternative fuels such as renewable diesel-fueled or solar-powered construction equipment, as feasible.
- The construction contractor shall implement an idling limit of 5 minutes or less for delivery trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).

- The construction contractor shall schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours and implement a Traffic Management Plan (TMP), to be developed during the design phase, to minimize the effects to traffic.
- The construction contractor shall reduce construction waste and maximize the use of recycled materials including project features as applicable (such as salvaging rebar from demolished concrete and process waste).
- The construction contractor shall encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment by ensuring that construction equipment is maintained and properly tuned, and that equipment has been correctly sized for the job.
- The construction contractor shall provide construction personnel with the knowledge to identify environmental issues and BMPs to minimize impacts to the human and natural environment. The construction contractor shall supplement existing training with information regarding methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to construction.
- The construction contractor shall use recycled water or reduce consumption of potable water for construction.
- The construction contractor shall reduce the need for transport of earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.
- The construction contractor shall salvage large removed trees for lumber or similar onsite beneficial uses other than standard wood-chipping.
- The construction contractor shall select long-life, permeable pavement materials that lower the rolling resistance of highway surfaces as much as possible, while still maintaining design and safety standards.
- The construction contractor shall use cold in-place recycling for pavement rehabilitation, as feasible.
- The construction contractor shall replace lighting with ultra-reflective sign materials that are illuminated by headlights to reduce energy used by electric lighting.
- 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.
- In accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 7-1.02M(2), Fire Protection, a fire prevention plan shall be prepared and submitted by the construction contractor prior to the start of job site activities. Fire prevention authorities shall be cooperated with during the performance of

work, any fires shall be reported immediately, and fires shall be extinguished if caused directly or indirectly by job site activities.

- Construction crews would implement and maintain stormwater and erosion control BMPs described in the Caltrans Construction Site (BMPs) 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;
    - maintaining vehicles and equipment to prevent fluid leaks;
    - storing hazardous materials such as fuels, oils, or solvents in sealed containers at a designated location no less than 100 feet from storm drains or aquatic resources; and
    - capturing or controlling sediment with erosion control devices such as silt fences, fiber rolls, and appropriate erosion control netting, and covering temporary stockpiles.
- If a special-status species is discovered, construction personnel would immediately halt work within 100 feet of the discovery and notify the Resident Engineer and Biologist. The Biologist would coordinate with the appropriate agency for assistance if necessary. Work would not continue at the location until authorized by the Biologist.
- For hazardous waste generated on the job site, the Water Pollution Control manager must be knowledgeable of proper handling and emergency procedures for hazardous waste, as demonstrated by submitting a training certificate that indicates completion of training required under 22 California Code of Regulations Section 66265.16, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.01.
- The construction contractor, upon discovery of unanticipated asbestos and/or hazardous substance, is required to immediately stop working in the area of the discovery and notify Caltrans Environmental Engineering, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.02. Environmental Engineering will use the on-call Construction Emergency Response Contract to perform any required work.

- The construction contractor is required, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.03, to handle, store, and dispose of hazardous waste under 22 California Code of Regulations Division 4.5.

- A Lead Compliance Plan under Caltrans Standard Specifications 7-1.02K(6)(j)(ii) would be required during construction when handling lead-contaminated soils, as well as removal of lead-based paint, thermoplastic, painted traffic stripe, and/or pavement marking.

- Excavation, transportation, and handling of material containing hazardous waste or contamination must result in no visible dust migration. When clearing, grubbing, and performing earthwork operations in areas containing hazardous waste or contamination, a water truck or water tank must be provided on the job site, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.04.

- The construction contractor is not permitted to stockpile material containing hazardous waste or contamination unless ordered. Stockpiles containing hazardous waste or contamination must not be placed where affected by surface run-on or run-off. Stockpiles are not permitted in environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs). Stockpiled material must not enter storm drains, inlets, or Waters of the State. These requirements are provided in Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.05.

- The construction contractor is designated the generator of hazardous waste produced from materials the construction contractor has brought to the job site, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.06.

- Removal of any treated wood waste (e.g., wooden posts for guardrails, signs, barriers, or piles) would require proper handling and disposal, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Special Provisions 14-11.14. Treated wood waste products contain hazardous chemical preservatives; therefore, treated wood waste is considered a California Hazardous Waste.

- Imported local materials from either a (1) noncommercial source, or (2) source not regulated under California jurisdiction, must be evaluated and approved for use by Environmental Engineering Branch, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 6-1.03B.

- Minimization measures to reduce 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, the construction contractor would contact utilities, DigAlert services, and/or other applicable entities to mark underground facilities, as needed.
- 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 CEQA and other state laws and regulations. Separate environmental documentation, supporting a Categorical Exclusion determination, has been prepared for the proposed project in accordance with 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 and consideration of significant impacts on historical resources that may be identified pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation 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 February 2026.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	ESA Section 7 Informal Consultation	Initiated October 2024.
San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board	Clean Water Act – Section 401 Water Quality Certification	Anticipated by February 2026.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Fish and Game Code – 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement	Anticipated by February 2026.

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 BMPs and measures included in the Standard Plans and Specifications or as Standard Special Provisions, are considered to be an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below.

“No Impact” determinations in each section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project, and no further discussion is included in this document.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the Visual Impact Assessment dated March 27, 2024 (Caltrans 2024a), the following significance determinations have been made:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099:

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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	**Less-than-Significant Impact**
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	**No Impact**

Regulatory Setting

CEQA Public Resources Code requires all actions necessary be taken to maintain the aesthetic, natural, scenic and historic environmental qualities of the state.

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

Affected Environment

Within the project limits, State Route 78 is an undivided highway in a rural area traversing flat to mountainous terrain. Key visual elements in the rural segment include sharp curves on steep grades through mountainous open spaces that have intact native vegetation. Most of the rural viewsheds have high visual quality and visual character. The project limits are eligible to be a state scenic highway but have not been designated.

Developed areas in the project limits include residences, commercial buildings, recreational spaces, and schools. Julian is a historic town in the project area. Various historic buildings in the town contribute to the historical visual appearance of the area. The design of the town is defined by linear streets and a commercial core along Main Street.

Environmental Consequences

Although the project limits contain a portion of State Route 78 that is an eligible state scenic highway, the proposed project would not substantially damage scenic resources. Some vegetation removal may occur but would be limited to the amount necessary to complete the work, would be replanted and would not significantly detract from the scenic quality of the roadway.

Changes to visual character from the proposed project are anticipated to impact different users of the highway. The different viewer groups in the

project area and their expected awareness of visual changes are described below:

- Residents from the area and daily commuters would have moderate viewer awareness of changes on State Route 78 due to their familiarity with the drive.
- Recreational and weekend users would have lower viewer awareness of changes on State Route 78 than residents and daily highway users. Recreational trail users may have limited foreground views, except for those at higher elevations.
- Residents, workers, and visitors are the primary viewer groups with the most exposure to curb ramp and crossing changes in downtown Julian. Residents from the area and daily users would have moderate awareness due to their familiarity with walking in the small town.

Proposed culvert work would cause temporary impacts to visual resources from construction activities. Drainage work would require brush removal, grading and trenching. Although the proposed culvert work would result in some change to the visual character on the roadway, the locations of vegetation removal would be significantly spaced out at intervals of approximately 1 mile or greater. Vegetation removal would not be concentrated in only one area, and the affected areas would only be visible intermittently from vehicles traveling at high speeds on State Route 78. Temporary access routes (if graded) may be visible from foreground and distant elevated locations. Vegetation removal would be avoided to the extent possible and limited to the amount necessary to complete the work. Disturbed soils would be revegetated with grasses, buckwheat, and sage scrub.

Visual quality would be reduced where mature trees and large shrubs are removed. Where trees are impacted, the change to visual character could be moderately high. Specifically, visual impacts would be adverse if a solitary specimen tree was removed. Existing trees would be protected to the highest possible extent to avoid any inadvertent damage, which would minimize visual impacts along the corridor.

Proposed improvements in the town of Julian would integrate into the historic character of the town and reduce visual impact. The project proposes to install bulb outs, crosswalks, and ADA curb ramps. The project originally proposed large bulb outs with curb ramps at each corner of the intersection of Washington Street and Main Street. Urban style, high-visibility continental crosswalks were also proposed at the intersections of Main Street with Washington Street, B Street and, C Street. Julian stakeholders reviewed the proposal and requested that the proposed design be reconsidered to fit the rural character of the town. In response, the intersection of Main Street and Washington Street was redesigned to reduce the size of the proposed bulb

outs, ensure that the bulb outs do not impact any historic buildings, and eliminate high-visibility continental crosswalks. Proposed crosswalks would use stamped asphalt with a colored brick pattern at crosswalks to mimic bricks used in some of the buildings in downtown Julian. Public sensitivity to this visual change should be moderate to low because the aesthetic would be designed to be consistent with the historic, rural character of Julian and avoid visual impacts.

Due to the quantity of viewers who would experience the proposed project, the viewer exposure is considered high. Although viewer exposure is high, viewer sensitivity and response to anticipated visual changes is considered low because of the low change in visual resources and the avoidance measures which have been incorporated into the project. Therefore, impacts to visual character and quality would be less than significant.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The proposed project would implement the following avoidance measures as project features:

- The project would implement the following project features to minimize visual impacts within the Julian Historic District. New crosswalks will use stamped asphalt paving with a brick pattern to match the pattern of the existing stamped brick crosswalk at 10th Street in Ramona. The stamped asphalt surface color will look like the brick color or colors used at brick buildings in the historic district. High visibility “Continental” crosswalk striping must not be used over the stamped asphalt brick paving at crosswalks. Reconstructed sidewalks and curb ramps will be integrally colored concrete to appear as older concrete. The surface finish should appear to be a uniform “light sand finish”. The sand finish will be achieved by using concrete surface retardants (no sandblasting, water blasting, or broom finish). Truncated domes would be either brown or gray (not yellow).
- Avoid tree removal and rock outcroppings if possible.
- Avoid blading vegetated areas in access routes and contractor use areas.
- Avoid placement of fill, grading, or trenching under tree canopies to avoid damage to tree roots.
- No equipment, material storage, or vehicles are allowed under the dripline of trees within or outside of the construction footprint. (This includes contractor use areas and temporary access routes. Install netting, a stake and rope system, or other device around the edge of the tree dripline canopy to delineate the area that is not for contractor use.)

- Avoid severe tree pruning. Pruning and shaping of trees shall be performed under the direct supervision of a certified arborist in accordance with the current standards of the Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture and the current American National Standards Institute A300 Plant Maintenance Standard Practices, and as directed and approved by the State's Engineer. Pruning shall not detract from the appearance, compromise the function, or adversely impact the maintainability or longevity of the tree. Pruning shall be done in the horticulturally appropriate time of the year.

- Protect vegetation outside of the work area limits by prohibiting material storage, parking, machinery, and construction access in vegetated areas.

- Brush trimming work shall not adversely impact the longevity of trees and shrubs. Brush trimmings would be hauled away or chipped.

- Disturbed areas would be mulched or treated with a permanent erosion control mix consisting of California native species, in accordance with the recommendation of the Project Biologist and Landscape Architect.

- Wildlife fencing, if proposed, would be painted or stained a dark brown.

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 (ARB).

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**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
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**

Discussion of Agriculture and Forestry Resource Evaluation

The project site does not contain designated Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, nor does the project site contain forest lands (California Department of Conservation 2020). The project site is in the Caltrans right-of-way and is not zoned for agricultural or forest use. Additionally, there are no Williamson Act contract lands within the project limits (California Department of Conservation 2022). Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on agriculture and forestry resources.

2.1.3 Air Quality

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

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

Regulatory Framework

Federal

Federal Clean Air Act

The Federal Clean Air Act, as amended, is the primary federal law that governs air quality. This law, and related regulations by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), set standards for the concentration of pollutants in the air. At the federal level, these standards are called National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

State

California Clean Air Act

The California Clean Air Act is the companion state law to the Federal Clean Air Act. Similarly, this law and related regulations by ARB sets standards for the concentration of pollutants in the air. At the state level, these standards are called California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS).

NAAQS and CAAQS have been established for the following six criteria pollutants that have been linked to potential health concerns:

- Carbon monoxide (CO);
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO_X);
- Ozone (O_3);
- Particulate matter (PM)—which is broken down for regulatory purposes into two particles sizes:
    - 10 micrometers or smaller (PM_{10}), and
    - 2.5 micrometers and smaller ($PM_{2.5}$);
- Lead (Pb); and
- Sulfur dioxide (SO_2).

In addition, the CAAQS also include standards for the following additional criteria:

- Visibility-reducing particles,
- Sulfates,
- Hydrogen sulfide, and
- Vinyl chloride.

The NAAQS and CAAQS are set at levels that protect public health and are subject to periodic review and revision. Both state and federal regulatory frameworks also cover toxic air contaminants (air toxics); some criteria pollutants are also air toxics or may include certain air toxics in their general definition.

Regional

San Diego Air Pollution Control District

SDAPCD regulates most air pollutant sources, except for motor vehicles, marine vessels, aircraft, and agricultural equipment, which are regulated by ARB or USEPA. Included in the SDAPCD's tasks are monitoring of air pollution, preparation of implementation plans for San Diego, and establishing rules and regulations for air quality. USEPA has delegated responsibility to air districts to establish local rules to protect air quality. Caltrans Standard Specifications requires compliance with applicable air quality laws and regulations, including local and air district ordinances and rules.

SDAPCD has established Air Quality Impact Analysis (AQIA) Trigger Levels in Regulation II, Rule 20.2, which are applicable to new or modified stationary sources. The SDAPCD AQIA trigger levels may be used to evaluate the increased emissions from projects; and to demonstrate that a project's emissions would not result in a significant impact to regional air quality or impede attainment of air quality standards for the region

Affected Environment

The proposed project site is in San Diego County, in the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB). Air quality in the SDAB is regulated by USEPA, ARB, and SDAPCD. As described above, each of these agencies develops rules, regulations, or policies and/or goals to attain the directives imposed through legislation.

Both USEPA and ARB use ambient air quality monitoring data to designate areas according to their attainment status for criteria air pollutants. The purpose of these designations is to identify the areas with air quality problems and initiate planning efforts for improvement. The three basic designation categories are nonattainment, attainment, and unclassified. An "attainment" designation for an area signifies that pollutant concentrations did not exceed the established standard.

Table 2-1 shows attainment designations for the SDAB. The SDAB currently meets the NAAQS for most criteria air pollutants except ozone; and meets the CAAQS for most criteria air pollutants except ozone, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$.

Table 2-1 San Diego Air Basin Attainment Status

Criteria Pollutant	Federal Designation	State Designation
Ozone (8-Hour)	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
Ozone (1-Hour)	Attainment[1]	Nonattainment
Carbon Monoxide	Attainment	Attainment
PM_{10}	Unclassifiable[2]	Nonattainment
$PM_{2.5}$	Attainment	Nonattainment

Criteria Pollutant	Federal Designation	State Designation
Nitrogen Dioxide	Attainment	Attainment
Sulfur Dioxide	Attainment	Attainment
Lead	Attainment	Attainment
Sulfates	No Federal Standard	Attainment
Hydrogen Sulfide	No Federal Standard	Unclassified
Visibility	No Federal Standard	Unclassified

Notes:

[1] The federal ozone (1-hour) standard of 12 parts per million was in effect from 1979 through June 15, 2005. The revoked standard is referenced here because this benchmark is addressed in State Implementation Plans.

[2] At the time of designation, if the available data do not support a designation of attainment or nonattainment, the area is designated as unclassifiable.

PM_{10} = particles 10 micrometers or smaller; $PM_{2.5}$ = particles 2.5 micrometers or smaller

Source: SDAPCD 2024

Environmental Consequences

Construction activities for the proposed project would generate temporary emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), nitrogen oxides (NO_X), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur oxides, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. Ozone, a regional pollutant derived from NO_X and VOCs in the presence of sunlight and heat, would be indirectly produced.

Construction-related emissions of VOCs, NO_X, CO, and particulate matter would primarily be associated with off-road and on-road equipment exhaust, as well as fugitive dust associated with demolition and ground-disturbing activities. SO_2 is generated by oxidation during combustion of organic sulfur compounds contained in diesel fuel. SO_2-related issues due to diesel exhaust would be minimized through compliance with existing regulations.

Emissions associated with construction of the proposed project were calculated using the Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool (CAL-CET [version 2021v1.0.2]) and are shown in Table 2-2. Emissions are compared to the SDAPCD AQIA Trigger Levels in Regulation II, Rule 20.2.

Table 2-2 Daily Construction Emissions

Phase	TOG	VOC	CO	NO_X	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Daily Average (pounds per day)	3.0	2.8	15.5	22.4	45.6	5.8
Project Maximum Daily Emissions (pounds per day)	4.2	3.9	25.9	29.0	65.3	9.4

Phase	TOG	VOC	CO	NO_X	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Threshold of Significance [1]	Not applicable	Not applicable	550	250	100	67
Significant Impact?	Not applicable	Not applicable	No	No	No	No

Notes:

CO = carbon monoxide; NO_X = nitrogen oxides; PM_{10} = particles 10 micrometers or smaller; $PM_{2.5}$ = particles 2.5 micrometers or smaller; TOG = total organic gases; VOC = volatile organic compounds

[1] SDAPCD Air Quality Impact Analysis Trigger Levels in Regulation II, Rule 20.2

Source: Caltrans 2024b

As shown in Table 2-2, construction-related emissions would not exceed the SDAPCD AQIA trigger levels. Construction impacts to air quality are short in duration and, therefore, would not result in long-term adverse conditions or in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard.

Operational emissions for the proposed project are expected to remain similar to existing conditions because the project would replace or rehabilitate existing facilities without increasing capacity or inducing additional vehicle travel. The improvements proposed by the project would allow for operational efficiencies in vehicle travel on State Route 78 due to pavement rehabilitation, drainage improvements, and signage. Furthermore, the project would improve existing curb ramps and crosswalks along the corridor, which would improve pedestrian facilities in the area. For these reasons, operation of the project would not result in long-term air quality impacts. This impact would be less than significant.

The primary air pollutant exposure from the project would occur during construction from toxic air contaminants associated with construction equipment exhaust. There are sensitive receptors (residences, schools, and childcare centers) along State Route 78 near the project limits. The total duration of construction activities is anticipated to be approximately 25 months; the exposure of sensitive receptors to construction emissions would be short term. Construction would only occur intermittently and would progress linearly without concentrated emission exposure in any one location. In addition, as described above, the proposed project construction emissions would not exceed the SDAPCD AQIA trigger levels. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations, and this impact would be less than significant.

Construction activities associated with the proposed project could result in short-term odor emissions from diesel exhaust associated with construction equipment and asphalt paving operations. As described above, construction would occur only intermittently and would progress linearly, without

concentrated emission exposure in any one location. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in other emissions, such as those leading to odors, affecting a substantial number of people. This impact would be less than significant.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The proposed project would implement the following standard measures to avoid or minimize air quality effects:

- The construction contractor must comply with SDAPCD Rule 55 and Caltrans Standard Specification 14-9. Section 14-9 includes specifications requiring compliance with applicable laws and regulations related to air quality, including air pollution control district and air quality management district regulations and local ordinances. In accordance with Section 14-9, waste or material generated from construction activities would not be disposed of by burning.

- Water 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.

- The construction contractor shall use alternative fuels, such as renewable diesel, for construction equipment.

- The construction contractor shall implement an idling limit of 5 minutes or less for delivery trucks and other diesel-powered equipment (with some exceptions).

- The construction contractor shall encourage improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment by ensuring that construction equipment is maintained and properly tuned, and that equipment has been correctly sized for the job.

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the Natural Environment Study dated August 2024 (Caltrans 2024c), 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, United States 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 United States 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**
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 varying degrees of local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and acts. Regulatory requirements that apply to the proposed project are listed in the following subsections.

Federal

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.

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.

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. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) are responsible for implementing the Clean Water Act.

In accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, USACE regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into Waters of the United States, including wetlands.

Executive Order 11990 Protection of Wetlands

This executive order established a national policy to avoid adverse impacts on wetlands whenever there is a practicable alternative. On federally funded projects, impacts on wetlands must be identified, and alternatives that avoid wetlands must be considered. If wetland impacts cannot be avoided, then all practicable measures to minimize harm must be included.

Executive Order 13112 Invasive Species

Executive Order 13112 requires projects to prevent the introduction or spread of invasive species if there is federal agency funding or approvals. Invasive species are classified as those species that may cause human health, environmental or economic harm.

State and Regional

California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) is an environmental law that conserves and protects plant and animal species at risk of extinction. CESA provides a listing and review process, prohibits certain acts as damaging to

listed species, and facilitates a consultation process for state projects that may result in take of a species listed under CESA.

Lake and Streambed Alterations

Under Sections 1600 through 1607, the 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 that supports riparian habitat and/or wildlife.

Affected Environment

Biological Study Area

The proposed project footprint includes the area of direct impacts. The Biological Study Area (BSA) includes the footprint and areas that could be indirectly impacted by project activities. The BSA for this project includes the footprint and a 100-foot buffer around the footprint to account for all impacts. Actions considered when determining the BSA include ground disturbance, equipment access, right-of-way, air quality impacts, lighting effects, and noise disturbances during culvert maintenance work.

Examples of direct impacts include ground disturbance from operation of equipment and staging. Examples of indirect impacts include spread of invasive weeds, which could occur after construction is completed; and impacts to aquatic resources outside the BSA from activities that occur in the BSA (e.g., stormwater discharges). Some impacts may be considered both direct and indirect, such as increased noise and artificial illumination. Both occur during construction and within the footprint; however, they may also impact resources outside of the footprint.

Land cover

Within the BSA, there are approximately 719 acres comprised of 31 land cover types. Landcover acreage is provided in Table 2-3.

Table 2-3 Land Cover and Plant Communities in the Biological Study Area

Land Cover Type/Habitat	Acres in the Biological Study Area
Upland Habitats	--
Buckwheat Shrub	6.05
Coast Live Oak Woodland	7.97
Chamise Chaparral	41.55
Coastal Sage Chaparral Shrub	23.98
Dense Coast Live Oak Woodland	76.48

Land Cover Type/Habitat	Acres in the Biological Study Area
Dense Engelmann Oak Woodland	15.48
Diegan Coastal Chaparral Shrub	46.77
Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub	46.88
Disturbed Buckwheat Scrub	0.03
Disturbed Chaparral	0.01
Disturbed Coastal Sage Scrub	0.036
Disturbed/Developed Habitat	3.9
Engelmann Oak Woodland	3.50
Eucalyptus Woodland	3.56
Field/Pasture	27.47
Mixed Oak/Coniferous/Bigcone/Coulter Forest	52.73
Mixed Oak Woodland	28.95
Native Grassland	123.79
Nonnative Vegetation (Grasses, Ornamental)	0.64
Northern Mixed Chaparral	25.25
Open Coast Live Oak Woodland	26.98
Open Engelmann Oak Woodland	15.32
Orchards Vineyards, Row/Crop	8.94
Scrub Oak Chaparral	0.03
Scrub Oak Mixed Chaparral	0.06
Southern Mixed Chaparral	3.46
Urban/Developed	95.83
Upland Habitat Total	**685.65**
Wetland Habitats	
Blackberry Dominated Channel	0.007
Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest	13.44
Southern Riparian Forest/Scrub	14.04
Unvegetated Channel	0.006
Wet Montane Meadow and Freshwater Seep	5.51
Wetland Habitat Total	**33.003**

Landcover is discussed in detail below and separated by habitat classification of wetland or upland. Landcover that is anticipated to not be impacted by the project will not be discussed further. This includes Buckwheat Scrub,

Chamise Chaparral, Coastal Sage Chaparral Shrub, Dense Coast Live Oak Woodland, Dense Engelmann Oak Woodland, Engelmann Oak Woodland, Eucalyptus Woodland, Mixed Oak/Coniferous/Bigcone/Coulter Forest, Mixed Oak Woodland, Native Grassland, Nonnative Vegetation (Grasses, Ornamental), Northern Mixed Chaparral, Open Coast Live Oak Woodland, Open Engelmann Oak Woodland, Orchards Vineyards, Row/Crop, and Southern Mixed Chaparral.

Upland Habitats

Coast Live Oak Woodland

Coast Live Oak Woodlands are characterized by the dominance of a single evergreen oak species, Coast live oak *(Quercus agrifolia*). Coast live oaks can reach heights of approximately 30 to 80 feet. These woodlands are typically found on north-facing slopes and shaded ravines in southern regions and more exposed locations in the north. Other characteristic species in this community include California buckeye (*Aesculus californica)*, toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*), blue elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), and poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), among other species that make up a sparse shrub layer. Coast live oaks are abundant throughout the project area, particularly near creeks and wetland areas. Generally, many oaks are present adjacent to or near the State Route 78 shoulder.

Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub

This vegetation type was once widespread in coastal southern California, and now it occurs in patches from Los Angeles into Baja California. This plant community is composed of a variety of low, soft, aromatic shrubs dominated by drought-deciduous species such as California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), flat-topped buckwheat, white sage (*Salvia apiana*), and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*). Typically, there are also scattered evergreen shrubs, including lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), and toyon. The understory is diverse and includes a rich variety of annual forbs, and both annual and perennial grasses. Disturbed coastal sage scrub is composed of a mixture of the plant species listed above and non-native or invasive species. In the project area, coastal sage scrub was commonly observed in patches in the BSA, particularly along slopes adjacent to the State Route 78.

Disturbed Chaparral

Disturbed chaparral is intermixed with non-native and/or invasive plant species. Disturbed chaparral may also lack the density and diversity of plant

cover typically found in this community. This community was primarily observed near a residential area within the BSA.

Disturbed/Developed Habitat

These areas are any lands where agricultural practices, construction, or other land-clearing activities have significantly altered the native vegetation. The species composition and site conditions are not characteristic of the disturbed phase of one of the plant associations in the BSA. Such habitat, which is dominated by nonnative annuals and perennial broadleaf species, is typically found in vacant lots, roadsides, construction staging areas, and abandoned fields. Types of vegetation observed included ornamental species such as tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), berry bush (*Pyracantha* sp.), and daffodils (*Narcissus* sp.). Other nonnative species commonly found in disturbed habitat include Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), sweet fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*), mustard (*Brassica* spp.), ice plant (*Carpobrotus edulis*), African fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*), and castor bean (*Ricinus communis*). Various fruit orchards and agricultural areas were observed. Disturbed habitat is found regularly immediately adjacent to State Route 78.

Field/Pasture

This is a land use type that is used to provide grazing and supplement for livestock. Vegetation cover is primarily composed of introduced forage species but can also include enhanced native forage species. Cover includes grasses, legumes, forbs, shrubs, or a combination of these (USDA n.d.). Common introduced species found along State Route 78 include foxtail chess, slender wild oat, ripgut grass, and soft chess. Large portions of route State Route 78 are bordered by private property where grazing livestock are present. The right-of-way in these areas is widely disturbed due to encroachment from nonnative grasses.

Montane Buckwheat Scrub

This community is widely dominated by flat-topped buckwheat. Montane buckwheat scrub, referred to as buckwheat scrub in this document, is primarily found in higher elevations and in disturbed areas at lower elevations in San Diego County, and commonly found near mountain meadows where sandy soils are present. Disturbed buckwheat scrub is composed of a mixture of native buckwheat and non-native or invasive plant species. Buckwheat scrub was commonly seen on slopes along State Route 78 in large patches.

Nonnative Grassland

Nonnative grasslands consist of dense-to-sparse cover of nonnative annual grasses, often associated with species of showy-flowered, native annual forbs, especially in years of high rainfall. During field surveys, nonnative grasslands were commonly observed on private property. In the Caltrans

right-of-way, nonnative grasses were primarily found bordering the State Route 78 shoulder or in other disturbed areas.

Scrub Oak Chaparral

Like chamise chaparral, this subtype of chaparral is defined by the dominant plant species in this community, scrub oak. Scrub oak chaparral was primarily observed near culvert locations #10 to #12, and along other nearby steep, rocky slopes in the BSA.

Scrub Oak Mixed Chaparral

Like chamise chaparral, this subtype of chaparral is defined by the dominant plant species in this community, scrub oak. Scrub oak chaparral was primarily observed near culvert locations #10 to #12, and along other nearby steep, rocky slopes in the BSA.

Urban/Developed

Developed areas are lands that have been permanently altered by human activities. These areas include roads, buildings, and other areas where the land has been altered to such a state that natural vegetation cannot become reestablished. This project occurs along a paved roadway where private residences and small businesses are present. Developed land includes the roadway itself and other developed land along the route.

Wetland Habitats

Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest

This community is characterized by open to locally dense evergreen forests primarily dominated by coast live oak. Other characteristic species that thrive in this environment include bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), California mugwort, poison oak, milkmaids (*Cardamine californica*), and blue elderberry, among others (Holland 1986). Southern coast live oak riparian forests are predominantly found in the canyons and valleys of coastal southern California. This habitat occurs along creeks in the BSA and is within the temporary impact area.

Unvegetated Channel

Unvegetated channels are the sandy, gravelly, or rocky fringe of waterways or flood channels. They are unvegetated on a relatively permanent basis. Variable water lines inhibit the growth of vegetation, although some weedy . species of grasses may grow along the outer edges of the wash. Vegetation may exist here but is usually less than 10 percent total cover. Unvegetated channels are found at the inlets/outlets and proposed impact areas for 4 out of the 20 culvert replacement locations in the BSA.

Blackberry Dominated Vegetated Channel

There is one California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*) dominated channel within the temporary impact area of one of the culvert replacements.

Special-Status Plant Species

No special-status plant species were found during general or vegetation mapping surveys in the project footprint.

Wildlife in the BSA

Wildlife species commonly identified in the study area included both common riparian and upland species in San Diego County. During general surveys, common bird species such as Stellar jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*), California quail (*Callipepla californica*), acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), and common raven (*Corvus corax*) were heard or seen in the BSA. Migratory birds such as red-winged black birds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) were also observed.

Special-Status Species Known to Occur in the BSA

Various special-status species occurrences have been recorded in the BSA. An official Information for Planning and Consultation list of federally listed species with the potential to occur in the study area was requested from USFWS. There are 14 federally listed species on the list. The official list was received July 5, 2024. A species list was also obtained from CDFW's California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), which showed an additional four special-status species. See Table 2-4 below for species and listing statuses.

Table 2-4 Special-Status Plants and Animal Species with the Potential to Occur in the Biological Study Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Habitat Present/Absent
Plants			
San Diego button celery	*Eryngium aristulatum* var. *parishii*	FE/SE	A
San Diego thorn mint	*Acanthomintha ilicifolia*	FT/SE	HP
Spreading navarretia	*Navarretia fossalis*	FT/CNPS 1B.1	A
Invertebrates			
Monarch butterfly	*Danaus plexippus*	FC	HP
San Diego fairy shrimp	*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*	FE/SE	A
Amphibians			
Arroyo toad	*Anaxyrus californicus*	FE/SSC	HP
Western spadefoot	*Spea hammondii*	FPT/SSC	HP

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Habitat Present/Absent
California red-legged frog	*Rana draytonii*	FT/SSC	HP
Reptiles			
Southwestern pond turtle	*Actinemys pallida*	FPT/SSC	HP
Birds			
California spotted owl	*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*	FC/SSC	A
Coastal California gnatcatcher	*Polioptila californica californica*	FT/SSC	HP
Least Bell's vireo	*Vireo bellii pusillus*	FE/SE	A
Southwestern willow flycatcher	*Empidonax traillii extimus*	FE/SE	HP
Mammals			
American badger	*Taxidea taxus*	SSC	HP
Pallid bat	*Antrozous pallidus*	SSC	HP
Western mastiff bat	*Eumops perotis californicus*	SSC	HP
Western yellow bat	*Lasiurus xanthinus*	SSC	A
Peninsular bighorn sheep	*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*	FE/ST	A

Notes:

Absent [A] – no habitat present and no further work needed
Habitat Present [HP] -habitat is or may be present; the species may be present

Status:

Federal Endangered (FE)
Federal Threatened (FT)
Federal Candidate (FC)
State Endangered (SE)
State Threatened (ST)
Fully Protected (FP)
State Species of Special Concern (SSC)
California Native Plant Society (CNPS)

Special-Status Species

A total of 18 special-status wildlife and plant species shown on federal and state databases were determined to have potential to occur in the BSA. Most of these wildlife species were either not observed in the BSA during surveys, did not have suitable habitat present, were not known to occur in the area, and/or were not observed in temporary or permanent impact locations. However, there is potentially suitable habitat present in or adjacent to the impact areas for the following species:

- Arroyo toad (Anaxyrus californicus) and
- Western spadefoot (Spea hammondii).

A description of all the special-status species is available below.

San Diego Button Celery

San Diego button celery or suitable habitat (vernal pools) were not observed in the BSA. There are no recorded occurrences in the databases or critical habitat present within the project limits.

San Diego Thornmint

The microhabitat associated with the San Diego thornmint was not detected during vegetation and general surveys of proposed impact areas. It is unlikely that this species occurs in the vicinity of the project. There are no recorded occurrences in the databases or critical habitat present within the project limits.

Spreading Navarretia

Spreading navarretia was not observed in the BSA. There are no recorded occurrences in the databases or critical habitat present within the project limits.

Monarch Butterfly

Monarch butterfly or its host plant (milkweeds) were not observed during general surveys within the temporary or permanent impact areas. Pre-constructions survey will be conducted within proposed impact areas to ensure individuals and potential breeding habitat are not present or disturbed during construction.

San Diego Fairy Shrimp

The San Diego fairy shrimp is a small aquatic crustacean that can be found in vernal pools and non-vegetated, ephemeral basins throughout coastal Southern California and northwestern Baja California, Mexico. No vernal pools were observed in the BSA or work/impact areas. There is no critical habitat present in the BSA and there are no species occurrences in databases for this species within the project area.

Arroyo Toad

This species is listed as endangered by the USFWS (1994) and is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. Arroyo toads require gravelly, sandy soils within shallow, low gradient streams with little to no vegetation to reproduce and sandy terrestrial uplands for estivation and foraging. Both habitats are necessary for this species to complete its annual life cycle. Two occurrences for arroyo toad from 1991 were documented in the BSA in USFWS and CNDDB databases. There is no designated critical habitat for arroyo toad in the BSA. All culvert replacement locations adjacent to or overlapping with creeks were surveyed for suitable breeding habitat for this species. Suitable breeding habitat was not found at any of these locations. Potential upland habitat for the species is present in the BSA.

Western Spadefoot

Western spadefoot occurs throughout the California Central Valley and adjacent foothills. This species is found in underground burrows for the greater part of the year. Individuals may create their own burrows or use those of burrowing mammals. Grasslands where shallow, temporary vernal pools are present are ideal habitat for this species, which depends highly on seasonal rainfall. Suitable breeding habitat for this species were not observed in any temporary or permanent impact areas during general or amphibian surveys. Potential estivation habitat is present.

California Red-Legged Frog

California red-legged frogs inhabit permanent freshwater sources and use uplands for foraging, shelter, and movement to other water resources. Critical habitat for California red-legged frog does not occur within the project limits. There were no sightings or data found suggesting occurrences of California red-legged frog within the project area.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

Southwestern pond turtle inhabits both permanent and intermittent waters within rivers, creeks, small lakes and ponds, marshes, irrigation ditches, and reservoirs. This species was not observed in the BSA during general surveys or within any temporary or permanent impact areas. There are no occurrence records of this species within the databases. Work near potential habitat for this species will be limited to culvert inlets and outlets. Impacts to these species are not anticipated.

California Spotted Owl

In Southern California, most California spotted owls live in riparian/hardwood forests and woodlands, live oak/big cone-fir forest, and redwood/California laurel forest (USFWS 2017). Occurrence records or suitable habitat for California spotted owls is not present in the BSA.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher

This species is listed as threatened by the USFWS (1993) and is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. It is a non-migratory resident whose range covers the coastal plains of southern California and northern Baja California. However, there is no critical habitat for this species within the project area. There have been no recorded sightings of California gnatcatcher within the project BSA in the databases. Most of the project occurs at elevations higher than the threshold where inland populations are typically found (>1,640 feet).

Least Bell's Vireo

The least Bell's vireo was once widespread from Tehama County in northern California to northwestern Baja California. This migratory species nests in willows, also using a variety of other shrub and tree species for nest

placement. This species nest from March 15th to September 15th. Declines have occurred due to habitat loss and fragmentation, and nest parasitism by the brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). Recent population numbers have trended upward. There have been no sightings of least Bell's vireo in the vicinity of the BSA in the databases since 1921. Least Bell's vireo was not detected during general surveys for this project. There is no critical habitat present within the BSA for this species. Typical habitat for this species (willow and riparian scrub) was not observed in any temporary or permanent impact areas. Impacts to this species are not anticipated. Appropriate AMMs for protection of migratory birds will be implemented during construction.

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

The southwestern willow flycatcher is listed as State and Federally Endangered; on July 22, 1997, the USFWS designated critical habitat for the subspecies. This subspecies is an uncommon spring and fall migrant and a very rare summer resident. It is found among trees or large shrubs throughout San Diego County. Nesting is restricted to willow thickets in riparian woodland; the local breeding population in San Diego County is now extremely small. Breeding occurs from May 15th – September 15th. Its diet consists of berries, insects, and some seeds. It feeds by hovering and gleaning. Nests are commonly parasitized by brown-headed cowbirds. Willow flycatchers arrive in southern California later in the spring (May) than other breeding migratory passerines. Southwestern willow flycatchers are typically found in riparian forest with open water. There have been no sightings of southwestern willow flycatcher within the BSA in the USFWS or CNDDB databases. There is no critical habitat for this species within the project area. Typical habitat for this species (willow and riparian scrub) was not observed in any temporary or permanent impact areas. Impacts to this species are not anticipated. Appropriate AMMs for protection of migratory birds will be implemented during construction.

American Badger

American badgers are found throughout the western and central United States. They are typically found in grasslands and desert scrublands within the Southwest region. This species is primarily nocturnal and spends most of its time underground during the winter months. Outside of the breeding season (late summer – early fall) this species is solitary. American badgers are aggressive mammals with few natural predators. Badgers occupy lard territories and may require up to 2,000 acres of suitable habitat for sufficient resources to survive and reproduce. Threats to the survival of this species include loss of habitat, and shooting/trapping. (NPS, 2022). This species or evidence of dens was not observed within the BSA. Most of the habitat within

the BSA and Caltrans ROW is fragmented by private land, scattered development, and the roadway itself.

Peninsular Bighorn Sheep

The Peninsular bighorn sheep was listed as Federally Endangered in 1998 and State Threatened in 1971 by the State of California. It is considered a distinct population segment (DPS) of the desert bighorn sheep. The distribution of bighorn sheep spans across a band of habitat throughout Southern California and Mexico in the eastern slopes of the Peninsular Ranges of the Colorado Desert. Males, or rams, have large, curved horns that curl back into a C shape over the ears and down past their cheeks, growing up to 33 inches long. Females, or ewes, have slender and much smaller horns than rams, generally forming a half-curl shape at most. Rams are also much larger in size than ewes, with average weights of approximately 160 and 105 pounds, respectively. Peninsular bighorn sheep are muscular, medium-sized bovids ranging in color from dark brown to a pale tan (USFWS, 2011). There is no critical habitat for this species within the project area. Suitable habitat for peninsular bighorn sheep is not present within the BSA. No impacts to this species are anticipated.

Pallid Bat

The pallid bat is a California Species of Special Concern (SSC) and can be found in arid to semi-arid regions across the western U.S. and along the coast from Canada to Mexico. They occur in open to sparsely vegetated grasslands with rocky outcroppings and a close water source available. This species does not seem to migrate great distances between seasons. Day roosts are typically in warm, horizontal openings such as in attics, shutters or crevices; night roosts are in the open near foliage; and hibernation roosts are often found in caves, cracks in rocks, or buildings. Pallid bats are unique in that they hunt almost exclusively on the ground. (Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, 2024). Suitable habitat for this species is present within the BSA, however it is unlikely to be impacted by the proposed work. AMMs such as pre-construction surveys will be implemented to prevent impacts to this species.

Western Mastiff Bat

The western mastiff bat, also known as the greater mastiff or greater bonneted bat, is a California SSC and the largest bat species in the United States. It can be found in the southwestern United States, northern Baja California, and north to central mainland Mexico. This species is active year-round and does not migrate or hibernate. It’s a member of the “free-tailed” bat family and identifiable by its mouse-like tail and very large ears. This bat is preyed upon by various birds of prey (SDNHM, 2024). Between June and August, females give birth to single young. The western mastiff bat prefers to roost in high cliffs making it difficult to study (Arizona Game and Fish, 2024).

This species was not detected within the BSA. Suitable habitat is present, but work is not likely to impacts this species.

Western Yellow Bat

The western yellow bat is a California SSC known to occur in valley foothill riparian, desert riparian, desert wash, and palm oasis habitats. This species is uncommonly found in California and known to occur primarily in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties south to the Mexican border at elevations below 2,000 ft (CDFW, 2008). Habitat for this species was not present within the BSA and the species is unlikely to occur within the project area. Impacts to this species are not anticipated.

Wildlife species commonly identified in the study area included both common riparian and upland species in San Diego County. During general surveys, common bird species such as Stellar jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*), California quail (*Callipepla californica*), acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), and common raven (*Corvus corax*) were heard or seen in the BSA. Migratory birds such as red-winged black birds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) were also observed.

Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Passage

Wildlife corridors connect large patches of natural open space that allow for the immigration and emigration of wildlife. Such movement assures the continual sharing of genetic information that helps maintain genetic diversity and reduces the probability of extinction through random events.

The BSA is primarily fragmented by the State Route 78 roadway. Bridges likely provide passage to larger animals; smaller drainages may assist in smaller mammal, reptile, and/or amphibian crossing. Riparian and wetland areas that cross State Route 78 at multiple locations may also function as corridors for wildlife.

Environmental Consequences

The main asset for this project is pavement; for this reason, most work will occur in the existing roadway structure and disturbed areas adjacent to the roadway, where physical and biological features for state or federally listed species habitat are not found. The proposed project was designed to avoid wetland and native vegetation impacts to the maximum extent possible.

Various measures have been taken to minimize potential impacts to biological resources. Shoulder backing was reduced to an in-kind replacement to minimize impacts to vegetation adjacent to the roadway. Various culvert locations were also removed from initial project designs to avoid additional impacts to biologically sensitive areas. Due to the need for replacement of culverts, some impacts to surrounding wetlands cannot be avoided, but would be minimized. Permanent impacts to jurisdictional wetlands were limited to 1 out of the 20 culvert locations. Impacts to native vegetation and wetlands

would be mitigated by using existing mitigation bank credits and hydroseeding temporary impacts areas. The avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures (AMMs) in the subsection below will be implemented during construction to further minimize any potential impacts to sensitive species and biological resources.

Impacts to Sensitive Vegetation

Impacts to both sensitive vegetation communities and jurisdictional wetlands are anticipated as a result of culvert and guardrail replacements. There is potential for impacts to the following sensitive vegetation communities: coastal sage scrub, chaparral, scrub oak and mixed chaparral, and coast live oak woodlands. Table 2-5 provides total acreage estimates of permanent and temporary impacts to upland vegetation.

Impacts to vegetation communities and nonvegetated habitats (bare ground or disturbed/developed) would be relatively minimal. The total estimated impact areas would be approximately 0.029 and 0.87 acres of permanent and temporary impacts, respectively, across all 20 culvert replacement locations. Impacts to sensitive vegetation communities would be potentially significant.

Coastal Sage Scrub

Coastal sage scrub is found in patches throughout the project area. Coastal sage scrub of good quality (defined as minimal presence or total absence of nonnative species) and disturbed coastal sage scrub (defined as a mixture of native and nonnative species present) occur at various culvert locations. In the culvert replacement impact areas, good quality coastal sage scrub is found at culvert locations #9 (post mile 48.83), #11 (post mile 51.77), and #12 (post mile 51.85). Disturbed coastal sage scrub is found at locations #2 (post mile 39.85) and #5 (post mile 41.55). Table 2-5 shows total anticipated impacts. The AMMs discussed below in the section titled Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures (minimizing vegetation removal, minimizing spread of invasive weeds, and compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts) will be implemented to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts to coastal sage scrub habitat. Therefore, the impact on this community would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Table 2-5 Total Upland Vegetation Impacts

Land Cover Type/Habitat	Permanent Impacts (Acres)	Temporary Impacts (Acres)
Native Habitats		
Coast Live Oak Woodland	-	0.06
Coastal Sage Scrub	-	0.11
Disturbed Buckwheat Scrub	-	0.03
Disturbed Chaparral	-	0.01
Disturbed Coastal Sage Scrub	0.006	0.03
Scrub Oak Chaparral	-	0.03
Scrub Oak Mixed Chaparral	-	0.06
Native Habitats Total	**0.006**	**0.33**
Disturbed or Nonnative Habitats		
Bare Ground	0.003	0.04
Disturbed/Developed	0.007	0.1
Disturbed Habitat	-	0.02
Nonnative Grassland	0.001	0.32
Nonnative Grassland/Pasture	0.003	0.03
Ornamental Vegetation	0.003	0.03
Disturbed or Nonnative Habitats Total	**0.023**	**0.54**

Coast Live Oak Woodland

In the culvert replacement impact areas, coast live oak woodland habitat is present at culvert locations #3 (post mile 41.03), #13 (post mile 54.39), and #15 (post mile 55.03). Table 2-5 shows total anticipated impacts. The AMMs discussed below in the section titled Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures (minimizing vegetation removal, avoiding impacts to oak trees during metal beam guardrail replacements, minimizing spread of invasive weeds, and compensatory mitigation for any permanent impacts) will be implemented to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts to coast live oak woodland habitats and individual oak trees. Therefore, the impact on this community would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Chaparral

Variations of chaparral habitat are present throughout the proposed culvert replacement impact areas. These variations include disturbed chaparral, scrub oak chaparral, and scrub oak mixed chaparral. In the culvert replacement impact areas, disturbed chaparral is found at culvert location 19 (post mile 58.68), with an estimated 0.01 acre of temporary impacts. Scrub

oak chaparral is found at culvert locations #6 (post mile 46.33) and #11 (post mile 51.77). Scrub oak mixed chaparral is found at culvert locations #6 (post mile 46.33), #10 (post mile 51.62), and #11 (post mile 51.77). Table 2-5 shows total anticipated impacts. The AMMs discussed below in the section titled Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures (minimizing vegetation removal, minimizing spread of invasive weeds, and compensatory mitigation for any permanent impacts) will be implemented to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts to chaparral habitat. Therefore, the impact on this community would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Impacts to State Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.

There are six locations where temporary and/or permanent wetlands impacts are anticipated due to the proposed culvert and guardrail replacements, along with the need for USACE 404 and/or CDFW 1602 permits. A wetland delineation was performed at a culvert located in a creek crossing (Coleman Creek). This location was removed from the proposed project to minimize impacts to wetlands. Anticipated impacts to wetland habitat include those to coast live oak riparian forest, unvegetated channels, and one channel dominated by California blackberry. Total acreages of potential wetland impacts can be found in Table 2-6.

The AMMs discussed below in the section titled Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures (limiting culvert work to dry season, construction buffers for temporary use areas, appropriate erosion control and sedimentation BMPs, hydroseeding of temporary impact areas, dust minimization, use of ESAs to protect wetlands and waters, and compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts) will be implemented to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts to wetlands. Therefore, the impact on wetlands would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Table 2-6 Potential Impacts to State Wetland Habitats and Water of the U.S.

Wetland/Water Type	Permanent Impacts (Acres)	Temporary Impacts (Acres)
Blackberry Dominated Channel	—	0.007
Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest	—	0.055
Unvegetated Channel	0.001	0.006
Total	**0.001**	**0.068**

Impacts to Special-Status Species

There are 18 special-status species on the lists provided by the USFWS and CDFW, and no critical habitat in the BSA. The project would not impact critical habitat for federally listed species. However, impacts to arroyo toad and

western spadefoot may occur during construction, as described further in the following paragraphs.

A USFWS occurrence for arroyo toad was found in the BSA from post miles 47.86 through 48.18. A second CNDDB occurrence overlaps with the BSA at post miles 47.93 through 48.15 and 48.26 through 48.61, approximately. Both occurrences were recorded in 1991 and are the most recent occurrences found in these databases. The occurrences are in the vicinity of Witch Creek and culverts #8 and #9. Both culverts and portions of Witch Creek adjacent to the culverts where permit to enter access was available were surveyed for suitable arroyo toad habitat. Any other culvert locations near waterways were also surveyed. Arroyo toad or suitable breeding habitat was not observed in or adjacent to the proposed culvert replacement impact areas for the project. Two surveys were performed in March and April during the breeding season, and multiple general surveys were conducted at all culverts from August 2023 to March 2024. No individuals were detected during general surveys. Upland habitat for this species is present; therefore, there may be potential for estivation of arroyo toad in the BSA. The AMMs discussed below in the section titled Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures will be implemented during construction to avoid impacts to this species.

An occurrence for western spadefoot is found from post miles 46.06 through 46.16, approximately. The occurrence was recorded in 2014 and occurs along a steep slope away from any waterways. A historical occurrence from 1959 is also found in the BSA. Surveys were performed at all culvert locations near waterways to determine the presence or absence of suitable breeding habitat for western spadefoot. Potential breeding habitat was observed at only one culvert location in Coleman Creek, which was removed from the project to minimize impacts. No breeding habitat for western spadefoot was observed at other culvert locations or adjacent wetland areas. Upland habitat for this species is present in the BSA. AMMs will be implemented during construction to avoid/minimize any potential impacts to western spadefoot. A biological assessment will be submitted to USFWS to initiate informal Section 7 consultation for this species.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The measures that the proposed project would implement to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to biological resources are discussed in the following subsections.

Avoidance and Minimization of Impacts to Sensitive Vegetation Communities and Oak Trees

- Vegetation removal (clearing, grubbing, mowing, and trimming) will be minimized to the maximum extent possible. The biologist will work with the

design to minimize impacts to sensitive vegetation communities such as coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodlands, and wetland areas.

- Design for installation, replacement, and upgrades to metal beam guardrails will be modified as needed to avoid impacts to oak trees. Modifications to design where feasible include spacing posts up to 6 feet apart to avoid tree roots, removal, minimization of vegetation control where trees or wetlands may be impacted, and using the same post holes of existing guardrail for in-kind replacements.

- There are several invasive weed species already growing in the right-of-way along State Route 78. Special care will be taken when transporting, using, and disposing of soils with invasive weed seeds. Heavy equipment will be cleaned of debris and inspected prior to entering the native habitats in the project area to minimize spread of invasive weeds.

Avoidance and Minimization of Impacts to Wetlands and Waters

- All culvert work shall occur during the dry season when feasible.

- The temporary construction staging areas, access roads, and equipment storage shall be strategically placed at a minimum of 100 feet away from jurisdictional waters to avoid impacts.

- Appropriate BMPs shall be used to control erosion and sedimentation. No sediment or debris will be allowed to enter the creeks, rivers, or drainages.

- Construction site BMPs will be implemented to minimize potential short-term water quality impacts, as required in Caltrans Standard Specification 13-1.

- The performance of the BMPs will be regularly assessed to ensure protection of the receiving waters and identify any necessary corrective measures.

- Specific BMPs will be identified and deployed during construction to protect water quality. Typical BMPs include fiber rolls or silt fences between excavation and aquatic resources, spill kits and drip pans beneath equipment, staging area run-on and run-off protections, and preservation of existing vegetation.

- Temporary impact areas around culvert replacements will be hydroseeded with native coastal sage scrub, chaparral, or wetland species, depending on the location in the footprint.

- Erosion control measures such as fiber rolls and erosion control blankets will use biodegradable materials such as jute instead of plastic mesh to avoid potential plastics pollution hazards to wildlife.

- Dust generated by proposed operations will be controlled with BMPs.
- Work in jurisdictional wetlands will be limited to the temporary and permanent impact areas identified for the project; adjacent areas with native or wetland/jurisdictional waters will be designated as ESAs in plans.

Avoidance and Minimization of Impacts to Arroyo Toad

The following AMMs will be implemented at locations where there is potential for upland habitat of arroyo toad:

- From postmiles 47.8 to 48.9, work and vegetation removal within the construction limits occurring in suitable habitat should be completed within the arroyo toad breeding season (March 15 through July 31), while toads are active and easier to find, to avoid/minimize any impacts to the species. A mandatory preconstruction survey by a qualified biologist would be conducted to ensure that no toads are present in the proposed work area. Should toads be located, appropriate measures may include designation of the location as an ESA and delaying or restricting project activities until after the breeding season.
- Suitable breeding habitat for arroyo toad was not observed within the project work limits. Any potential suitable breeding habitat that is adjacent to work areas would be identified as an ESA to avoid any impacts.
- Prior to the start of active construction activities near identified arroyo toad populations and in potential arroyo toad upland habitat, qualified biologists will install exclusion fencing along the perimeter of all work areas to exclude arroyo toads from the work site. The fencing would consist of woven nylon netting approximately 2 feet in height and attached to wooden stakes. The bottom of the fence will be secured with gravel bags to prevent burrowing beneath the fence. All fencing materials (mesh, stakes, etc.) will be removed following construction activities. Ingress and egress of construction equipment and personnel will be kept to a minimum, but, when necessary, equipment and personnel will use a single access point to the site. The access point would be as narrow as possible and will be closed off by exclusionary fencing when personnel are not present on the site. At minimum, a three-night survey will be conducted in the fenced area by a USFWS-approved biologist. Surveys would continue until there have been three consecutive nights without arroyo toads inside the fence. Surveys would be conducted during the appropriate climactic conditions and time of day or night to maximize the likelihood of encountering arroyo toads. If the toads are found, they will be captured and translocated by a permitted biologist to the closest area of suitable habitat.
- A USFWS-approved biologist will oversee compliance with protective measures for the biological resources in the project area during clearing

and construction activities. The biologist will specifically monitor activities that may affect listed species, such as vegetation removal and the installation of BMPs and ESA fencing to ensure that all AMMs are properly constructed and followed.

Avoidance and Minimization of Impacts to Western Spadefoot

- A biologist with experience in western spadefoot ecology and behavior will be present during all work that could affect western spadefoot from postmiles 45.5 to 46.5. This would typically include work in or near grasslands where shallow temporary vernal pools are present; however, the project biologist will review final plans and determine the extent of work areas requiring monitoring for this species. Work may include grading and other ground disturbance during culvert replacements or guardrail removal/installation, vegetation removal, and removal/installation of ESA and exclusionary fencing.
- If nighttime work is necessary, the biologist will conduct preconstruction clearance surveys of access roads, staging areas, and work sites within 300 feet of suitable breeding habitat.
- The same exclusionary fencing and conservation measures for arroyo toad will be used for any work in suitable habitat for western spadefoot.
- Stockpiles or spoils will be covered the end of each workday, and edges of covers would be sealed tightly with sandbags or other similar material.
- Equipment and personnel will use one single access point to staging and storage areas. Access points would be as narrow as possible and closed off by exclusionary fencing when personnel are not present in the areas.
- If at any time a western spadefoot is found, the biologist will capture and relocate it to suitable habitat at least 300 feet from the work site.
- Contractors will control dust with water and not palliatives.

Migratory Birds and ESA Protection

- To avoid impacts to any nesting birds, if possible, all native vegetation and nonnative shrubs and trees in the impact areas will be removed outside of the breeding season (February 15 through August 31) to avoid impacts to any nesting birds, if possible. Otherwise, a qualified biologist will thoroughly survey all vegetation prior to removal to ensure there are no nesting birds on site. If nesting birds are identified on site, vegetation removal will be delayed until the chicks have fledged, or the nest has failed. If vegetation clearing has not been completed within 7 days after the survey, an additional survey will need to be completed.

- All sensitive habitat outside of the permanent and temporary construction areas shall be designated as an ESA on project plans.
- ESA fencing should be placed around culvert work and guardrail locations adjacent to wetlands and/or native vegetation during construction, with orange snow or mesh fencing where appropriate. A qualified biologist will be present during the installation and removal of ESA fencing to ensure avoidance of sensitive species and habitat.
- No personnel access, staging/storage, equipment, work, debris, or vegetation removal will be allowed in the ESAs.
- Staging will be limited to the pavement or bare/disturbed compacted areas adjacent to the roadway, such as motor vehicle pullouts. Various suitable staging areas have been identified and included in project plans. Staging areas adjacent to sensitive vegetation and/or wetlands will require ESA fencing.
- A qualified biologist will be made available for both the preconstruction and construction phases to review grading plans, address protection of sensitive biological resources, and monitor ongoing work. The biologist shall be familiar with the habitats, plants, and wildlife of the project area; and shall maintain communications with the resident engineer to ensure that issues relating to biological resources are appropriately and lawfully managed.
- During any nighttime construction, all project lighting should be directed at the roadway or the construction site and away from ESAs. Light glare shields may also be used to reduce the extent of illumination onto adjoining areas.

Compensatory Mitigation

- Where feasible, impacts to oaks and sensitive vegetation communities will be avoided. Where permanent impacts to large oak trees and jurisdictional areas (State wetlands and Waters of U.S.) cannot be avoided, they will be mitigated using existing mitigation bank credits. Caltrans has several mitigation banks with available credits for all impacts associated with the project. Credits are available at Rancho San Diego, Rutherford Ranch and Go Cart mitigation banks. Temporary impact areas where grading, clearing and/or grubbing results in the removal of native vegetation will require hydroseeding of the impact area with an appropriate seed mix for the existing plant community. Compensatory mitigation is anticipated for approximately 0.06 acres of permanent impact to coastal sage scrub.
- Where feasible, impacts to wetlands will be avoided. Where impacts cannot be avoided, they will be mitigated by using existing Caltrans mitigation bank credits and hydroseeding of impact areas. Compensatory

mitigation is anticipated for approximately 0.001 acres of permanent impacts to jurisdictional wetlands during culvert replacement work. Caltrans has several mitigation banks with available credits for all habitats and impacts associated with the project. Credits are available at Rancho San Diego, Rutherford Ranch, and Go Cart mitigation banks. Grading, clearing, and/or grubbing of native vegetation in wetland areas may also require revegetation measures, such as hydroseeding with an appropriate seed mix for the existing plant community. Coordination with USFWS, USACE, and CDFW during acquisition of permits and Section 7 consultation may determine additional protective measures to be implemented by the project.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information compiled by Caltrans in the Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR), dated September 2024, and the Historical Resources Evaluation Report (HRER) and Archaeological Survey Report (ASR) dated July 2024 (Caltrans 2024d), 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?	**Less-than-Significant 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**

Regulatory Setting

The term “cultural resources,” as used in this document, refers to the “built environment” (e.g., structures, bridges, railroads, or water conveyance systems); places of traditional or cultural importance; and archaeological sites (both prehistoric and historic), regardless of significance. Laws and regulations dealing with cultural resources are discussed below.

CEQA requires the consideration of cultural resources that are historical resources, unique archaeological resources, and tribal cultural resources. California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5024.1 established the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and outlined the necessary criteria for a cultural resource to be considered eligible for listing in the CRHR and, therefore, a historical resource. Historical resources are defined in PRC Section 5020.1(j), and PRC Section 21083.2(h) as any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which is historically

or archaeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California. In 2014, Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) added the term “tribal cultural resources” to CEQA, and AB 52 is commonly referenced instead of CEQA when discussing the process to identify tribal cultural resources (as well as identifying measures to avoid, preserve, or mitigate effects to them). Defined in PRC Section 21074(a), a tribal cultural resource is a CRHR or local register eligible site, feature, place, cultural landscape, or object which has a cultural value to a California Native American tribe. Tribal cultural resources must also meet the definition of a historical resource.

PRC Section 5024 and 14 CCR 4851(a)(1) requires state agencies to identify and protect state-owned historical resources that have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). PRC Section 5024 further requires Caltrans to inventory state-owned structures in its rights-of-way.

Information from this section was drawn from the HPSR approved for the proposed project by Caltrans in September 2024. While the HPSR is intended to fulfill Caltrans National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 responsibilities, Caltrans also uses the HPSR to fulfill both its PRC 504 and CEQA responsibilities.

Affected Environment

The proposed project’s Project Area Limits were established by qualified Caltrans archaeologists to encompass the maximum extent of ground disturbances as well as direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. The Project Area Limits encompass 14,529 acres, including the extent of the project footprint, a one-parcel buffer of the existing right-of-way, and the boundary of the Julian Historic District townsite. Additionally, a vertical Project Area Limit was included which encompasses depths down to 15 feet for culvert replacements and up to 10 feet above grade to account for temporary construction equipment, advance signage installation, and barriers. The Project Area Limits is equivalent to the Area of Potential Effects used for Section 106 consultation.

The portion of State Route 78 in the project limits traverses the Julian Historic District, which is a registered California Historic Landmark (#412). The Julian Historic District is currently assigned California State Office of Historic Preservation status code 7L, which indicates a California Historic Landmark that does not meet CRHR criteria. The County of San Diego listed the Julian Historic District in the County of San Diego Local Register of Historical Resources in 1979 as a 758-acre rural district, including 29 contributing resources. It was listed due to its potential to yield important information about the County of San Diego’s prehistory and history. To assess for NRHP and CRHR eligibility of the Julian Historic District and potential effects of the

proposed project, an architectural history survey was completed in the district. The survey included all buildings and structures more than 50 years old in 2024 (i.e., buildings constructed in 1974 or earlier).

Built Historical Resources

Twenty-nine historic-period resources in the Project Area Limits were evaluated to determine eligibility for consideration as historical resources under CEQA. Four of the built historical resources were determined eligible and would also be considered historical resources under CEQA. The Julian Historic District is locally designated in the County register; thus, it is also considered a historical resource under CEQA. These findings are summarized below in Table 2-7.

Table 2-7 Built Historical Resources in the Study Area

Name	Address/Location/ Description	Community	Finding
Marks Mercantile/A. Levi and Co	2130-2134 Main Street	Julian	NRHP- and CRHR-eligible and historical resource under CEQA
Swycaffer Saloon/ Daley Butcher Shop	2122 Main Street	Julian	NRHP-and CRHR-eligible and historical resource under CEQA
Hotel Robinson (Julian Hotel)/ Robinson Hotel	2032 Main Street	Julian	NRHP-listed and historical resource under CEQA
Wilcox Building	2102-2110 Main Street	Julian	NRHP- and CRHR-eligible and historical resource under CEQA
Julian Historic District	Julian, CA (758 acres)	Julian	Not NRHP-eligible but historical resource under CEQA

Notes:

CEQA = California Environmental Quality Act; NRHP = National Register of Historic Places

Archaeological Resources

To determine the presence of archaeological resources that could be affected by the proposed project, a records search and archaeological survey were completed for the Project Area Limits. As a result of the record search and survey, 14 previously recorded archaeological resources and one newly recorded site were identified within or adjacent to the Project Area Limits. Archaeological resources in the study area consist of prehistoric habitation sites, milling sites, historic road and bridge remains, a prehistoric/ ethnohistoric village complex, historic trash scatter, and historic State Route 78 alignment and elements. These 15 archaeological sites were

determined to be eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR; thus, they would also be historical resources under CEQA.

Refer to Section 2.1.18 for additional information on Tribal Cultural Resources.

Environmental Consequences

Proposed improvements in the Julian Historic District have been designed to minimize effects on the historic character of the district, considering input from the Julian Community Planning Group. The improvements proposed in the Julian Historic District would consist of installation of ADA curb ramps, bulb outs, and crosswalks in the Caltrans right-of-way. Design modifications were made through this outreach process to reduce the size of bulb outs and remove high-visibility continental crosswalks due to potential conflict with the historic character of the district. As described in Section 2.1.1, the proposed project would include design features to address visual compatibility with existing building types and exterior materials. Crosswalks would consist of stamped asphalt with a colored brick pattern, similar to what is present in many of the historic buildings in Julian. New sidewalks and curb ramps in Julian would be integrally colored to match adjacent older concrete coloration. Detectable warning surfaces, the truncated dome surface pattern that sits on top of curb ramps to alert visually impaired people of the intersection, would also be selected with a color that matches the historic character of downtown Julian.

Improvements in Julian would not involve modifications to historic structures or other alterations that could cause substantial adverse change to historical resources. Curb extensions, curb ramps, and truncated domes are proposed near to four built historical resources. These improvements are proposed adjacent to the Hotel Robinson/Julian Hotel and Marks Mercantile/ A.Levis & Co. buildings. With the proposed improvements mimicking colors and materials that exist in the historic district, the visual effects would be minimized. The Swycaffer Saloon/Daley Butcher Shop and Wilcox Building are not adjacent to the improvements and are in the middle of their respective blocks. The improvements would have the potential to minimally impact these historic resources since the buildings are located away from the proposed improvements.

Outside of Julian, there are no built historical resources in the Caltrans right-of-way or in the staging areas adjacent to the roadway that could be affected during project construction. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on built historical resources.

As noted above, there are 15 archaeological sites in the project area that are considered historical resources under CEQA. None of these sites would be directly impacted by the project. The project area is heavily disturbed due to previous construction of State Route 78 and other infrastructure in the vicinity.

Therefore, the potential for the proposed project to encounter or affect subsurface cultural materials during construction is low. If buried cultural materials, including human remains, are unearthed during construction, Caltrans will stop work in that area until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find and make a recommendation for appropriate treatment. Known archaeological resources near the project limits would be avoided during construction through establishment of ESAs, as described in the project-specific ESA Action Plan, and monitoring will occur in select areas identified by Caltrans archaeologists. For these reasons, no impact to archaeological resources or human remains would occur.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The proposed project would implement the following standard measures to avoid and/or minimize effects on cultural resources:

- If cultural materials are discovered during construction, all earthmoving activity within 60 feet of the discovery area will be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find.
- If human remains are discovered, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities shall cease in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the county coroner contacted. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.8, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the NAHC, which will then notify the Most Likely Descendant. At this time, the person who discovered the remains will contact the District 11 Native American Coordinator so that they may work with the Most Likely Descendant on the respectful treatment and disposition of the remains. Further provisions of PRC Section 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.
- The establishment of ESAs and barriers are required and shall protect elements of designated cultural resources in place for the duration of the project. The ESAs will be marked on plans and delineated in the field by a Caltrans archaeologist.
- The establishment of archaeological monitoring areas (AMAs) shall be required. AMAs shall be established throughout the limits of the project and depicted on project plans. Archaeological monitors as assigned by Caltrans shall monitor ground-disturbing construction-related activities within AMAs. The archaeological monitoring procedures shall meet Standard Special Provisions 14-2.03 for archaeological resources, including 12-2.03A for general practices and 14-2.03B for AMAs.
- Prior to construction, a qualified architectural monitor will document the pre-construction conditions of the adjacent resources. During construction, the architectural monitor will conduct at least one field visit to ensure that

none of the adjacent historic properties are adversely impacted by the proposed project. After construction, the architectural monitor will conduct a post-construction field visit to document the results of the construction and monitoring efforts. The architectural monitor will then complete a construction monitoring report.

- The proposed project will implement measures to avoid impacts to visual resources in the Julian Historic District. These measures would also serve to avoid impacting its historic character. Refer to Section 2.1.1 for additional information on aesthetic avoidance measures.

2.1.6 Energy

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**

Discussion of Energy Evaluation

Because the proposed project is not a capacity-increasing project, a qualitative analysis was performed for this section. Construction of the proposed project would result in short-term direct energy consumption due to the manufacture of construction materials, the use of heavy-duty construction equipment requiring petroleum fuels, and construction workers' motor vehicles as they travel to and from the site. Construction-related energy consumption for the proposed project would be temporary. Energy consumption would not be excessive, because construction would adhere to Caltrans Standard Specifications, which include requirements to consider environmentally friendly treatments and use materials with recycled content to the extent feasible.

Once operational, the proposed project would result in negligible changes in energy consumption along the State Route 78 corridor. The proposed project would replace or improve existing elements along the roadway, including pavement, culverts, guardrails, shoulders, crosswalks, traffic management systems, and signage. These features, as operational and safety improvements to the roadway, would not induce additional vehicle travel or otherwise consume excessive or unnecessary amounts of energy. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during operation, and there would be no impact.

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

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**
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**

Discussion of Geology and Soils Evaluation

The proposed project is not in an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone (California Department of Conservation 2019), and adverse effects related to earthquake fault rupture are unlikely. The proposed project would be constructed to meet Caltrans' Seismic Design Criteria, which would minimize potential risks related to seismic ground shaking and other seismic hazards. Temporary effects due to soil erosion would be addressed by compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit. The proposed project would make improvements to existing Caltrans facilities without changing their overall function and is not likely to exacerbate any existing hazardous soil conditions. Furthermore, site-specific

soil conditions would be evaluated during the design phase in the project Geotechnical Report, which would provide recommendations to address any soil, liquefaction, or seismic issues. Therefore, no impacts would occur due to seismic or soil hazards.

The project area is in low, marginal, and no potential paleontological sensitive zones as mapped by the County of San Diego (County of San Diego 2011b). Furthermore, work would be paused in the event of unanticipated discovery of paleontological resources, and any resources would be evaluated by a Caltrans archaeologist for recommendations on treatment prior to commencement of work. As a result, project construction activities would have no impact on paleontological resources.

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Climate Change Technical Study dated September 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

Regulatory Framework

California has been innovative and proactive in addressing greenhouse gas emissions and climate change by passing multiple Senate Bills, Assembly Bills, and executive orders, including but not limited to those described in the following paragraphs.

Executive Order S-3-05 (June 1, 2005)

The goal of this order is to reduce California's greenhouse gas emissions to (1) year 2000 levels by 2010, (2) year 1990 levels by 2020, and (3) 80 percent below year 1990 levels by 2050. This goal was further reinforced with the passage of AB 32 in 2006 and Senate Bill 32 in 2016.

AB 32, Chapter 488, 2006, Núñez and Pavley, The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006

AB 32 codified the 2020 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals outlined in Executive Order S-3-05, further mandating that ARB create a scoping plan and implement rules to achieve "real, quantifiable, cost-effective reductions of greenhouse gases." The law requires ARB to adopt rules and regulations in

an open public process to achieve the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective greenhouse gas reductions.

Executive Order B-30-15 (April 2015)

This order establishes an interim statewide greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 to ensure that California meets its target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. It further orders all state agencies with jurisdiction over sources of greenhouse gas emissions to implement measures, pursuant to statutory authority, to achieve reductions of greenhouse gas emissions to meet the 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets.

Senate Bill 743, Chapter 386 (September 2013)

This bill changes the metric of consideration for transportation impacts pursuant to CEQA from a focus on automobile delay to alternative methods focused on vehicle miles traveled; this is intended to promote the state's goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and traffic-related air pollution and promoting multimodal transportation, while balancing the needs of congestion management and safety.

Executive Order B-55-18 (September 2018)

This order sets a new statewide goal to achieve and maintain carbon neutrality no later than 2045. This goal is in addition to existing statewide targets of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Affected Environment

Greenhouse gas emissions from transportation projects can be divided into those produced during operation of the State Highway System and those produced during construction. The primary greenhouse gases produced by the transportation sector are CO_2, methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), and hydrofluorocarbons. CO_2 emissions are a product of the combustion of petroleum-based products, like gasoline, in internal combustion engines. Relatively small amounts of CH_4 and N_2O are emitted during fuel combustion. In addition, a small amount of hydrofluorocarbons emissions is attributable to the transportation sector.

The proposed project is in a rural/semi-urban area of San Diego County. The primary land uses in the area include rural residential, retail, service commercial, and open space. Greenhouse gas emissions in the project area are mainly generated through fuel consumption (e.g., vehicle exhaust) along the highway and regional/local roads. In 2021, State Route 78 had annual average daily traffic ranging from approximately 1,350 to 8,400 vehicle trips within the general project limits (Caltrans 2021). Energy use for building electricity, heating, and cooling also contributes to the regional greenhouse gas emissions portfolio. A Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable

Communities Strategy by SANDAG guides transportation and land use development in the proposed project area to target greenhouse gas reductions.

Environmental Consequences

The proposed project would generate greenhouse gas emissions during construction due to material processing and transportation, construction equipment, and traffic delays. These emissions would be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase. Temporary construction emissions would be reduced with BMPs and Caltrans Standard Specifications, which are described further below in the section titled Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures.

Greenhouse gas emissions associated with construction activities were estimated using the Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool (CAL-CET version 2021v1.0.2). Table 2-8 shows the anticipated construction-related greenhouse gas emissions for the proposed project. Construction of the project would generate approximately 1,181 metric tons of CO_2e, after accounting for the global warming potential of each greenhouse gas.

Table 2-8 Total Construction-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse Gas	Total Emissions (tons)
CO_2	1,071
CH_4	0.01
N_2O	0.09
BC	0.02
HFC	0.05
Total CO_2e (Metric Tons)	**1,181**

Notes:

Global warming potential values, relative to 1 ton of CO_2e, are assumed as follows: N_2O is 298, CH_4 is 25, BC is 460, HFC is 1,430.

BC = black carbon; CH_4 = methane; CO_2 = carbon dioxide; CO_2e=carbon dioxide equivalent; HFC = hydrofluorocarbons; N_2O = nitrous oxide

Source: Caltrans 2024e

As standard practice for all projects, Caltrans incorporates required measures that limit greenhouse gas emissions during construction to the extent feasible. With implementation of these measures (listed below) as part of the project, project construction would be completed efficiently and with minimal energy and material waste, in alignment with a TMP, to minimize excess fuel consumption during temporary lane closures. Therefore, project construction would not generate substantial greenhouse gas emissions that would have a

significant impact on the environment, and the impact would be less than significant.

Once operational, the proposed project would not have a measurable effect on regional greenhouse gas emissions. The project would replace or rehabilitate existing transportation facilities without an increase in vehicle capacity or induced travel, and operational emissions would remain similar to existing conditions. Therefore, operation of the proposed project would not generate greenhouse gas emissions that would have a significant impact on the environment.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

All construction contracts include Caltrans Standard Specifications to reduce temporary greenhouse gas emissions. Contractors are also required to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and will comply with all ARB emission reduction regulations.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the hazardous waste memorandum prepared by Caltrans dated August 2024 (Caltrans 2024f), the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	**Less-than-Significant Impact**
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	**No Impact**
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	**Less-than-Significant 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**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
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**

Regulatory Setting

California regulates hazardous materials, waste, and substances under the authority of the California Health and Safety Code and is also authorized by the federal government to implement the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act in the state. California law also addresses specific handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup, and emergency planning of hazardous waste.

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 are vital if hazardous materials are found, disturbed, or generated during project construction.

Affected Environment

Multiple facilities with onsite and nearby hazardous waste/unauthorized release were identified in the project area through the Cortese List. Cortese is a database that provides information about hazardous materials release locations. Four open cases are located in downtown Julian; these cases are all related to gasoline releases on private properties.

Soil screening and statistical analysis for aerially deposited lead was performed in September 2022 and July 2023. Based on the statistical analysis results, soil in the proposed project would be considered unregulated for aerially deposited lead. Existing wooden posts are present in the project limits; removal would generate treated wood waste. Treated wood waste products contain hazardous chemical preservatives, and treated wood waste is considered hazardous waste. The proposed project also would include cold planing of paved surfaces, including roadway surfaces with thermoplastic striping or other pavement marking. Paint and thermoplastics may include residue containing lead or other hazardous waste residue.

Environmental Consequences

The primary potential hazards to the public or environment related to transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would occur during construction of the proposed project. Construction activities would be focused in the Caltrans right-of-way on State Route 78, mostly involving the use of concrete and other hardscape materials. Typical hazardous materials used

during construction (e.g., solvents, paints, and fuels) would be managed in accordance with Caltrans' standard measures and other regulatory requirements, and are not anticipated to compromise workers' health and safety.

However, soil disturbance would be required for the proposed project, which may unearth previously undiscovered hazardous materials. As described previously, there are Cortese-listed sites in the immediate project vicinity through Julian, which are related to prior releases and groundwater impacts. The proposed project would only entail excavation to a limited depth to complete improvements to the roadway surface in the vicinity of these sites. Construction activities would likely not encounter groundwater, which ranges from 28 to 290 feet below grade in the area. For these reasons, impacts from these hazardous materials sites are not expected. With adherence to standard practices, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard due to routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

Any hazardous materials determined to be present during construction would require special handling, reuse, and disposal because of their potential to harm human health and the environment. To avoid adverse environmental effects related to the accidental release of these toxins into the environment during construction, a debris containment and collection plan would be required for proper containment during disturbance activities. Additionally, based on the statistical analysis for aerially deposited lead, a lead compliance plan would be prepared.

The proposed project would generate treated wood waste for activities involving removal of existing wooden posts from either guardrail or signs. Accordingly, the proposed project would implement Caltrans Standard Special Provision 14-11.14, Treated Wood Waste, to manage the handling and disposal of this hazardous waste in accordance with standard practices.

During pavement rehabilitation (cold planing), the proposed project would remove traffic striping and pavement parking that may contain lead. If traffic striping and/or pavement markings will not be removed prior to cold planing, Standard Special Provision 36-4, Residue Containing Lead from Paint and Thermoplastic, would be required. If yellow striping paint, yellow thermoplastic traffic stripe, or yellow pavement markings will be removed from paved surfaces prior to and separately from cold planing, Standard Special Provision 14-11.12, Removal of Yellow Traffic Stripe and Pavement Marking with Hazardous Waste Residue, would be required. Also, if removal of any traffic striping or pavement markings other than yellow is performed prior to and separately from cold planing, Standard Special Provision 84-9.03B, Remove Traffic Stripes and Pavement Markings Containing Lead, would be required.

In accordance with standard Caltrans construction protocols, staging areas for construction equipment and materials would be in specifically designated areas in the Caltrans right-of-way or immediately adjacent properties (if determined necessary due to safety or site constraints). A spill prevention plan would be implemented to reduce risk of accidental spills of fuels, solvents, or other regularly used hazardous materials during construction activities. Soil stockpiles would not be permitted to contain hazardous materials or be located in ESAs, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.05. With adherence to applicable state and federal regulations, permit conditions, and Caltrans Standard Special Provisions and Non-Standard Special Provisions, the proposed project would not create a significant hazard through upset and accident conditions involving release of hazardous materials into the environment. Therefore, there would be no impact.

The proposed project would take place within 0.25 mile of existing schools, including Julian Community Nursery School (0.02 mile north of State Route 78); Witch Creek School (0.02 mile south of State Route 78); and Julian High School, Julian Junior High School, and Julian Charter School (co-located approximately 0.13 mile north of State Route 78). The proposed project would take place in the State Route 78 right-of-way or immediately adjacent parcels, and would not infringe on the boundaries of any schools. As mentioned above, Caltrans' provisions related to hazardous materials, along with applicable state and federal regulatory requirements, would be adhered to by the project to ensure that hazardous materials are properly contained during construction activities. Therefore, potential impacts from emitting or handling hazardous materials within 0.25 mile of existing schools would be less than significant.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The proposed project would implement the following standard measures to avoid or minimize effects from hazardous materials:

- Caltrans is designated as the generator of hazardous waste produced from work activities, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.07.
- For hazardous waste generated on the job site, the Water Pollution Control manager must be knowledgeable of proper handling and emergency procedures for hazardous waste, as demonstrated by submitting a training certificate that indicates completion of training required under 22 California Code of Regulations Section 66265.16, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.01.
- A Lead Compliance Plan under Caltrans Standard Specifications 7-1.02K(6)(j)(ii) would be required during construction when

handling lead-contaminated soils, as well as removal of lead-based paint, thermoplastic, painted traffic stripe, and/or pavement marking.

- Caltrans will follow all requirements for aerially deposited lead treatment and disposal pursuant to Caltrans Standard Special Provision 7-1.02K(6)(j)(iii).
- Removal of any treated wood waste (e.g., wooden posts for guardrails, signs, barriers, or piles) would require proper handling and disposal, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Special Provision 14-11.14. Treated wood waste products contain hazardous chemical preservatives; therefore, treated wood waste is considered a California Hazardous Waste.
- The construction contractor, upon discovery of unanticipated asbestos and/or hazardous substance, is required to immediately stop working in the area of the discovery and notify Caltrans Environmental Engineering, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specification 14-11.02. Environmental Engineering will use the on-call Construction Emergency Response Contract to perform any required work for the proposed project.
- The construction contractor is required, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.03, to handle, store, and dispose of hazardous waste under 22 California Code of Regulations Division 4.5.
- Excavation, transportation, and handling of material containing hazardous waste or contamination must result in no visible dust migration. When clearing, grubbing, and performing earthwork operations in areas containing hazardous waste or contamination, a water truck or water tank must be provided on the job site, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.04.
- The construction contractor is not permitted to stockpile material containing hazardous waste or contamination unless ordered by Caltrans or a regulatory agency. Stockpiles containing hazardous waste or contamination must not be placed where affected by surface run-on or run-off. Stockpiles are not permitted in ESAs. Stockpiled material must not enter storm drains, inlets, or Waters of the State. These requirements are provided in Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.05.
- The construction contractor is designated the generator of hazardous waste produced from materials the construction contractor has brought to the job site, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-11.06.
- Imported local materials from a (1) noncommercial source or (2) source not regulated under California jurisdiction must be evaluated and approved for use by Environmental Engineering Branch, in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 6 1.03B.

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

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**
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**

Regulatory Setting

Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management)

Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) directs all federal agencies to refrain from conducting, supporting, or allowing actions in floodplains unless it is the only practicable alternative.

Affected Environment

The project is in the San Diego River and San Dieguito watersheds (County of San Diego 2024). Within the project limits, State Route 78 crosses several streams throughout both watersheds, including Hatfield Creek, Witch Creek, San Diego River, Bailey Creek, Coleman Creek, and Banner Creek (USGS 2024). Stream crossings are on bridges or in culverts under the roadway.

The project overlies a small portion of the Santa Maria Valley Groundwater Basin just east of Ramona but is largely outside of mapped groundwater basins.

The proposed project would occur primarily in existing developed roadways and Caltrans facilities, with some culvert improvement work occurring immediately adjacent to the roadway. The project extends over several areas mapped as floodplains, which are summarized below along with the corresponding Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map:

- Witch Creek, Flood Insurance Rate Map 06073C1154G
- Santa Ysabel Creek, Flood Insurance Rate Map 06073C1156G
- Coleman Creek, Flood Insurance Rate Map 06073C1159G
- Coleman Creek, Flood Insurance Rate Map 06073C1178G

The proposed project includes features in mapped floodplains. Project improvements would primarily occur in existing developed facilities.

Environmental Consequences

The proposed project would make improvements to existing facilities along State Route 78 without modifying existing drainage patterns. One culvert located at post mile 48.30 is located within the floodplain. However, the culvert is being replaced in-kind with no changes besides material type. This improvement would have no significant impact to the floodplain.

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

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

Discussion of Land Use and Planning Evaluation

The proposed project would not construct any barriers or inhibit access to and from the unincorporated communities of Ramona, Ballena, Witch Creek, Santa Ysabel, Wynola, and Julian. During construction, the proposed project would implement a TMP to ensure that community access is retained throughout construction. The project complies with the County of San Diego General Plan, Ramona Community Plan, and Julian Community Plan because the project replaces or improves existing facilities and maintains the existing land use and community boundaries. Therefore, there would be no impact.

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

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

Discussion of Mineral Resource Evaluation

There are no existing mines or mineral resource recovery sites in the project footprint, as identified by the County of San Diego and the California Department of Conservation. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the loss of mineral resources or mineral resource recovery sites. There would be no impact.

2.1.13 Noise

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**
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**

Discussion of Noise Evaluation

The proposed project is classified as a Type III project, which is exempt from analysis under 23 CFR 772; accordingly, no noise abatement analysis is included herein (Caltrans 2020a). The proposed project would take place on State Route 78 in the Caltrans right-of-way, in both rural and urban areas, in the communities of Ramona, Ballena, Witch Creek, Santa Ysabel, Wynola, Whispering Pines, and Julian. State Route 78 is a highly traveled roadway, with an average annual daily traffic ranging from approximately 2,500 to 10,000 vehicle trips within the general project limits. The proposed

improvements would not modify the roadway in a way that would bring traveling vehicles (and associated roadway noise) closer to sensitive receptors, and no widening or capacity increase would occur. Therefore, the proposed project would not increase noise levels above existing conditions.

Construction noise for the proposed project would be temporary and would be controlled by Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-8.02, which states the following:

- Do not exceed a maximum sound level of 86 A-weighted decibels at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- Equip an internal combustion engine with the manufacturer-recommended muffler. Do not operate an internal combustion engine on the job site without the appropriate muffler.

Construction noise would be short term, intermittent, and often overshadowed by local traffic noise. All construction equipment would be inspected at periodic intervals to ensure proper maintenance and presence of noise control devices. Any idling equipment would also be turned off when not in use. Thus, substantial temporary noise increases during construction would not occur, and there would be no impact.

There would be no operational change in use of the roadway, and vibration levels would remain the same as existing conditions. The proposed project would result in intermittent, localized vibration in the project area during construction processes such grading, excavation, and earthwork, along with equipment movement. The vibration levels created by the normal movement of vehicles—including graders, front loaders, and backhoes used for construction—are the same order of magnitude as the groundborne vibration created by heavy vehicles traveling on streets and highways. Therefore, operating equipment would not generate excessive groundborne noise or vibration, and there would be no impact.

2.1.14 Population and Housing

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**

Discussion of Population and Housing Evaluation

The proposed project would improve various assets along State Route 78 without increasing the capacity of the highway or providing new access to the area. The proposed project would improve operational efficiency and safety of the highway but would not induce substantial unplanned population growth. The project would not result in any residential or commercial property relocations; thus, no displacement of people would occur, and no replacement housing would need to be constructed. Therefore, there would be no impact.

2.1.15 Public Services

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services
a) 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, 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**

Discussion of Public Services Evaluation

The proposed project would include the rehabilitation and enhancement of multiple assets on State Route 78, from post miles 37.2 through 60, in the communities of Ramona, Ballena, Witch Creek, Santa Ysabel, Wynola, Whispering Pines, and Julian. Construction of the proposed project would be in the existing developed Caltrans right-of-way and would be temporary and of short duration. During construction, a TMP would be in place to identify any needed closures and establish alternate routes to public facilities, such as schools and parks. Public roads would remain open to emergency vehicles at all times. 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. Therefore, no new or physically altered governmental facilities would be needed to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or performance objectives.

Once operational, the proposed project would improve travel efficiency and safety along State Route 78. No additional burden would be placed on public

services due to an increase in the local population or change in travel patterns. Therefore, there would be no impact.

2.1.16 Recreation

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**

Discussion of Recreation Evaluation

The proposed project would include the rehabilitation and enhancement of multiple assets on State Route 78, from post miles 37.2 through 60.0, in the unincorporated communities of Ramona, Ballena, Witch Creek, Santa Ysabel, Wynola, Julian, and Whispering Pines. These improvements would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur. Equipment and materials storage sites would be sited as far away from park uses as feasible. Staging areas would be in the Caltrans right-of-way or immediately adjoining properties and would not require use of any recreational sites. The proposed project does not include recreational facilities and would not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on recreation.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The proposed project would implement the following standard measure to avoid or minimize effects on recreation:

- Equipment and materials storage sites would be located as far away from residential and park uses as feasible.

2.1.17 Transportation

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**

Discussion of Transportation Evaluation

Existing transit facilities along State Route 78 include several bus stops for San Diego Metropolitan Transit System's Routes 891/892 in Santa Ysabel, Wynola, and Julian. Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks and crosswalks that are primarily in town centers for nearby communities; the rural areas that make up the majority of the project area do not contain sidewalks. The project area does not currently contain any bicycle lanes; however, there are bicycle facilities planned in the area separate from this project. The County of San Diego has identified several bicycle improvements planned for future implementation in its Active Transportation Plan, including Class II bicycle lanes between Ramona and Julian within the project limits (County of San Diego 2018).

During construction, a TMP would be implemented to minimize any vehicle and transit delays along the roadway and identify alternate routes as needed for all transportation modes. Once operational, the proposed project would improve operational efficiency and safety along the roadway. No transit or roadway facilities would be removed or inhibited by the proposed project.

Additionally, the proposed project would be compatible with existing and planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities because it would implement Complete Streets improvements and result in negligible change in use of the roadway. The proposed project would improve mobility for pedestrians in the area through ADA upgrades of curb ramps, sidewalks, and crosswalks in downtown Julian. Curb extensions would be constructed to meet ADA standards, which would increase the visibility of pedestrians crossing the roadway, with fewer pavement markings and signs. Crosswalks would be installed on State Route 78 at eight locations to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety. The proposed project would not preclude future implementation of bicycle improvements in the County's Active Transportation Plan. Therefore, there would be no conflict with existing or planned pedestrian or bicycle facilities.

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information compiled by Caltrans in the Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR), dated September 2024, and the Historical Resources Evaluation Report (HRER) and Archaeological Survey Report (ASR) dated July 2024 (Caltrans 2024d), the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
A substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	**No Impact**
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	**Less-than-Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

In compliance with AB 52, a Sacred Lands File search request of the initial project area was submitted to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on March 10, 2023, by Caltrans. It was returned with positive results on March 28, 2023. The NAHC provided Caltrans with a list of 24 Native American contacts who may have additional knowledge of cultural resources in the project area. Consultation letters were sent out on April 11, 2023. On August 2, 2023, updated project information and an updated project scope were sent out via email, and by mail the following day.

Replies were received from the following six contacts: San Pasqual Band of Diegueño Mission Indians deferred to Mesa Grande on June 18, 2024; Fort Yuma Reservation deferred to local tribes on May 11, 2023; Jamul Indian Village deferred to Mesa Grande and Santa Ysabel on August 30, 2023; La Posta Band of Diegueño Mission Indians requested monitors during ground-disturbing activities on August 2, 2023; Campo Band of Diegueno Mission Indians replied on June 10, 2024, with the interest of initiating consultation;

and Mesa Grande Band of Diegueño Mission Indians also requested monitoring on February 2, 2024, with specific concerns for the areas between post miles 42.8 through 43.4 and post miles 44.6 through 45.5. Responses were not received from Ipay Nation of Santa Ysabel.

Environmental Consequences

As described above, tribal consultation has been undertaken for the proposed project in compliance with AB 52. The information and recommendations provided by local tribes has been considered during project development. The proposed project would be required to implement AMMs in alignment with the recommendations of Native American tribes. These measures would include tribal monitoring and evaluation, avoidance, or treatment of potentially significant resources if encountered. Consultation will continue throughout the duration of the project to further refine the measures required during construction activities.

If buried cultural materials are encountered during construction, it is Caltrans' policy that work stop in that area until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find. Additional survey will be required if the project changes to include areas not previously surveyed. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The proposed project would implement the following measures to avoid or minimize impacts to tribal cultural resources during project construction:

- Recommendations for appropriate treatment of tribal cultural resources shall be identified through the consultation process with interested tribes. Native American monitors shall be present during construction activities that involve ground disturbance in sensitive areas. If potentially significant resources are discovered, coordination with tribal representatives shall be required to determine the appropriate treatment methods. Buffer zones around significant tribal cultural resources shall be delineated using ESA fencing to the satisfaction of tribal monitors.

- If cultural materials are discovered during construction, all earthmoving activity within 60 feet of the discovery area will be diverted until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find.

- If human remains are discovered, State Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 states that further disturbances and activities shall cease in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the county coroner contacted. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.8, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the NAHC, which will then notify the Most Likely Descendant. At this time, the person who discovered the remains will contact the District 11 Native American Coordinator so that they may work with the Most Likely

Descendant on the respectful treatment and disposition of the remains. Further provisions of PRC Section 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

- The establishment of ESAs and barriers are required and shall protect elements of designated cultural resources in place for the duration of the project. The ESAs will be marked on plans and delineated in the field by a Caltrans archaeologist.

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or 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**
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	**No Impact**

Discussion of Utilities and Service Systems Evaluation

The proposed project would improve various components on State Route 78 to maintain the service life of the highway. The project would not create a new demand for utilities and service systems that would require construction of new or expanded facilities. There are existing utilities in the project area, such as overhead electrical distribution lines in the highway shoulder and sewer lines and pump stations in downtown Julian. Avoidance of existing utilities and minimization of conflicts and relocations would be a key component of the design process. Temporary interruptions to service are not anticipated; however, if determined necessary during final design, they would be scheduled during non-use or off-peak service periods to minimize disruption, and notifications to any affected parties would be made in advance by the

utility provider and/or Public Information Officer. This standard practice would ensure that any service disruptions are understood by the public and do not pose a health or safety risk to individual customers.

The proposed project would not result in any population growth or subsequent increase in water demand, wastewater generation, or solid waste disposal needs. The proposed project may use a limited amount of water if necessary for dust control during construction; however, these demands would be negligible and would not exceed available supplies. Similarly, wastewater disposal would only be temporarily required during construction and would not exceed the treatment capacity of the Santa Maria Wastewater Reclamation Plant or the Julian Water Pollution Control Facility, which can treat up to 1 million gallons per day (mgd) and 0.040 mgd, respectively (Ramona Municipal Water District 2024; County of San Diego 2013). Solid waste disposal, including construction demolition debris recycling, would occur in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications 14-10 and would not exceed state or local standards or conflict with applicable statutes. The project would not require the construction of any new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or solid waste disposal facilities. The project proposes replacement or rehabilitation of stormwater drainage facilities (culverts), the environmental effects of which are assessed throughout this document by resource area. Therefore, there would be no impact.

2.1.20 Wildfire

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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	**No Impact**
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	**No Impact**
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**

Discussion of Wildfire Evaluation

The proposed project would take place in areas classified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (CAL FIRE 2024). Project construction activities would occur in the existing developed Caltrans right-of-way that is operated and maintained by Caltrans. Emergency access could be temporarily affected by construction delays or road closures. However, the proposed project would implement a TMP to ensure that emergency vehicle access for fire responders is maintained throughout construction.

The project would adhere to Caltrans Standard Specifications 7-1.02M(2) to manage fire risk during construction, which requires preparation of a fire prevention plan. Wildfire risk would not be exacerbated by the proposed project due to slope, prevailing winds, or other factors. The proposed project would not require the installation of any infrastructure that could exacerbate wildfire risks or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. The proposed project would not change the grade of the roadway or surrounding areas in a manner that could result in post-fire instability. Once operational, the proposed project would not introduce new uses or develop facilities that could exacerbate wildfire risks. Therefore, there would be 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

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

Cumulative impacts to resources in the project area may result from residential, commercial, industrial, and highway development, as well as from agricultural development and the conversion to more intensive agricultural cultivation. These land use activities can degrade habitat and species diversity through consequences such as displacement and fragmentation of habitats and populations, 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.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 describes when a cumulative impact analysis is necessary and what elements are necessary for an adequate discussion of cumulative impacts. The definition of cumulative impacts under CEQA can be found in Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Caltrans internal records and the State Clearinghouse CEQANet web portal were reviewed to find cumulative projects occurring along State Route 78, or projects planned to occur in the future, that could overlap with the project footprint or otherwise affect similar resource areas. Caltrans is undertaking various planned projects along State Route 78, including the State Route 78 Ramona Asset Management Project, State Route 78 Culvert and Road Rehabilitation Project, and the Interstate 15/State Route 78 Managed Lanes Direct Connectors Project. These projects also involve improvements to State Route 78 in San Diego County but do not overlap with the project footprint. Also, routine maintenance projects (e.g., tree trimming or facility repairs) occur on an as-needed basis; these projects may occur in the project area, depending on the maintenance required.

Environmental Consequences

The proposed project is in a rural/semi-urban setting and does not involve significant changes to the existing use of the infrastructure or surrounding land uses. As described in this Initial Study, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the environment or eliminate important examples of California history. The proposed project involves construction activity in existing developed Caltrans facilities. Construction would result in minor temporary and short-term activities, which would not substantially reduce habitat or restrict the range of special-status plant or animal species (see

Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources). The proposed culvert replacements would result in small areas of permanent and temporary impact to wetlands, upland and other sensitive natural communities. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures would be implemented during construction to address significant impacts, including the use of mitigation banks to offset permanent impacts. Furthermore, the proposed project would not affect current operations and maintenance activities and would not result in a substantial change to the environment once constructed. Therefore, these impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Construction of the proposed project would result in temporary and short-term impacts that would be limited to the project site and immediate vicinity. Although impacts related to resources such as air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and traffic would contribute to regional impacts, these impacts would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to any significant cumulative impact resulting from other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the vicinity of the site. This is due to the scale of the proposed project activities, limited nature of construction-related impacts over a relatively short construction period, minimal operational change, and the proposed AMMs that would limit the potential for any significant impacts. Furthermore, there are no cumulative projects planned or under construction that have been identified in the project footprint that could overlap with project effects on other resources.

As discussed in this Initial Study, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts or no impacts on the following resource areas: Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire. AMMs are included as part of the proposed project to limit the potential for any significant impacts. Therefore, all impacts would be avoided or minimized, and the proposed project would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to significant cumulative impacts on any of these resource areas. The incremental effect of the proposed project would not be cumulatively considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Therefore, there would be no impact.

The analysis conducted in this Initial Study concluded that the proposed project would not have a significant adverse effect on human beings. Air quality emissions during construction would be minimized through Caltrans Standard Specifications for dust control, proper equipment use, idling limits, and compliance with SDAPCD rules and regulations. Hazardous materials used during construction would similarly be controlled through Caltrans Standard Specifications for proper storage, transport, and disposal of all materials. The proposed project is considered a Type III project, which would

not require noise abatement, and operational noise levels would remain similar to existing levels. Therefore, there would be no significant adverse effect on human beings.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No additional measures are required beyond those already discussed by resource area in this Initial Study.

Chapter 3 Coordination

The Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration for this project was distributed to federal, state, regional, and local agencies and elected officials; tribal groups; and interested groups, organizations, and individuals.

The Notice of Intent was also sent to property owners within a 200-foot buffer of the State Route 78 centerline within the project limits. A full distribution list for the project is available upon request at the Caltrans District 11 office.

Native American consultation has been completed for the proposed project pursuant to AB 52. Refer to Section 2.1.18 for additional details.

Coordination with SHPO is ongoing to determine concurrence with findings of effect for historic resources. Caltrans, pursuant to Section 106 PA, Stipulation X.B.2, determined that a Finding of No Adverse Effect is appropriate for the proposed project. Concurrence was requested from SHPO for this finding on September 6, 2024.

Additionally, coordination on the proposed project with local community planning groups has been ongoing. On February 29, 2024, Caltrans sent an outreach email to Julian Planning Group member Kiki Skagen Munshi. Munshi responded on February 29, 2024, and directed the inquiry to President of the Historical Society Julie Davis and Town Historian David Lewis. Lewis replied via telephone on March 4, 2024, and provided additional information. Munshi also asked Caltrans to attend the Julian Planning Group meeting on March 11, 2024. A Caltrans Project Manager and Public Information Officer attended the meeting and received feedback regarding the proposed design in the local County register-listed Julian Historic District. Caltrans has taken that feedback and has redesigned the project using the Planning Group's input.

Chapter 4 References

California Air Resources Board (ARB). 2023. California Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Data–2023 Edition, 2000-2021. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/ghg-inventory-data>. Accessed: June 14, 2024.

Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2017. Construction Site Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual. California Department of Transportation Division of Environmental Analysis, Stormwater Program. Sacramento, California.

Caltrans. 2019. California State Scenic Highway Map. Interactive Map. Available at: https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aacaa. Accessed July 12, 2024.

Caltrans. 2020a. Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol for New Highway Construction, Reconstruction, and Retrofit Barrier Projects. Available at: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/env/traffic-noise-protocol-april-2020-a11y.pdf. Accessed July 26, 2024.

Caltrans. 2020b. Transportation Analysis Under CEQA for Projects on the State Highway System. Available at: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/sb-743/2020-09-10-1st-edition-tac-fnl-a11y.pdf. Accessed August 9, 2024.

Caltrans 2021. Traffic Census Program. Available at: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/census. Accessed September 5, 2024.

Caltrans. 2023. Standard Specifications – 2023 Edition. Available at: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/2023_stdspecs-a11y.pdf. Accessed August 9, 2024.

Caltrans. 2024a. SR-78 Asset Management – Visual Impact Assessment.

Caltrans. 2024b. W. Xia, personal communications, May 29, 2024, and June 7, 2024. State Route 78 Julian Asset Management Project Construction Emissions Summary, CAL-CET version 2021v1.0.2.

Caltrans. 2024c. Natural Environmental Study (NES)– State Route 78 Asset Management Project.

Caltrans. 2024d. Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) – State Route 78 Pavement Rehabilitation Project. September.

Caltrans. 2024e. C. Graciano, personal communication, September 3, 2024. State Route 78 Julian Asset Management Project Greenhouse Gas Construction Emissions Summary, CAL-CET version 2021v1.0.2.

Caltrans. 2024f. Reevaluation 11-43089: SR-78 Pavement Rehabilitation Project (Air Quality, Hazardous Waste, and Noise).

California Department of Conservation. 2019. CGS Seismic Hazards Program: Alquist-Priolo Fault Hazard Zones. Available at: https://gis.data.ca.gov/datasets/cadoc::cgs-seismic-hazards-program-alquist-priolo-fault-hazard-zones-1/explore?location=33.263263%2C-116.747355%2C9.56. Accessed July 21, 2024.

California Department of Conservation. 2020. California Important Farmland Finder. Available at: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/ Accessed July 22, 2024.

California Department of Conservation. 2022. California Willamson Act Enrollment Finder. Available at: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/WilliamsonAct/. Accessed July 22, 2024.

California Department of Conservation. 2024. Mines Resource Related Data and Maps Interactive Maps. Available at: https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/mineral resources/. Accessed July 22, 2024.

CAL FIRE (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection). 2024. Fire Hazard Severity Zones in State Responsibility Area. Available at: https://calfire-forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=988d431a42b242b29d89597ab693d008 Accessed July 22, 2024.

County of San Diego. 2007. Guidelines for Determining Significance of Report Format and Content Requirements – Air Quality. Available at: https://www.sandiego county.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/ProjectPlanning/docs/AQ-Guidelines.pdf. Accessed September 5, 2024.

County of San Diego. 2011a. County of San Diego General Plan. Available at: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/docs/GP/GENERAL%20PLAN_April2022_PRINT.pdf. Accessed July 22, 2024.

County of San Diego. 2011b. County San Diego General Plan Update. Final Environmental Impact Report, Volume I, Program EIR. SCH #2002111067. Available at: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/generalplan/GP-EIR/EIR-1.html. Accessed July 22, 2024.

County of San Diego. 2011c. Ramona Community Plan. Available at: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/docs/CP/Ramona_CP.pdf. Accessed July 22, 2024.

County of San Diego. 2011d. Julian Community Plan. Available at: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/docs/CP/Julian_CP.pdf Accessed July 22, 2024.

County of San Diego. 2013. Julian Sewer Service Area, Sewer Master Plan. Available at: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/dpw/SAN_DIEGO_

COUNTY_SANITATION_DISTRICT/Sewer%20Master%20Plan/!Julian%20Sewer%20MP%2001%2031%2013.pdf. Accessed August 22, 2024.

County of San Diego. 2018. Active Transportation Plan. Available at: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/pds/advance/activetransportationplan/FinalATPOctober2018.pdf. Accessed August 13, 2024.

County of San Diego, Airport Land Use Commission. 2022a. Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for Ramona Airport. Available at: https://www.san.org/Airport-Projects/Land-Use-Compatibility/ALUC-Resources. Accessed July 22, 2024.

County of San Diego. 2022b. Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan. Available at: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/oes/emergency_management/plans/op-area-plan/2023-eop/EOP2023_Complete%20Plan.pdf. Accessed July 22, 2024.

County of San Diego. 2024. Watersheds of San Diego County. Available at: https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/dpw/watersheds/Watersheds.html. Accessed August 6, 2024.

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). 2024. National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) Viewer. Available at: https://hazards-fema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8b0adb51996444d4879338b5529aa9cd. Accessed August 16, 2024.

Holland, R.F. 1986. Preliminary descriptions of the terrestrial natural communities of California. State of California, The Resources Agency.

Kittel, G., P. Comer, T. Keeler-Wolf, M.S. Reid, and K.A. Schulz. 2015. Californian Perennial Grassland. Nature Serve Explorer. Available at: https://explorer.natureserve.org/Taxon/ELEMENT_GLOBAL.2.848782/Nassella_pulchra_-_Melica_californica_-_Leymus_condensatus_Grassland_Group.

Kramer, G. 2024. Fresh Emergent Wetland. *California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System*, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFW). April. Available at: file:///C:/Users/s158939/Downloads/FEW%20(1).pdf. Accessed August 5, 2024.

Oberbauer, T., M. Kelly, and J. Buegge. 2008. Draft Vegetation Communities of San Diego County. Based on “Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California,” Robert F. Holland, Ph.D., October 1986.

Quinn, R.D., and S.C. Keeley. 2006. Introduction to California Chaparral. University of California Press. 76, 81 pp.

Ramona Municipal Water District. 2024. Wastewater Operations. Available at: https://www.rmwd.org/about-us/wastewater-operations#:~:text=The%20recycled%20water%20produced%20by,Road%20and%20Highland%20Valley%20Road. Accessed August 22, 2024.

RWQCB (Regional Water Quality Control Board). 2024. San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board. San Diego Basin Plan Map. Available at: https://gispublic.waterboards.ca.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=1f58bd97fdcd45329a5e16e373ede24d. Accessed February 2, 2024.

SDAPCD (San Diego Air Pollution Control District). 2022. 2022 Regional Air Quality Strategy. Available at: https://www.sdapcd.org/content/dam/sdapcd/documents/grants/planning/Att.%20A%20-%202022%20RAQS.pdf. Accessed September 5, 2024.

SDAPCD. 2024. Attainment Status. Available at: https://www.sdapcd.org/content/sdapcd/planning/attainment-status.html. Accessed September 5, 2024.

USDA (United States Department of Agriculture). No date. USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Pasture Resources. Available at: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources/data-and-reports/pastureresources#:~:text=Pasture%20vegetation%20can%20consist%20of,preferred%20forage%20for%20grazing%20livestock. Accessed December 8, 2023.

USFWS (United States Fish and Wildlife Service). 1993. *Coastal California Gnatcatcher*. Available at: https://www.fws.gov/story/coastal-californiagnatcatcher#:~:text=Within%20its%20range%2C%20the%20distribution,820%20feet%20(250%20meters). Accessed August 6, 2024.

USFWS. 2017. California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*) Conservation Objectives Report. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, Sacramento, California. October.

USGS (United States Geological Survey). 2024. National Hydrography Dataset – MapServer. Available at: https://hydro.nationalmap.gov/arcgis/rest/services/nhd/MapServer. Accessed August 5, 2024.

Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

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

September 2023

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

TONY TAVARES
Director

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