MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

CITY OF CHICO PUBLIC WORKS - ENGINEERING

Based upon the analysis and findings contained within the attached Initial Study, a Mitigated Negative Declaration is hereby proposed by the City of Chico Public Works - Engineering Department and adopted by the City of Chico Community Development Department for the following project:

PROJECT NAME: Eaton Road and State Route 99 Southbound Ramps Project (Capital Project No. 50488)

APPLICANT(S) NAME: City of Chico Public Works – Engineering Department (Brendan Ottoboni, Director of Public Works – Engineering)

PROJECT LOCATION: The Project is located at the intersection of Eaton Road and the State Route 99 southbound ramps, between Post Miles 36.1 and 36.6, Chico, CA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The City of Chico is proposing to transform the current intersection of Eaton Road and the State Route 99 southbound on/off ramps into a modern, four-legged multilane roundabout. The project is designed to enhance safety for all travel modes and accommodate future mobility requirements. The project site is located at the intersection of Eaton Road and the State Route 99 southbound ramps between Post Miles 36.1 and 36.6. Construction is expected to begin in 2027 and is anticipated to last approximately nine months.

FINDING: The City of Chico, as the Lead Agency, has reviewed the proposed project and on the basis of the whole record before the agency, has determined that there is no substantial evidence that the project, with implementation of the following mitigation measures, will have a significant effect on the environment. This Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the Lead Agency's independent judgment and analysis. An Environmental Impact Report is not required pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

AIR QUALITY MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation Measure AIR-1: Implement Air Quality Control Measures during Construction

The following Butte County Air Quality Management District (BCAQMD) control measures shall be included in construction contract specifications for the Project and implemented during construction:

- Reduce the amount of the disturbed area where possible.
- Use of water trucks or sprinkler systems in sufficient quantities to prevent airborne dust from leaving the site. An adequate water supply source must be identified. Increased watering frequency would be required whenever wind speeds exceed 15 mph. Reclaimed (non-potable) water should be used whenever possible.
- All dirt stockpile areas should be sprayed daily as needed, covered, or a District approved alternative method will be used.
- Permanent dust control measures identified in the approved project revegetation and landscape plans should be implemented as soon as possible following completion of any soil disturbing activities.
- Exposed ground areas that will be reworked at dates greater than one month after initial grading should be sown with a fast-germinating non-invasive grass seed and watered until vegetation is established.
- All disturbed soil areas not subject to re-vegetation should be stabilized using approved chemical soil binders, jute netting, or other methods approved in advance by the District.
- All roadways, driveways, sidewalks, etc. to be paved should be completed as soon as possible. In addition, building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding or soil binders are used.
- Vehicle speed for all construction vehicles shall not exceed 15 mph on any unpaved surface at the construction site.
- All trucks hauling dirt, sand, soil, or other loose materials are to be covered or should maintain at least two feet of freeboard (minimum vertical distance between top of load and top of trailer) in accordance with local regulations.
- Install wheel washers where vehicles enter and exit unpaved roads onto streets, or wash off trucks and equipment leaving the site.
- Sweep streets at the end of each day if visible soil material is carried onto adjacent paved roads. Water sweepers with reclaimed water should be used where feasible.
- Post a sign in a prominent location visible to the public with the telephone numbers of the contractor and District for any questions or concerns about dust from the project.

MITIGATION MONITORING AIR-1: Public Works staff shall ensure that BCAQMD control measures are included in construction contract specifications and that they are implemented during construction.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Avoidance and Minimization Measures to Protect Special-Status Plants

If construction activities may impact special-status plant habitat, floristic plant surveys shall be conducted by a qualified botanist during the appropriate blooming period for special-status plant species with the potential to occur within or adjacent to the Project area. All suitable habitat shall be surveyed in accordance with CDFW's Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities (March 2018). If no special-status plants are found within the Project site, no further measures pertaining to special-status plants are necessary. A floristic survey report shall be prepared by the qualified botanist and submitted to the City, and shall include the surveyor's name and qualifications, dates of the surveys, survey methodology, results, and recommendations.

MITIGATION MONITORING BIO-1: Public Works staff shall ensure that a survey for special-status plant species is complete before commencement of construction. If Swainson's Hawk are detected, the identified mitigation measures will be adhered to.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: Avoidance and Minimization Measures to Protect Swainson's Hawk

If Project activities are scheduled during the Swainson's hawk nesting season (March 1 to August 31), then prior to beginning work on the Project, a qualified biologist shall survey for Swainson's hawk nesting activity. The survey area shall include a 0.25-mile distance surrounding the Project Area. The qualified biologist shall conduct surveys according to the Recommended Timing and Methodology for Swainson's Hawk Nesting Surveys in California's Central Valley (Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee 2000) or, if proposing an alternate survey methodology, shall submit the proposed survey timing and methods to CDFW for review and written approval prior to initiation of surveys. If Swainson's hawk nesting activity is observed during the survey, then the survey results shall be submitted to CDFW for review prior to starting Project activities.

If the qualified biologist identifies nesting Swainson's hawks, then they shall recommend a no disturbance buffer in coordination with CDFW, and the contractor shall implement the buffer under the supervision of a qualified biologist. Project activities shall be prohibited within the no disturbance buffer between March 1 to August 31, unless otherwise approved in writing by CDFW. The buffer shall be kept in place until after the qualified biologist confirms the young have fledged, are foraging independently, and the nest is no longer active for the season. If the

qualified biologist determines that avoidance measures are insufficient to avoid take of the birds, their nest, or their eggs, all specific project activities shall cease, and Caltrans shall immediately consult with CDFW pursuant to California ESA.

MITIGATION MONITORING BIO-2: Public Works staff shall ensure that a survey for Swainson's Hawk is complete before commencement of construction. If Swainson's Hawk are detected, the identified mitigation measures will be adhered to.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: Avoidance and Minimization Measures to Protect Other Nesting Birds

If Project activities are to occur during the nesting season (generally February 1 through August 31), the City shall ensure that a qualified biologist conducts a pre-construction nesting bird survey of all suitable nesting habitat within 14 days of the commencement of Project activities. If there is a lapse in Project-related work of 14 days or longer, then an additional survey shall be conducted prior to resuming Project activities. The survey shall be conducted within a 500-foot radius of Project work areas for raptors and within a 100-foot radius for other nesting birds. If any active nests are observed, these nests shall be designated a sensitive area and protected by an avoidance buffer implemented by the contractor and under the supervision of a qualified biologist until a qualified biologist has determined that the young have fledged, are foraging independently, and the nest is no longer active. A Pre-construction Nesting Bird Survey Report shall be prepared by a qualified biologist for the City that includes surveyors' names and qualifications, dates and times of surveys, methods, results, and recommendations.

MITIGATION MONITORING BIO-3: Public Works staff shall ensure that a survey for other nesting bird species is complete before commencement of construction. If Swainson's Hawk are detected, the identified mitigation measures will be adhered to.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Avoidance and Minimization Measures to Protect Special-Status Bat Species

Prior to construction activities between February 1 and September 1, the following measures are recommended to minimize potential impacts to special-status birds:

- If trees are scheduled to be removed or trimmed, then a qualified bat biologist shall conduct a bat habitat assessment for suitable bat roosting habitat prior to any construction activities. The habitat assessment shall be conducted one year prior to the initiation of construction activities, if feasible, and no less than 30 days prior to the initiation of construction activities. If no suitable roosting habitat is identified, no further measures are necessary. If suitable roosting habitat and/or signs of bat use are identified during the assessment, the roosting habitat shall be avoided to the extent possible.
- If avoidance of the identified bat roosting habitat is not feasible, then a qualified bat biologist shall prepare a Bat Management Plan that will include specific avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to roosting bats. The Bat Management Plan

shall be submitted to the Caltrans biologist for approval prior to the removal of trees. The Project-specific Bat Management Plan shall include the requirement for an emergence and/or pre-construction survey for roosting bats, roost removal timing and methodology; and will include as necessary and appropriate the inclusion of acoustic monitoring, no disturbance buffers, methods and materials for passive exclusion of bats, species-specific habitat replacement mitigation, and/or post-construction mitigation monitoring.

- Emergence surveys shall not be conducted during the bat inactive/hibernation period (typically October 15 through March 1, or when nighttime low temperatures are 45 degrees Fahrenheit or lower and rain is not over 0.5 inch in 24 hours), as bats are not detectable using emergence survey methods during their inactive period. If a maternity roost is located, that roost will remain undisturbed until after the maternity season (maternity season is typically April 15-August 31) or until a qualified biologist has determined the roost is no longer active.
- If tree removal/trimming occurs outside of the bat maternity season and outside of bat hibernation season, tree removal during the weather parameters described shall be conducted after bat exclusion has been installed and left in place for no less than three days prior to removal/trimming, or using the two-step tree removal methods described below:

As much as feasible, vegetation and trees to be removed within the area that are not suitable for roosting bats will be removed first to provide a disturbance that may reduce the likelihood of bats using the habitat.

Two-step tree removal shall occur over two consecutive days under the supervision of a qualified bat biologist. On Day 1, small branches and small limbs containing no cavity, crevice, or exfoliating bark habitat on habitat trees (or outer fronds in the case of palm trees), as identified by a qualified bat biologist are removed first, using chainsaws only (i.e., no dozers, backhoes). The following day (Day 2), the remainder of the tree is to be felled/removed. The intention of this method is to disturb the tree with noise and vibration and branch removal on Day 1. This should cause any potentially present day-roosting bats to abandon the roost tree after they emerge for nighttime foraging. Removing the tree quickly the next consecutive day should avoid reoccupation of the tree by bats. If bats are observed during the two-step removal process, the biologist shall be immediately notified, the tree shall be left until the next day, and the biologist shall inspect the tree to ensure the tree does not contain bats prior to disturbance. If bats remain the following day, CDFW shall be notified and measures will be submitted, such as methods for passive bat exclusion, for written acceptance prior to implementation and tree disturbance. If bat roost mitigation is required, roost mitigation shall be installed as far in advance of the bat maternity season as possible, but no less than 30 days prior to roost removal.

MITIGATION MONITORING BIO-4: Public Works staff shall ensure that a survey for special-status bat species is complete before commencement of construction. If Pallid Bat are detected, the identified mitigation measures will be adhered to.

CULTRAL RESOURCES MITIGATION MEASURES:

Mitigation Measure CR-1: Protect Archaeological and Tribal Cultural Resources if Encountered

If, during ground disturbing activities, any potential paleontological, prehistoric, protohistoric, historic cultural resources, or tribal cultural resources are encountered, the supervising contractor shall cease all work within 25 feet of the find (100 feet for human remains) and notify the City of Chico Public Works staff at 879-6900. A professional archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for prehistoric and historic archaeology and who is familiar with the archaeological record of Butte County, shall be retained by the City of Chico to evaluate the significance of the find. Further, City Public Works staff shall notify the local tribe(s) on the consultation list maintained by the State of California Native American Heritage Commission to provide local tribes the opportunity to monitor evaluation of the site. Site work shall not resume until the archaeologist conducts sufficient research, testing and analysis of the archaeological evidence to make a determination that the resource is either not cultural in origin or not potentially significant. If a potentially significant resource is encountered, the archaeologist shall prepare a mitigation plan for review and approval by the City, including recommendations for total data recovery, Tribal monitoring, disposition protocol, or avoidance, if applicable. All measures deemed appropriate by the City of Chico, in collaboration with Tribal representatives, shall be implemented pursuant to the terms of the archaeologist's report. The preceding requirement shall be incorporated into construction contracts and plans to ensure contractor knowledge and responsibility for proper implementation.

MITIGATION MONITORING CR-1: Public Works staff will verify that language to reinforce the above measure is included on construction plans. Should cultural resources be encountered, the supervising contractor shall be responsible for reporting any such findings to Public Works staff, and contacting a professional archaeologist, in consultation with Public Works staff, to evaluate the find.

Mitigation Measure CR-2: Protect Human Remains if Encountered

If human remains, associated grave goods, or items of cultural patrimony are discovered during construction, work shall stop immediately within a 100-foot radius of the discovery and any nearby area suspected to contain additional remains (PRC, Section 7050.5). The County Coroner shall be contacted to determine if an investigation into the cause of death is necessary. If the remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Coroner shall notify the NAHC within 24 hours. The Commission shall then inform the Most Likely Descendant (MLD), who has 48 hours to provide recommendations to the landowner regarding the disposition of the remains. A

qualified archaeologist, the City, Caltrans, and the MLD shall collaborate to develop an agreement for the respectful treatment of the remains and any associated or unassociated funerary objects. This agreement shall address the appropriate excavation, removal, recordation, analysis, custodianship, and final disposition of the remains and objects.

MITIGATION MONITORING CR-2: Public Works staff will verify that language to reinforce the above measure is included on construction plans. Should cultural resources be encountered, the supervising contractor shall be responsible for reporting any such findings to Public Works staff, and contacting a professional archaeologist, in consultation with Public Works staff, to evaluate the find.

GEOLOGICAL/SOILS MITIGATION MEASURES:

Mitigation Measure GEO-1: Protect Paleontological Resources if Encountered

If fossils are discovered during construction (such as bones, teeth, or notably well-preserved invertebrates or plants), construction activities shall be halted within 50 feet of the find. A professional paleontologist shall be notified to document the discovery, evaluate the potential resource, and assess its significance. Depending on the scientific value or uniqueness of the find, the paleontologist may either record the find and allow work to continue or recommend the salvage and recovery of the material if it cannot be avoided. The paleontologist shall provide recommendations for any necessary treatment in line with current scientific practices. Any fossils collected shall be deposited in an accredited and permanent scientific institution for proper curation and preservation.

MITIGATION MONITORING GEO-1: Public Works staff will verify that language to reinforce the above measure is included on construction plans. Should cultural resources be encountered, the supervising contractor shall be responsible for reporting any such findings to Public Works staff, and contacting a professional archaeologist, in consultation with Public Works staff, to evaluate the find.

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MEASURES:

Mitigation Measure HAZ-1: Hazardous Materials Management During Construction

Prior to construction, the City shall ensure that shallow soil sampling and analytical testing are conducted in unpaved highway and roadway shoulders within the Project area to evaluate the potential presence of aerially deposited lead (ADL) at regulated concentrations. Screening-level soil testing shall also be performed to determine the suitability of excess excavated soil for reuse near sensitive land uses. If asbestos-containing pipe, treated wood, or yellow

thermoplastic/paint striping is encountered, these materials shall be handled and disposed of in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

Any undocumented subsurface structures, including underground storage tanks (USTs), septic systems, and domestic or agricultural water wells, encountered during construction shall be properly removed or abandoned in compliance with Butte County Environmental Health Division (BCEHD) permitting requirements. If apparent soil contamination (e.g., odor, staining, debris) is observed during excavation or grading, the affected soil shall be isolated, stockpiled separately, and disposed of at a permitted landfill. The City shall notify BCEHD for regulatory oversight if significant contamination is encountered. These measures shall be incorporated into the construction specifications and implemented throughout the duration of ground-disturbing activities to minimize potential hazards to public health and the environment.

MITIGATION MONITORING HAZ-1: Public Works staff shall ensure that hazardous materials are managed accordingly during construction.

TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES MITIGATION MEASURE:

Mitigation Measure CR-1: Protect Archaeological and Tribal Cultural Resources if Encountered

For the full details of this mitigation measure, please see Cultural Resources Mitigation Measures.

Mitigation Measure CR-2: Protect Human Remains if Encountered

For the full details of this mitigation measure, please see Cultural Resources Mitigation Measures.

I have reviewed the Initial Study prepared for the Eaton Road and State Route 99 Southbound Ramps Project and the mitigation measures identified therein. I hereby incorporate and include all mitigation measures into the project.

Project Applicant: _____ 5/8/26

Brendan Ottoboni — City of Chico
Director of Public Works – Engineering

Date

Prepared by: _____ 5/8/26

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Date

Adopted by: _____ 5/8/26

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