CEQA EXEMPTION / NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION FORM (rev. 06/2022)

Project Information

Project Name (if applicable): Scott Creek Coastal Resiliency-Geotechnical Drilling

DIST-CO-RTE: 05-SCR-1 **PM/PM:** 31.28-31.96

EA: 05-1M720 **Federal-Aid Project Number:** 0520000048

Project Description

There will be a geotechnical site investigation for the Scott Creek Coastal resiliency project located on State Route 1 at postmile 31.28 to 31.96 in Santa Cruz County. The purpose of the geotechnical investigation is to assess subsurface conditions for foundation design of the proposed bridge and associated retaining walls, parking lots, restroom building, cuts, and fills. (continued on following pages)

Caltrans CEQA Determination (Check one)

☐ **Not Applicable** – Caltrans is not the CEQA Lead Agency
☐ **Not Applicable** – Caltrans has prepared an IS or EIR under CEQA

Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, the project is:
☐ **Exempt by Statute.** (PRC 21080[b]; 14 CCR 15260 et seq.)
☒ **Categorically Exempt. Class** 6. (PRC 21084; 14 CCR 15300 et seq.)
  ☐ No exceptions apply that would bar the use of a categorical exemption (PRC 21084 and 14 CCR 15300.2). See the SER Chapter 34 for exceptions.
☐ **Covered by the Common Sense Exemption**. This project does not fall within an exempt class, but it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment (14 CCR 15061[b][3].)

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Matthew Fowler	Matthew Fowler	4/10/25
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager

Meg Henry	Meg Henry	4/10/2025
Print Name	Signature	Date

Caltrans NEPA Determination (Check one)

☐ **Not Applicable**

Caltrans has determined that this project has no significant impacts on the environment as defined by NEPA, and that there are no unusual circumstances as described in 23 CFR 771.117(b). See SER Chapter 30 for unusual circumstances. As such, the project is categorically excluded from the requirements to prepare an EA or EIS under NEPA and is included under the following:

☒ **23 USC 326:** Caltrans has been assigned, and hereby certifies that it has carried out the responsibility to make this determination pursuant to 23 USC 326 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 18, 2022, executed between FHWA and Caltrans. Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under:

- ☒ **23 CFR 771.117(c): activity (c)(24)**
- ☐ **23 CFR 771.117(d): activity (d)(Enter activity number)**
- ☐ **Activity Enter activity number listed in Appendix A of the MOU between FHWA and Caltrans**

☐ **23 USC 327:** Based on an examination of this proposal and supporting information, Caltrans has determined that the project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 USC 327. The environmental review, consultation, and any other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by Caltrans pursuant to 23 USC 327 and the Memorandum of Understanding dated May 27, 2022, and executed by FHWA and Caltrans.

Senior Environmental Planner or Environmental Branch Chief

Matthew Fowler	Matthew Fowler	4/10/25
Print Name	Signature	Date

Project Manager/ DLA Engineer

Meg Henry	Meg Henry	4/10/25
Print Name	Signature	Date

Date of Categorical Exclusion Checklist completion (if applicable): 4/9/25
Date of Environmental Commitment Record or equivalent: 4/9/25

Briefly list environmental commitments on continuation sheet if needed (i.e., not necessary if included on an attached ECR). Reference additional information, as appropriate (e.g., additional studies and design conditions).

Continuation sheet:

The proposed geotechnical investigation includes 20 borings, drilled within Caltrans Right-of-Way, confined to the paved shoulder or cut-slope locations.

The drilling equipment will include a conventional truck-mounted drill rig, horizontal track-mounted drill rig, water tender truck, support trailer, six-wheel truck and low boy trailer, and crew cab pickups. Photo examples of drill rigs are attached. Based on the subsurface conditions; two types of drill systems may be employed: a hollow stem auger, and a rotary wash wire-line drill system with attached rock core barrels and rock bits. The diameter of the borehole will be between 4 and 6 inches. Drilling fluids (required for rotary wash drill systems only) consist of water mixed with and/or polymer that will be recirculated through a closed system that includes drill pipe, casing, pumps, hoses, and a mud tank.

Borings RC-25-001 through -012, and RC-25-015, -018, and -019 will be drilled vertically to depths of up to approximately 200 feet below the ground surface. These borings will be drilled in the paved northbound shoulder where possible, and shoulder closures will be used where appropriate. However, where the shoulder is too narrow or work needs to be performed within the lane, a closure of the northbound lane will be required, and traffic will be reversed using flaggers.

Borings RC-25-013 and -014 will be drilled horizontally into the southbound-side cut slope approximately 50 feet. The drill rig will be stationed in the southbound shoulder. A closure of the southbound lane will be required, and traffic will be reversed using flaggers.

Boring RC-25-016, -017, and 020 will be drilled horizontally into the northbound-side cut slope approximately 75 feet. The drill rig will be stationed in the northbound shoulder. A closure of the northbound lane will be required, and therefore traffic will be reversed using flaggers.

Up to approximately 15 weeks of borehole drilling is anticipated, which may be completed in phases. Work may be completed sooner if the scope is reduced and/or multiple pieces of drilling equipment are able to work concurrently.

Once the borings are completed, each hole will be backfilled using the methods required by the Local Enforcement Agency (LEA), the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency, Environmental Health Division. Boreholes not completed in a single shift will be grouted with a temporary plug. The plug will be removed next shift, and the borehole will be completed.

Precautions during drilling will be employed to mitigate any possible equipment leaks or drilling fluid spillage. These will include plastic tarps, absorption mats, and jute wattles. Also, potential leakage at the casing-mud line contact will be monitored. If leakage is detected, the wet drilling will be stopped, and casing will be installed to a depth at which leakage has stopped (adequately sealed off). The contained drill fluids generated during

drilling will be pumped into 55-gallon steel drums and transported to Caltrans' facility for processing.

The following avoidance and minimization measures will apply.

Biology:

- BIO-1: All vehicles, machinery, and equipment shall be in a clean and soil-free condition before traveling off-pavement.
- BIO-2: Only water will be used for dust abatement.
- BIO-3: Drilling activities will not release water, remove soil, trench, or place fill materials in waters, wetlands, or on streambanks.
- BIO-4: Excavations greater than 2-feet deep will be covered at the end of each workday by plywood or similar material. If the excavations cannot be covered, one or more escape ramps constructed of earthen fill or wooden planks shall be installed.
- BIO-5: All open holes within the drilling areas will be inspected at the beginning of the day, middle of the day, and end of the day for trapped animals.
- BIO-6: Before excavations are backfilled, thoroughly inspect for trapped animals.
- BIO-7: All construction pipes or similar structures with a diameter of 4-inches or greater that are stored at the project site overnight will be thoroughly inspected before the pipe is moved, buried, capped, or otherwise moved in any way.

CE/CE Attachment 1: Drilling Locations

05-1M720 SCR1 PM31.28/31.96 Scott Creek Lagoon Restoration

Site Investigation Plan
10/10/2024 CMc

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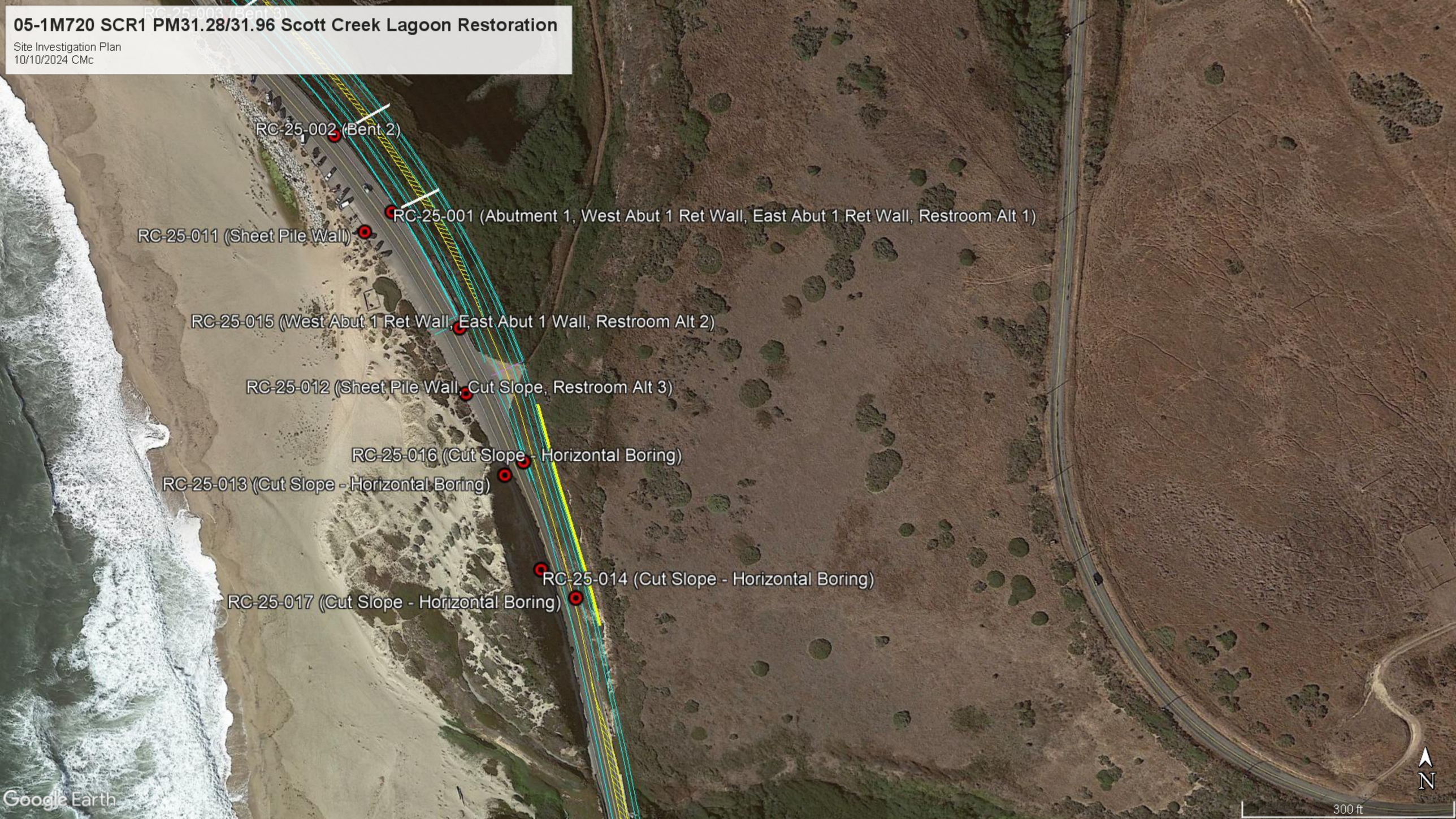
05-1M720 SCR1 PM31.28/31.96 Scott Creek Lagoon Restoration
Site Investigation Plan
10/10/2024 CMc
RC-25-007 (Bent 7, Temp. Construction Wall)
RC-25-006 (Bent 6)
RC-25-005 (Bent 5)
RC-25-004 (Bent 4)
RC-25-003 (Bent 3)
RC-25-002 (Bent 2)
Scott Creek
Google Earth
N
200 ft


05-1M720 SCR1 PM31.28/31.96 Scott Creek Lagoon Restoration
Site Investigation Plan
10/10/2024 CMc
RC-25-003 (Bent 3)
RC-25-002 (Bent 2)
RC-25-001 (Abutment 1, West Abut 1 Ret Wall, East Abut 1 Ret Wall, Restroom Alt 1)
RC-25-011 (Sheet Pile Wall)
RC-25-015 (West Abut 1 Ret Wall, East Abut 1 Wall, Restroom Alt 2)
RC-25-012 (Sheet Pile Wall, Cut Slope, Restroom Alt 3)
RC-25-016 (Cut Slope - Horizontal Boring)
RC-25-013 (Cut Slope - Horizontal Boring)
RC-25-014 (Cut Slope - Horizontal Boring)
RC-25-017 (Cut Slope - Horizontal Boring)
Google Earth
N
300 ft


05-1M720 SCR1 PM31.28/31.96 Scott Creek Lagoon Restoration
Site Investigation Plan
10/10/2024 CMc
RC-25-014 (Cut Slope - Horizontal Boring)
RC-25-017 (Cut Slope - Horizontal Boring)
RC-25-018 (Embankment Fill)
Molino Creek
RC-25-019 (Embankment Fill)
RC-25-020 (Cut Slope - Horizontal Boring)
N
300 ft
Google Earth

CE/CE Attachment 2 : Photo Examples of Drill Rigs

Typical Caltrans Drill Rigs

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"

CE/CE Attachment 2: Photo Examples of the Soil and Core Samples

Standard Penetration Test (SPT) Sample

Core Sample