

California Department of Transportation

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April 1, 2026

Matiel Holloway
Mariposa County Engineer
Department of Public Works
4639 Ben Hur Road
Mariposa, CA 95338

**MPA-49-PM 18.667
Fournier Road
Improvement Project
IS-SCH 2026030195**

Mr. Holloway,

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Mariposa County Public Works Department's proposal for road widening and associated improvements along Fournier Road. The proposed improvements would span the entire length of the roadway and would include widening the roadway to two 12-foot travel lanes. The proposed project also includes new pavements, construction of a sidewalk, curb and gutter, detention basin, a bridge, on-street parking adjacent to the cemetery, and striping at the intersection with Antone Road. The proposed project would also include grading, Right of Way (ROW) dedication, and relocation of utilities. The project site is not part of a site that is included on the State Cortese List (Government Code Section 65962.5[a]).

Caltrans has the following comments:

Environmental

- Based on current information, the project includes activities that occur within or immediately adjacent to Caltrans ROW along State Route (SR) 49 at approximately Post Mile (PM) 18.667. Any work performed in Caltrans ROW—including roadway tie-ins, drainage modifications, utility adjustments, temporary traffic handling, construction access, or vegetation removal—must comply with Caltrans environmental requirements and will require an Encroachment Permit.
- Mature trees within and near Caltrans ROW may provide suitable nesting habitat, and project activities have the potential to impact biological resources.
- If work occurs in Caltrans ROW between February 1 and September 30, a pre-construction bird survey must be conducted by a qualified biologist before any construction begins; if an active nest is identified, a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) compliant protective buffer must be established, and no work may occur within that buffer until the young have fledged and Caltrans

District 10 Environmental authorizes resumption of activity. Survey results must be submitted to District 10 Environmental before the start of construction.

- In addition, if drainage improvements or in-channel work are proposed within Caltrans ROW, the project proponent should be aware that additional measures, surveys, and regulatory permits may be required—particularly for water diversion, dewatering, or work below the ordinary high-water mark. Coordination with the Regional Water Quality Control Board may be required for 401 Water Quality Certification under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and consultation with CDFW may be needed for Streambed Alteration Agreement (1600 series) compliance. This is especially important given historic occurrences of foothill yellow-legged frog (South Sierra DPS, *Rana boylei* pop. 5) recorded lower portion of bear creek, south of Merced River, near Briceburg, along SR 140 approximately 2.5 miles north of Midpines, southwest of Yosemite National Park, and historic occurrences of limestone salamander (*Hydromantes brunus*) documented approximately 2.0 miles south of Briceburg. Although these occurrences are not within the immediate project footprint, Caltrans may require species-specific precautionary measures, habitat assessments, and avoidance/minimization strategies if drainage work in ROW could affect connected hydrologic pathways or suitable habitat conditions.
- Finally, any planned closures or partial closures affecting SR 49 will require a Caltrans-approved detour and traffic handling plan demonstrating how traffic will be safely rerouted and emergency access will be maintained throughout construction. According to the scope of work there are no other natural resources within Caltrans ROW that may be affected/impacted by project activity.
- If there are any construction related activities that will encroach into Caltrans ROW as a result of the project, the project proponent must apply for an Encroachment Permit with the Caltrans District 10 Encroachment Permit Office.
- All California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation, with supporting technical studies, must be submitted with the Encroachment Permit Application. These studies may include an analysis of potential impacts to any cultural sites, historic properties, biological resources, hazardous waste/materials, scenic highways, and/or other environmental resources within Caltrans ROW, at the project site(s). If the CEQA Lead Agency finds the project exempt from CEQA, the applicant must provide Caltrans with a copy of the Notice of Exemption that was filed with the County Clerk and State Clearinghouse.

System Planning

- Caltrans supports local development that is consistent with State planning priorities intended to promote equity, strengthen the economy, protect the environment, enhance the transportation system, and improve public health and safety. We look forward to continued coordination with the County to achieve a shared vision for the transportation system and its improvements.
- Given that the project site intersects Joe Howard Street approximately 75 feet south of SR 49, and recognizing that SR 49 in Mariposa County operates as a

limited-capacity facility that is sensitive to disruptions affecting traffic flow and circulation, installation of clearly visible advance wayfinding signage along SR 49 is recommended to notify motorists of the alternate route for accessing Fournier Road during construction activities. This should also include signage along SR 49 directing motorists traveling to the cemetery entrance via Fournier Road. Implementation of such signage would assist in guiding motorists, improving traffic circulation, and minimizing potential disruptions to traffic operations on SR 49. Coordination with appropriate local and regional agencies is recommended to ensure that temporary traffic control measures are developed and implemented in accordance with applicable Caltrans standards and guidelines.

- If Fournier Road is closed during construction activities, the preparation of detailed plans demonstrating adequate turnaround space and vehicle storage is recommended to ensure the traffic operations are not impeded and that no adverse impacts occur on SR 49.

Active Transportation

- We recommend narrowing the proposed motor vehicle through lanes on Fournier Road and on the proposed bridge from 12 feet to 11 feet in each direction. An 11 foot through lane would still be wide enough to accommodate larger vehicles, such as buses. However, the narrowing of the lanes can free up two extra feet that can then be given to the proposed sidewalk. The sidewalk can then be widened from 5 feet 8 inches to 7 feet 8 inches. This feature would provide a less stressful experience for active transportation users along Mariposa Creek.
- The possibility of incorporating a wider sidewalk than currently proposed should receive further consideration.

Traffic Operations

- It is suggested the intersection of Joe Howard Street and Fournier Road accommodates bus turning movements.
- An Encroachment Permit is required for any work within the State ROW.

Hydrology

Proposed Detention Basin:

- In page 3 of the Appendix E, Hydrology Supporting Information (HSI), Section 1.2.4.3 mentioned the proposed detention basin with specific design dimensions and storage volume. We request to review detailed basin storage volume calculations to ensure the storage capacity adequacy and “no” negative impacts to surrounding areas, including SR 49, since the project is located within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-mapped 100-year floodplain and regulatory floodway of Mariposa Creek at Fournier Road crossing.

Design Discharge Calculation:

- In page 14 of the HSI, Section 3.1.3.2.2 discussed “Surface Water” in which the main and only water body within the project limits is the Mariposa Creek. The 100-year peak flow upstream of Fournier Road estimated to be 1,960 cubic feet per

second (cfs) was used in the 1988 study and 2,000 cfs was used as the design discharge for this project. However, no detailed calculations for the above-mentioned discharges were included in the study. We request to review hydraulic modeling and/or detailed discharge calculations.

Proposed Drainage Systems/Facilities:

- Since Fournier Road widening and improvements are terminated at the T-intersection of Fournier Road and Joe Howard Street which is less than 100' of SR 49 eastbound edge of pavement (EP) and is very close to the existing State ROW. We request to review drainage calculations, drainage plan and grading plan for Fournier Road to learn flow patterns.
- If historical undeveloped topography shows drainage from this site flowed into the State ROW, it may continue to do so with the conditions that peak flows may not be increased from the pre-construction quantity. Any increase in runoff generated by the proposed development should be stored/mitigated onsite. We would not allow additional runoff draining into the State ROW or significantly impacting the existing drainage patterns.
- Additional review will be required once the grading and drainage plans, and all mentioned calculations are submitted.

All future development(s) for the project location will require further review by Caltrans. If you have any questions or would like to discuss these comments, please contact Lloyd Clark at (209) 986-9802 (Email: Lloyd.Clark@dot.ca.gov) or me at (209) 483-7234 (email: Gregoria.Ponce@dot.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

Gregoria Ponce'

Gregoria Ponce'
Chief, Office of Rural Planning

Attachment: Species List

bc: Elizabeth Hummel, District 10, Environmental
Sang Hyunh, District 10, Traffic Operations
Hedy Mack-Chiu, District 10, Systems Planning and Goods Movement
Charles Carroll, District 10 Active Transportation Portfolio Manager
Jonathan Dang, District 10, Hydraulics