Hoods Creek Bridge Replacement

East of Farmington on State Route 4

10-STA-4-7.1/7.4

10-1H230/1020000178

Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2

Prepared by the

State of California Department of Transportation

January 2026

General Information About This Document

What's in this document:

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

What you should do:

- Please read the document. Additional copies of the document and the related technical studies are available for review at the following locations:
    - Caltrans District 10 Office at 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205
    - Oakdale Library at 151 South First Avenue, Oakdale, California 95361
- This document may also be downloaded at the following website: https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-10/district-10-current-projects#cnty-stanislaus.
- Tell us what you think. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project or would like to request a public meeting, please send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to: Laura Cook, District 10 Environmental Division, California Department of Transportation, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205. Submit comments via email to: Laura.Cook@dot.ca.gov.
- Submit comments by the deadline: February 24, 2026.

What happens next:

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

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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: Laura Cook, Senior Environmental Scientist, District 10 Environmental Division, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, California 95205; phone number 209-662-2261 (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.

10-STA-4-7.1/7.4
10-1H230/1020000178

Replacing Hoods Creek Bridge on State Route 4 from post miles 7.1 to 7.4 in Stanislaus County

INITIAL STUDY
with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

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

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation
and
Responsible Agency: California Transportation Commission

C. Scott Guidi
Scott Guidi
Office Chief, District 10 Environmental Compliance
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

01/07/2026
Date

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

Laura Cook, 1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, CA 95205; 209-662-2261; Laura.Cook@dot.ca.gov

DRAFT
Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: pending

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 10-STA-4-7.1/7.4

EA/Project Number: 10-1H230/1020000178

Project Description

The project proposes to remove and replace the existing Hoods Creek Bridge along State Route 4 in Stanislaus County at Post Mile 7.28. The project scope of work includes raising the roadway profile for the proposed bridge, roadway widening with standard shoulders, and installing guard rail and new culverts from post mile 7.1 to 7.4. The proposed improvements include right-of-way acquisition, temporary construction easements, ground disturbance, work in channel, and vegetation removal.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans District 10. On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The project would have no effect on aesthetics, air quality, energy, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire.

The project would have less than significant effects to agricultural resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous waste, and tribal cultural resources.

With the following mitigation measures incorporated, the project would have less than significant effects to biological resources.

- **BIO-1: Compensatory Mitigation – Waters of the United States**. Compensatory mitigation would be required under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the estimated loss of 62.92 square feet (0.001-acre) of other waters of the United States. Compensatory mitigation would also be required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act for the estimated loss of 235.94 square feet (0.005-acre) of isolated wetlands qualifying as waters of the State of California. Compensatory mitigation is expected to be accomplished through participation in the United States Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento Office and National Fish and Wildlife Federation’s in-lieu fees program.

- **BIO-6: Compensatory Mitigation – California Tiger Salamander**. Compensatory mitigation would be required for the total loss of 4.28 acres of California tiger salamander upland habitat due to significant impacts resulting from permanent fill and the temporary detour alignment during construction. Impacts would be compensated by acquiring 5.02 acre-credits from a United State Fish and Wildlife Service-approved mitigation bank. The loss of 0.16-acre from permanent fill and 0.58-acre from permanent impacts from the temporary detour alignment would be compensated at a 2:1 ratio (1.48 acre-credits). Temporary impacts to 3.54 acres of upland habitat from the detour alignment would be compensated at a 1:1 ratio (3.54 acre-credits).

_____

Scott Guidi
Office Chief, District 10 Environmental Compliance
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

_____

Date

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Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (known as CEQA) and the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (known as NEPA). The proposed project would take place at Hoods Creek Bridge, between post miles 7.1 to 7.4 on State Route 4 in Stanislaus County. At the project location, State Route 4 is a two-lane conventional freeway.

The proposed project would replace an existing bridge that currently experiences bridge scour. Bridge scour occurs when fast-moving water from storms or floods erode the soil and sediment around bridge foundations and expose the bridge's footings. Over time, this can potentially lead to bridge failure.

This project was amended into the 2022 State Highway Operation and Protection Program with funding under the 201.111 Bridge Program in the 2026/2027 fiscal year.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this project is to improve the structural integrity and address the nonstandard condition of Hoods Creek Bridge (Bridge Number 38-0041) on State Route 4.

1.2.2 Need

The project is needed due to the poor structural integrity, excessive bridge scouring, recurring flooding, and nonstandard conditions of Hoods Creek Bridge, as identified in the Structure Maintenance and Investigations Bridge Inspection Report dated March 4, 2020.

1.3 Project Description

The project proposes to remove and replace the existing Hoods Creek Bridge along State Route 4 in Stanislaus County at Post Mile 7.28. The project scope of work includes raising the roadway profile for the proposed bridge, roadway widening with standard shoulders, and installing guard rail and new culverts from Post Mile 7.1 to 7.4. The proposed improvements include right-of-way

acquisition, temporary construction easements, ground disturbance, work in channel, and vegetation removal.

Permanent right-of-way acquisition would be required to widen the bridge and adjacent roadway at the approach and departure of the bridge. Temporary construction easements would be necessary for construction and staging purposes.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

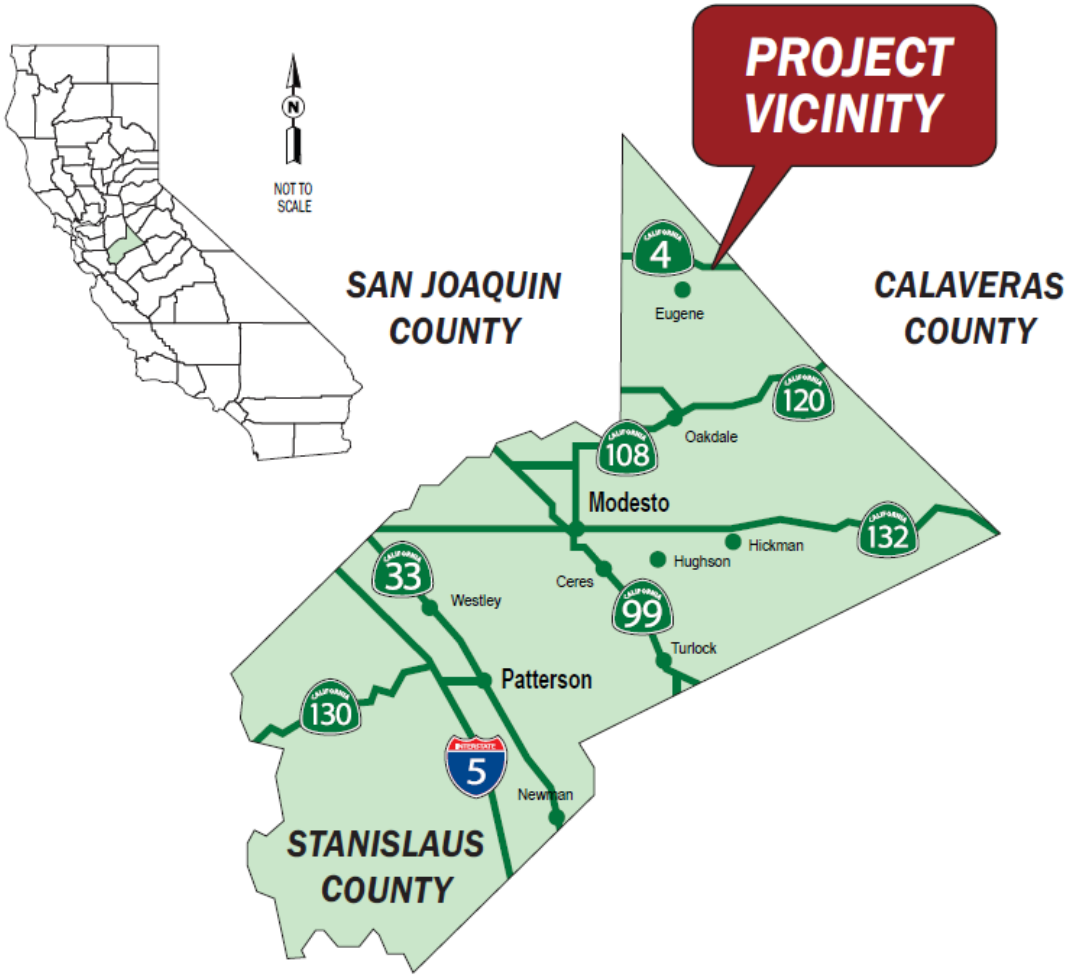
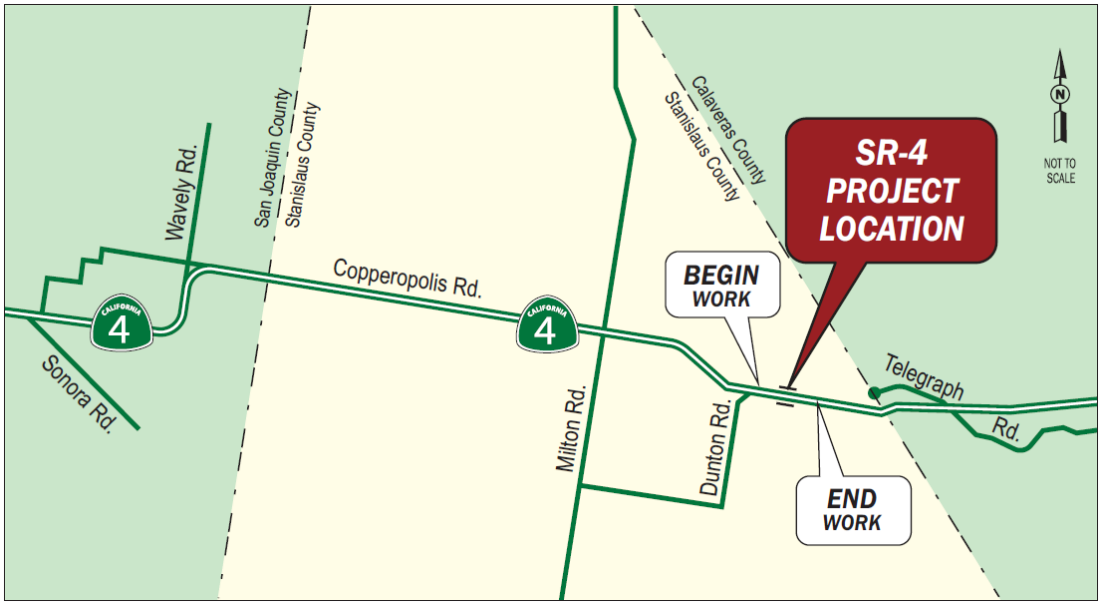


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



1.4 Project Alternatives

There is one Build Alternative and one No-Build Alternative being considered for the proposed project.

1.4.1 Build Alternatives

The Build Alternative would involve removing and replacing the existing Hoods Creek Bridge (Bridge Number 38-0041). The bridge would be widened to accommodate standard 8-foot shoulders, and the profile of the bridge would be raised. The roadway adjacent to the bridge would be widened and raised to conform to the approach and departure sides of the bridge.

The bridge replacement would be constructed in the same location as the existing Hoods Creek Bridge. A temporary roadway alignment and temporary stream crossing would be constructed on the north side of the existing State Route 4, to detour traffic while the existing Hoods Creek Bridge is being demolished and reconstructed. Temporary construction easements would be necessary for construction of the detour. The temporary alignment would consist of two 12-foot lanes with 4-foot shoulders and provide two-way traffic control. The temporary alignment would be demolished after completion of the bridge replacement.

Ten (10) 6-foot diameter culverts would be required for the temporary detour bridge alignment based on the Hydraulic Recommendation. One (1) culvert located west of Hoods Creek along the existing State Route 4 alignment would be removed and four (4) 3-foot diameter new culverts would be

installed. The roadway profile would be modified (raised) within the project limits to include the new culverts on the west end. Steep and disturbed areas would be treated with aggressive permanent erosion control measures.

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

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would leave Hoods Creek Bridge in its current state, with poor scour condition and recurring flooding. As such, it would not address the purpose or need of the project.

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

The following Best Management Practices are anticipated to be implemented on the project, where applicable. The final list of Best Management Practices would be submitted by the contractor and approved for inclusion in the construction contract by Caltrans later in the project design phase as part of the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan or Water Pollution Control Plan.

- Spill Prevention and Control (Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual WM-4)
- Material Management (Material Delivery, Use, Storage, and Stockpiles; Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual WM-1 through WM-4)
- Waste Management (Solid, Hazardous, Concrete, Sanitary/Septic Wastes, Contaminated Soils; Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual WM-5 through WM-10)
- Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning, Fueling, and Maintenance (Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual NS-8 through NS-10)
- Material and Equipment Use Over Water (Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual NS-13)
- Structure Removal Over or Adjacent to Water (Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual NS-15)
- Paving, Sealing, Sawing, Grooving and Grinding Activities (Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual NS-3)

- Concrete Curing and Finishing (Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual NS-12)
- Temporary Soil Stabilization (Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual SS-1 through SS-10)
- Temporary Sediment Control (Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual SC-1 through SC-10)
- Temporary Tracking Control (Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual TC-1 through TC-3)
- Temporary Concrete Washouts (Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual WM-8)
- Illicit Connection/Illegal Discharge Detection and Reporting (Caltrans 2025 Best Management Practices Manual NS-6)

The following measures from the 2025 Caltrans Standard Specifications would also be implemented in the project, where applicable:

- Section 7-1.02K(6)(j)(ii): Lead Compliance Plan
- Section 7-1.02M: Fire Prevention Procedures
- Section 10-5: Dust Control
- Section 13: Water Pollution Control
- Section 13-4.03B: Spill Prevention and Control
- Section 13-4.03E(3): Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning
- Section 14-7.03: Discovery of Unanticipated Paleontological Resources
- Section 14-8: Noise and Vibration
- Section 14-9.02: Air Pollution Control
- Section 14-11.12: Removal of Yellow Traffic Stripe and Pavement Marking with Hazardous Waste Residue
- Section 14-11.13: Disturbance of Existing Paint Systems on Bridges
- Section 17-2.03: Clearing Vegetation
- Section 21-2.02F: Seed for Erosion Control

1.6 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

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

1.7 Permits and Approvals Needed

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

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification	The permit would be obtained during the design phase of the project.
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Verification	The permit would be obtained during the design phase of the project.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	California Fish and Game Code Section 2081 Incidental Take Permit	The permit would be obtained during the design phase of the project.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement	The permit would be obtained during the design phase of the project.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Endangered Species Act Section 7 Formal Consultation: Biological Opinion	Approval would be obtained during the design phase of the project.

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 would indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A "No Impact" answer reflects this determination. The questions in this checklist are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

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

"No Impact" determinations in each section are based on the scope, description, and location of the proposed project as well as the appropriate technical report (bound separately in Volume 2), and no further discussion is included in this document.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the Visual Impact Assessment Questionnaire dated November 13, 2025, 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?	**No Impact**
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	**No Impact**

2.1.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

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

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment Memorandum dated December 2, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest Resources
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	**Less than Significant Impact**
c) Conflict with existing zoning, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	**No Impact**
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	**No Impact**
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The proposed project takes place in a rural, unincorporated area in the northern region of Stanislaus County along State Route 4.

The surrounding area is a flat grassland, categorized under the California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program as grazing land. The area directly north of the project has mixed enrollment in the Williamson Act, while the area south is non-prime agricultural land not enrolled in the Williamson Act.

In the wider vicinity, there are livestock facilities categorized under the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program as confined animal agriculture. The nearest of these facilities is 0.2 miles west of the project. Further northwest of these livestock facilities is a small number of rural residential properties. These properties are located north of the intersection of State Route 4 and Dunton Road, approximately 0.6 miles west of the project. South of this intersection, over 1 mile from the project, is a 50-acre area categorized as Farmland of Local Importance, along with additional confined animal agriculture facilities.

The project area does not include any forest land or timberland that would be impacted by the permanent right-of-way acquisition or temporary construction impacts of the proposed project.

Environmental Consequences

The proposed project would require an estimated 2.87 acres of permanent right-of-way acquisition to accommodate raising the bridge and roadway profile, as well as widen their embankments and abutments. The project would acquire 1.37 acres from the parcel north of State Route 4 and 1.50 acres from the parcel to the south. These parcels are a total of 672.67 acres and 1,257.17 acres respectively, so this proposed right-of-way take would represent 0.2% or less of the total area for either of these adjacent parcels. Additionally, the land that would be acquired for construction of the project does not qualify as Prime or Unique Farmland or as Farmland of Local or Statewide Importance.

The project would also involve temporary construction easements at the east end of the project length to build up the roadway embankment, as well as north of Hoods Creek Bridge to build the temporary detour alignment and stream crossing. The temporary construction easements would include 1.08 acres from the parcel to the north and 0.07-acre from the parcel to the south. This temporary alignment would be demolished after construction is completed. The area temporarily affected by construction is primarily used for livestock grazing and would be restored and revegetated per the avoidance and minimization measure listed below. The temporary construction easements would not permanently affect the agricultural use or zoning of these properties, and the impact is considered less than significant.

A Farmland Conversion Impact Rating was calculated using Form AD-1006 produced by the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Land use conversion impacts to adjacent parcels were evaluated by a list of 12 Site Assessment Criteria, resulting in scores of 58 for the north and 53 for the south parcel. These scores both fall below the threshold of 60 and following the guidance in the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference, Chapter 23, the impacts do not require formal evaluation by NRCS and are considered less than significant.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measure would minimize less than significant impacts to agricultural resources. A full description of the measure is also included in Appendix B of this document.

- BIO-5: Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.

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.

Considering the information in the Air Quality Memorandum dated November 3, 2023, the following significance determinations have been made:

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?	**No Impact**
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	**No Impact**
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	**No Impact**

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the Natural Environment Study dated November 6, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries?	**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated**
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
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**

Affected Environment

The proposed project is located within the eastern San Joaquin Valley portion of the California Central Valley, in Stanislaus County. The surrounding area is mostly flat grassland near sea level, which is used for livestock grazing and animal agriculture. The area has a Mediterranean climate characterized by hot, dry summers and cool, moist winters, with most rainfall occurring between November and April.

Hoods Creek is a tributary of the Farmington Flood Control Basin, Rock Creek, Little John's Creek, French Camp Slough, and the San Joaquin River, and is located between two reservoir systems. The Orvis Dam reservoir is located approximately 1.7 stream-miles upstream, and the dam at the Farmington Flood Control Basin is located downstream, approximately 7.8 miles southwest. The Farmington Flood Control Basin is also planned by the San Joaquin Council of Governments to be repurposed from flood protection to a long-term water storage facility.

The project area was surveyed by Caltrans biologists on seven dates between 2021 and 2024 to identify biological inventory, observe hydrologic features, delineate jurisdictional waters, and perform botanical surveys. Field surveys used resource-agency approved protocol methods where appropriate.

Potentially Jurisdictional Waters

Wetlands were preliminarily delineated within the project area, but they lack a continuous surface connection to a relatively permanent waterbody. As such, they do not qualify as waters of the United States, though they do qualify as non-federal waters of the State of California. The Caltrans biologist preliminarily identified 0.46-acre of potentially jurisdictional other waters of the United States and 0.005-acre of non-federal jurisdictional waters of the State of California in the area.

Hoods Creek in the project area is a late-intermittent stream, with site visits in January 2021 and December 2023 indicating that it continues to flow and support pools of water under and upstream of the bridge later into summer. The project area also includes stormwater drainage facilities, such as ditches and highway cross culverts. However, the area does not support vernal pools or other seasonal wetlands. There is also no riparian vegetation in the project footprint.

Essential Fish Habitat

The Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Management Act defines Essential Fish Habitat as waters and substrate determined to be necessary for fish spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth. Essential Fish Habitat for Chinook salmon does not occur in the project area. Therefore, the project would not require consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Special-Status Plants

One special-status plant species was surveyed for presence in the project area: Colusa grass. However, the project is outside the range of the species, and the project area also does not include any vernal pools or other seasonal wetlands that would support the species. No special-status plant species were detected during botanical surveys in March 2024, and none are expected to occur within the project area.

Invasive Species

Several invasive plant species were identified during botanical surveys in March 2024, including wild oat, soft chess, yellow star thistle, Bermuda grass, curly dock, black locust, and ripgut brome. Most of these species are annual grasses and forbs that commonly occur as ruderal vegetation along disturbed roadside areas and are rated by the California Invasive Plant Council as plants of “limited” or “moderate” invasiveness.

Bullfrogs, an invasive animal species, were identified during site visits in January and March of 2021 in the aquatic habitat of Hoods Creek, within the project area. The area also serves as suitable breeding habitat for bullfrogs, which serve as potential predators of other species.

California Tiger Salamander

The Central California Distinct Population Segment of the California tiger salamander is listed as “threatened” under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The project area does not include any designated critical habitat for the California tiger salamander, and none of the species were observed during field visits between December 2023 and March 2024.

While the project is within the current and historical range of this population segment, and there is a single recorded occurrence of the species 3.1 miles away, the project area has no suitable aquatic breeding habitat for California tiger salamander due to the presence of predatory bullfrogs and the area’s high exposure to sunlight and warm temperatures. However, there is potential aquatic habitat located 1.24 miles from the project. This means that a total of 4.28 acres of the grasslands in the project area are considered potential upland habitat for the species.

Northwestern Pond Turtle

The northwestern pond turtle is considered a “Species of Concern” by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and is proposed to be listed as “threatened” under the Federal Endangered Species Act. The project is within the current range of the species. Hoods Creek could serve as potential aquatic foraging and dispersal habitat for the species, and the surrounding area includes potential upland habitat for breeding, dispersal, or overwintering. However, no northwestern pond turtles were observed in field visits between December 2023 and March 2024 or during the monitoring and surveys associated with the archaeological investigation performed in April 2025

The nearest recorded observation of the species was 8.8 miles south of the project, in 1993. All areas below the top of the bank of Hoods Creek are considered potential aquatic habitat for northwestern pond turtles (totaling 0.79-acre), and all areas within 200 feet of this aquatic habitat are considered potential upland habitat (totaling 1.84 acres).

Western Spadefoot

The western spadefoot is considered a “Species of Concern” by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and is proposed to be listed as “threatened” under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Hoods Creek in the project area is not suitable aquatic breeding habitat for the species as the water flows during the species’ reproductive season.

However, there are potential breeding pools within 1,000 feet of the project area. Uplands within 200 feet of these potential breeding pools are considered as potentially occupied by adult spadefoot. The project area contains 0.68-acre of potential upland habitat for spadefoot.

No life stages of the species were observed during site visits between December 2023 and March 2024. They also were not encountered during monitoring and surveys associated with archaeological excavation activities performed in April 2025. The nearest recorded observation was 2.8 miles northwest of the project, in 1981.

Migratory Birds and Raptors

Nesting migratory birds and raptors protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act may potentially nest on the ground, within shrubs or trees, or on structures between February 1 and September 30. Three black locust trees occur in the project vicinity, though no nests were observed. However, swallow mud nests were observed on the existing Hoods Creek Bridge during surveys between December 2023 and March 2024.

Roosting Bats

Special-status and non-special status bat species may roost in structures or trees, and some may use swallow nests for roosting as well. However, the existing bridge lacks expansion joints, longitudinal joints, or other crevice-type features that would be suitable as day roosting habitat for bats. As such, the bridge has very low potential to host day roosts for bats. The bridge structure could support night roosting, but there was no evidence of roosting in the structure, swallow nests, or black locust trees during site visits between December 2023 and March 2024.

Other Special-Status Wildlife Species

Other special-status wildlife species considered for analysis in the Natural Environment Study include monarch butterfly, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, vernal pool fairy shrimp, and vernal pool tadpole shrimp. However, the project area is either outside the range of these species or lacks suitable habitat for them.

Fish Passage and Wildlife Connectivity

The existing Hoods Creek Bridge does not represent a barrier to fish passage. However, due to fish passage issues associated with the dam at Farmington Flood Control Basin, native anadromous fish species like salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon are not expected to be able to access this segment of Hoods Creek. There is no Essential Fish Habitat for Chinook salmon or other anadromous fish within the project area.

Hoods Creek and the reservoir at Orvis Dam may support common warm-water, non-anadromous fish species such as mosquitofish, black bullhead, white catfish, carp, and largemouth bass. However, no special-status fish species were observed or are expected, and the project would not result in any permanent impediment to fish passage through the area.

Habitats for common terrestrial wildlife species occur within and adjacent to the project footprint. The highway system, local roads, and agricultural uses in the vicinity are the primary barriers to terrestrial wildlife movement in the region. However, the project does not propose any features that would permanently impede wildlife movement or connectivity, as the detour alignment and indirect disturbances of construction activity would be temporary in nature.

Environmental Consequences

The project would result in permanent and temporary modifications to aquatic and upland habitats, additional structures shading, and other temporary construction impacts. These would potentially include turbidity, contaminants, noise, vibrations, light, or other physical disturbances.

Two reasonably foreseeable effects were considered when assessing potential impacts from the proposed project on California tiger salamander, northwestern pond turtle, western spadefoot, and their respective habitats. The first effect evaluated was the potential for changes in the duration or frequency of habitat inundation or modification that could affect aquatic habitat suitability. The second effect was potential for the project to introduce predators to the area. These reasonably foreseeable effects are discussed alongside other potential impacts for each species below.

Potentially Jurisdictional Waters

The project would result in 62.92 square feet (0.001-acre) of permanent fill below the ordinary high-water mark of Hoods Creek. This would cause potentially significant impacts to jurisdictional other waters of the United States. Additionally, there would be 7,638.61 square feet (0.18-acre) of temporary disturbance to other waters of the United States from dewatering during construction.

The project would also result in 235.94 square feet (0.005-acre) of permanent fill in isolated wetlands qualifying as waters of the State of California, which would be a potentially significant impact. The project would also result in 575.16 square feet (0.01-acre) of permanent fill between the ordinary high-water mark and top of bank.

Compensatory mitigation would be required for 0.001-acre of permanent impacts to potentially jurisdictional other waters of the United States, under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Compensatory mitigation would also be required for the 0.005-acre of permanent impacts to isolated wetlands qualifying as waters of the State of California, under Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act or Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

A Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and Section 404 Nationwide Verification would be acquired prior to project construction. A

California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement would also be acquired prior to construction from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for potential discharge or disturbance of the streambed. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures for impacts to potentially jurisdictional waters are included below.

Essential Fish Habitat

As the project contains no Essential Fish Habitat, no impacts are anticipated, and no avoidance or minimization measures are required.

Special-Status Plants

No special-status plants are present in the project area, so no impact is anticipated from the proposed project. No avoidance or minimization measures are required.

Invasive Species

The proposed project may potentially break new ground and encourage the spread of invasive plant species. This is due to shoulder widening and grading, as well as construction and removal of temporary alignments and stream crossings. The project is not expected to introduce or transport invasive animal species. The standard specifications and best management practices to reduce the risk of invasive species propagation are listed above in Section 1.5 of this environmental document.

California Tiger Salamander

Hoods Creek in the project area is unlikely to support aquatic breeding of California tiger salamander, and the project would not impact riparian vegetation, as none is present. The project would also be constructed during a time period where aquatic life stages of the California tiger salamander would not be present. As such, the potential for impacts from aquatic habitat modification, vegetation removal, dewatering, sediment mobilization, contaminants, noise, vibration, lights, and other physical disturbances is considered very low.

However, 4.28 acres of annual grassland in the project area are considered upland habitat and may be occupied by adult or juvenile California tiger salamanders. As such, there is moderate potential for impacts to the species from upland habitat modification. Adjacent to State Route 4, 0.16 acres of upland habitat would be permanently impacted by the widened roadway embankment and bridge abutments. Additionally, 0.58 acres of upland habitat would be permanently impacted by the temporary detour alignment, as the excavation and compaction would permanently destroy burrows in the area even after the temporary detour is removed and the area is revegetated. Finally, the remaining 3.54 acres of upland habitat would be temporarily

impacted from contractor access and staging, including the temporary detour alignment, that would cover or trample burrows, but not collapse them entirely.

Two reasonably foreseeable effects were evaluated for their potential to impact the California tiger salamander later in time or at another location. Both were determined to have no potential or very low potential for impact. The project would not change the duration of frequency of aquatic habitat inundation or affect precipitation or watershed drainage patterns, and no suitable aquatic breeding habitat exists in the project area. Additionally, the project would not introduce additional predators to the area.

Under the Federal Endangered Species Act, the proposed project would be likely to adversely affect the Central California Distinct Population Segment of the California tiger salamander. Formal consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act would be required.

Under the California Endangered Species Act, the proposed project would result in take of the Central California Distinct Population Segment of the California tiger salamander. Consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife would be required under Section 2081 of the California Fish and Game Code.

Standard specifications for noise minimization, as listed under Section 1.5 of this environmental document, would apply. Compensatory mitigation measures would be required for permanent and significant impacts to 0.16-acre California tiger salamander upland habitat. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are listed below for California tiger salamander.

Northwestern Pond Turtle

The project area may potentially serve as aquatic foraging and dispersal habitat for the northwestern pond turtle. However, none were detected during the wildlife surveys conducted between December 2023 and March 2024, or during the monitoring and surveys associated with the archaeological investigation performed in April 2025.

Upland habitat may support turtle nesting sites that could be occupied from the beginning of May to the end of August or could support overwintering turtles from November to March. As such, the project has moderate potential for impact to the species. The potential area of temporary impacts to upland habitat is 1.3 acres, with potential permanent impacts to 0.54-acre of upland habitat.

The potential for impacts from vegetation removal, additional structural shade footprint, sediment mobilization, and introduction of contaminants is considered very low. Indirect construction impacts, including noise, vibration,

and light, have moderate potential to impact adult pond turtles, but very low potential to impact pond turtle eggs.

Two reasonably foreseeable effects were evaluated for their potential to impact the northwestern pond turtle later in time or at another location. Both were determined to have no potential or very low potential for impact. The project would not affect inundation, precipitation, or drainage patterns in the area or make aquatic habitat less suitable and would not introduce additional predators to the site.

Under the Federal Endangered Species Act, the proposed project would be likely to adversely affect the northwestern pond turtle. Under the California Endangered Species Act, the proposed project may result in take of the northwestern pond turtle.

Impacts to northwestern pond turtle are considered less than significant and would be avoided and minimized with the implementation of the measures listed below.

Western Spadefoot

Project activities would occur during the aquatic life stages of the western spadefoot. However, Hoods Creek is not suitable for aquatic breeding or rearing habitat for the spadefoot. As such, the likelihood of impacts to spadefoot through aquatic habitat modification, dewatering, water diversion, additional shading, sediment or contaminant mobilization, and physical disturbances are considered very low.

Although suitable upland spadefoot habitat occurs in the project area, direct permanent impacts would be avoided. Contractor access and staging may temporarily affect 347.99 square feet (0.01-acre) area of potential upland habitat. The likelihood of impacts to spadefoot through upland habitat modification is also considered very low.

Two reasonably foreseeable effects were evaluated for their potential to impact the northwestern pond turtle later in time or at another location. Both were determined to have no potential or very low potential for impact. The project would not affect inundation, precipitation, or drainage patterns in the area or make aquatic habitat less suitable and would not introduce additional predators to the site.

Under the Federal Endangered Species Act, the project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the western spadefoot. Under the California Endangered Species Act, the project would also result in no take of the species. Avoidance and minimization measures are included below.

Nesting Migratory Birds and Raptors

The project is not anticipated to result in significant impacts to migratory birds and raptors, or their nests. Under the California Endangered Species Act, the project would also result in no take. Avoidance and minimization measures are included below.

Roosting Bats

The existing Hoods Creek Bridge lacks expansion joints, longitudinal joints, or any other crevice-type features suitable as day-roosting habitat for structures-roosting or crevice-roosting bats. The bridge does potentially provide night-roosting habitat on vertical concrete surfaces. Three black locust trees occur in the project area, though they lack cavities, exfoliating bark, or dense foliage suitable for day-roosting.

No evidence of bat day-roosting, night-roosting, tree-roosting, or use of abandoned swallow nests was detected during site visits conducted between December 2023 and April 2024. However, removal of abandoned swallow nests along Hoods Creek Bridge may result in take of roosting bats. The avoidance and minimization measures listed below would be required to avoid impacts to roosting bats.

Other Special-Status Wildlife

The following special-status species or habitats were also evaluated for potential impacts from the proposed project, including monarch butterfly, valley elderberry longhorn beetle, vernal pool fairy shrimp, vernal pool tadpole shrimp, and designated critical habitat for the Central California Distinct Population Segments of California tiger salamander and steelhead.

However, due to the project being outside the range of these species, lacking suitable habitat or habitat components in the area, and not harming individuals or altering habitat, it is Caltrans' determination that the proposed project would have no effect on the species or habitats listed above. No avoidance or minimization measures would be required.

Fish Passage and Wildlife Connectivity

The existing Hoods Creek Bridge is not considered a barrier to resident native and non-native non-anadromous fish species. The project would also not result in any modifications to the bridge structure or stream channel that would permanently impede fish passage.

The completed project would also not include any features that would further impede the passage of terrestrial wildlife. Temporary impediments to wildlife passage may result from construction, including physical barriers, construction noise, or visual disturbances. However, the project would not cause any permanent alteration of the baseline terrestrial wildlife movement or connectivity. No avoidance or minimization measures would be required.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Full descriptions of the avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

Potentially Jurisdictional Waters

The following compensatory mitigation measure would be required for significant impacts to potentially jurisdictional other waters of the United States.

- BIO-1: Compensatory Mitigation – Waters of the United States and the State of California.

The following avoidance and minimization measures would be required for less than significant impacts to potentially jurisdictionally waters.

- BIO-2: Environmentally Sensitive Area Designation.
- BIO-3: Designated Biologist.
- BIO-4: Limited Operation Period – Stream Zone Construction Activities.
- BIO-5: Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.

California Tiger Salamander

The following compensatory mitigation measure would be required for significant impacts to California tiger salamander.

- BIO-6: Compensatory Mitigation – California Tiger Salamander.

The following avoidance and minimization measures would be required for less than significant impacts to California tiger salamander.

- BIO-2: Environmentally Sensitive Area Designation.
- BIO-3: Designated Biologist.
- BIO-4: Limited Operation Period – Stream Zone Construction Activities.
- BIO-5: Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.
- BIO-7: Worker Environmental Awareness Training for Construction Personnel.
- BIO-8: Temporary Exclusion Fencing.
- BIO-9: Prevent Entrapment.

- BIO-10: California Tiger Salamander Relocation.
- BIO-11: California Tiger Salamander – Restrict Work During Rain Events.
- BIO-12: Temporary Construction Lighting Minimization.
- BIO-13: Construction Lighting – Color Temperature.

Northwestern Pond Turtle

The following avoidance and minimization measures would be required for less than significant impacts to northwestern pond turtle.

- BIO-2: Environmentally Sensitive Area Designation.
- BIO-3: Designated Biologist.
- BIO-4: Limited Operation Period – Stream Zone Construction Activities.
- BIO-5: Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.
- BIO-13: Construction Lighting – Color Temperature.
- BIO-14: Aquatic Wildlife – Pre-Construction Surveys.
- BIO-15: Aquatic Wildlife – Protective Buffers.
- BIO-16: Aquatic Wildlife – Construction Monitoring.

Western Spadefoot

The following avoidance and minimization measures would be required for less than significant impacts to northwestern pond turtle.

- BIO-2: Environmentally Sensitive Area Designation.
- BIO-3: Designated Biologist.
- BIO-4: Limited Operation Period – Stream Zone Construction Activities.
- BIO-5: Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.
- BIO-13: Construction Lighting – Color Temperature.
- BIO-17: Western Spadefoot – Pre-Construction Surveys.
- BIO-18: Western Spadefoot – Protective Buffers.
- BIO-19: Western Spadefoot – Construction Monitoring.

Nesting Migratory Birds and Raptors

The following avoidance and minimization measures would be required for less than significant impacts to nesting migratory birds and raptors.

- BIO-20: Migratory Birds and Raptors – Pre-Construction Surveys During Nesting Season.
- BIO-21: Migratory Birds and Raptors – Protective Buffers.
- BIO-22: Migratory Birds and Raptors – Construction Monitoring.

Roosting Bats

The following avoidance and minimization measures would be required for less than significant impacts to roosting bats.

- BIO-23: Roosting Bats Avoidance – Pre-Construction Surveys.
- BIO-24: Roosting Bats Avoidance – Protective Buffers.
- BIO-25: Roosting Bats Avoidance – Construction Monitoring.
- BIO-26: Roosting Bats Avoidance – Bat Roost Management.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated November 21, 2025, the Archaeological Survey Report dated July 29, 2025, and the Archaeological Evaluation Report dated July 29, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

Affected Environment

Cultural resource identification efforts on the project included review of data from the Caltrans Cultural Resources Database, the Central California Information Center at California State University, Stanislaus; and an in-house archival search by Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc.

The records search identified several previously recorded resources in the general project vicinity, though only two archaeological sites intersected the project's area of potential effect. An archaeological investigation of the project area also resulted in the identification of these two archaeological sites within the area of potential effect.

Both sites were formally evaluated for their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources. A pedestrian survey of the entire area of potential effect was conducted to confirm the location and condition of the sites. Intensive Phase II subsurface archaeological investigations were also completed in April 2025 where the sites intersected with the project's area of direct impact.

Informational letters for consultation outreach were sent to the Stanislaus County Historical Society, the City of Oakdale Planning Department, and the Stanislaus County Community Development Department. No responses to the informational letters were returned. Caltrans also performed consultation outreach to four Native American Tribes and has since continued coordination with representatives of two Tribes about the construction schedule and monitoring procedures. Additional information about Tribal outreach is included in Section 2.1.8 and Chapter 3 of this environmental document. Tribal consultation remains ongoing.

Environmental Consequences

The project area of potential effect includes the Hoods Creek Bridge (Bridge Number 38-0041), which was previously determined not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The only other built environment resource present in the area of potential effect meets the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Programmatic Agreement criteria for properties exempt from evaluation. As such, the project is expected to have no impacts to built environment historic properties.

Subsurface testing was conducted within the portions of the two archaeological sites within the project's area of direct impact, and it was concluded that the evaluated portions do not retain sufficient integrity or data potential to contribute to the site's eligibility for listing in either the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources.

However, the two archaeological properties as a whole are assumed eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for the purposes of this project. This assumption is being made because the large size of the sites

and access limitations prevented a full evaluation of the entire sites. Because the sites were not exhaustively tested, there is still potential for unknown buried deposits to exist within untested portions of the sites within the area of direct impact.

Because the project would not diminish the integrity or data potential for the two archaeological sites, Caltrans has determined that a Finding of No Adverse Effect (without Standard Conditions) is appropriate for the project. Concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Officer would be obtained for this finding prior to the final environmental document.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Impacts to the two archaeological sites identified in the project's area of potential effect would be avoided and minimized with the use of the following measures. Full descriptions of the measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- CU-1: Environmentally Sensitive Area Designation (Cultural).
- CU-2: Environmental Monitoring Area.

2.1.6 Energy

Considering the information in the Energy Analysis Technical Memorandum dated November 21, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

Considering the scope of the proposed project, the information in the District Preliminary Geotechnical Report dated October 6, 2023, the Paleontological Identification Report dated November 20, 2025, and the Earthquake Fault Zone mapping produced by the California Department of Conservation, the following significance determinations have been made:

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**

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Climate Change Study dated December 3, 2025, 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**

Affected Environment

The proposed project is located in a rural, unincorporated area in Stanislaus County, approximately 12 miles north of the City of Oakdale. The project area is agricultural, with the surrounding land consisting of native and nonnative grassland sometimes used for livestock grazing.

State Route 4 in the area connects the City of Stockton, approximately 25 miles west of the project, to the town of Angels Camp located approximately 19.5 miles northeast of the project. State Route 4 is the main transportation route to and through the area for both passenger and commercial vehicles. This segment of State Route 4 has an Annual Average Daily Traffic count of 7,600 vehicles per day. This is relatively low traffic use due to the low population density of the area and the significant distance from any residential or commercial centers.

The Stanislaus Council of Governments is the metropolitan planning organization for Stanislaus County, and guides transportation development. The regional reduction target for the 2022 Regional Transportation Plan produced by the Stanislaus Council of Governments is 16 percent by 2035. The Stanislaus County General Plan Circulation element addresses greenhouse gas emissions in the project area.

Environmental Consequences

The proposed project is non-capacity increasing, as it would not add any travel lanes. As such, it would not lead to any operational increases in greenhouse gas emissions that would conflict with greenhouse emission reduction goals outlined in the 2022 Regional Transportation Plan or General Plan for Stanislaus County.

However, greenhouse gas emissions would be unavoidable during construction. Project construction is expected to generate approximately 183 tons of carbon dioxide during the 180 working days duration. However, these temporary construction emissions would be minimized with the use of the following measures.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measures would be implemented for the project to reduce greenhouse emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project. Full descriptions of the measures are also included in Appendix B of this document.

- GHG-1: Limit equipment idling.
- GHG-2: Schedule truck trips.
- GHG-3: Improve fuel efficiency.
- GHG-4: Reduce waste.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment dated November 20, 2025, the Community Impact Assessment dated December 2, 2025, and the Climate Change Study dated December 3, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	**No Impact**
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	**Less Than Significant 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?	**No Impact**
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	**No Impact**
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	**No Impact**
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The proposed project is located in a rural, agricultural area in Stanislaus County, approximately 12 miles north of the City of Oakdale. The project would involve a temporary detour alignment to convey traffic during the construction period, replacement of Hoods Creek Bridge, and bridge and roadway widening and profile raising through the project length. The project would require a total of 1.87 acres of permanent right-of-way acquisition and 1.15 acres of temporary construction easements from the adjacent properties to the north and south. The temporary detour alignment would also involve excess soils, which would not be reused on site.

The surrounding area was assessed for its potential to include remediation sites, aerially deposited lead, asbestos-containing material, lead-based paint, naturally occurring asbestos, yellow thermoplastic or painted striping, pavement markings, and treated wood waste. Information on the site and the surrounding area was obtained through mapping and records from Caltrans, the State Water Resources Control Board, and the Department of Toxic Substances Control.

Environmental Consequences

The project area includes no open remediation sites and is unlikely to include ultramafic rock outcroppings, faults, or other naturally occurring asbestos formations. As such, the potential to encounter contaminated soils or naturally occurring asbestos is minimal.

However, aerially deposited lead is known to occur in unpaved areas adjacent to highways. Asbestos can also occur in bridge bearing pads, shims, mastic material, or concrete, and any graffiti or other painted surfaces on the bridge

may contain lead-based paint. As such, project-specific surveys of aerially deposited lead, asbestos containing material, and lead based paint shall be conducted prior to construction activities.

Additionally, the project would require removal of yellow thermoplastic striping and pavement markings that have high concentrations of lead. The resulting debris would be treated as construction waste. Disposal of treated wood waste, such as that found in guardrails or roadway signage, may also occur as a result of the proposed project.

Best management practices and standard specifications pertaining to hazardous materials are listed in Section 1.5 of this environmental document. Additional avoidance and minimization measures are also included below.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following avoidance and minimization measures would be required for the project unless otherwise indicated after conclusion of project-specific surveys. Full descriptions of the measures are also included in Appendix B of this document.

- HW-1: Liner under stockpiles.
- HW-2: Hazardous materials management.

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information in the Water Quality Assessment Report dated November 20, 2025 and the Location Hydraulic Study dated November 5, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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**

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

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment Memorandum dated December 2, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

Considering the project scope, the information in the Preliminary Geotechnical Report dated October 6, 2023, and in the Mineral Hazard Mapping produced by the California Geological Survey, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the Noise Compliance Study dated November 21, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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**

2.1.14 Population and Housing

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment Memorandum dated December 2, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.15 Public Services

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment Memorandum dated December 2, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Public Services
Other public facilities?	**No Impact**

2.1.16 Recreation

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment Memorandum dated December 2, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.17 Transportation

Considering the information in the Community Impact Assessment Memorandum dated December 2, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	**No Impact**
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	**No Impact**

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historic Property Survey Report dated November 21, 2025, the Archaeological Survey Report dated July 29, 2025, and the Archaeological Evaluation Report dated July 29, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Would the project cause 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:

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	**Less Than Significant 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

Cultural resource identification efforts on the project are described in Section 2.1.5 of this environmental document. They included reviews of state and private databases, as well as a pedestrian survey and intensive Phase II archaeological investigation of the project site.

Section 106 consultation with Native American Tribes was also conducted. Further consultation details are included in Chapter 3 of this environmental document. Tribal consultation remains ongoing.

Two archaeological sites were identified in the project area and formally evaluated for their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources. A pedestrian survey of the entire area of potential effect was conducted to confirm the location and condition of the sites. Intensive Phase II subsurface archaeological investigations were also completed in April 2025 where the sites intersected with the project's area of direct impact.

Environmental Consequences

Subsurface testing was conducted within the portions of the two archaeological sites that intersected with the project's area of direct impact, and it was concluded that they do not retain sufficient integrity or data potential to be eligible for listing in either the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or California Register of Historical Resources.

However, these two properties as a whole are assumed eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for the purposes of this project. This assumption is being made because the large size of the sites and access limitations prevented a full evaluation of the entire sites. It is also assumed there is potential for unknown buried deposits within the sites.

Because the project would not diminish the integrity or data potential for the two archaeological sites, Caltrans has determined that a Finding of No Adverse Effect (without Standard Conditions) is appropriate for the project. Concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Officer would be obtained for this finding prior to the final environmental document. An environmental monitoring area would be established during construction, and archaeological and Native American Tribal monitoring would be required.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Impacts to the two archaeological sites identified in the project's area of potential effect would be avoided and minimized with the use of the following measures. Full descriptions of the measures are included in Appendix B of this document.

- CU-1: Environmentally Sensitive Area.
- CU-2: Environmental Monitoring Area.

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Considering the scope of the proposed project and the information in the Water Quality Assessment Report dated November 20, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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**

2.1.20 Wildfire

Considering the information in the Climate Change Study dated December 3, 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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**

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**

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance
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?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

The project would affect agricultural resources, biological resources, archaeological and Tribal cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and hazardous materials. These impacts would occur from both construction and the temporary detour alignment and stream crossing to convey traffic during the construction period. The work would require a total of 1.87 acres of permanent right-of-way acquisition and 1.15 acres of temporary construction easements from the adjacent properties to the north and south.

Environmental Consequences

The proposed project may cause impacts to agricultural resources, archaeological and Tribal cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, and hazardous materials. Impacts to adjacent agricultural parcels and archaeological and Tribal cultural resources would potentially result in indirect effects to human beings. With the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures as discussed in Chapter 2 and Appendix B, the effects of these impacts would be less than significant.

The project may also impact biological resources, but with the implementation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures as discussed in Chapter 2 and Appendix B, the effects would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

With the implementation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, the project would have a less than significant impact on the environment. All other impacts would be minimized through the implementation of Caltrans best management practices, Standard Specifications, and Standard Special Provisions. Therefore, the project would

not have a significant impact on species, habitat, or any other natural or historical resource.

Chapter 3 Coordination

Coordination with the following agencies and interested parties was conducted as part of the preparation of technical studies for this environmental document.

Biological Resources Consultation

Caltrans submitted a Biological Assessment for the Hoods Creek Bridge Replacement Project to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in a correspondence dated June 10, 2024. The Biological Assessment described a two-part action, a pre-construction cultural investigation and the ultimate bridge replacement construction project. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service provided comments on the Biological Assessment in an e-mail correspondence dated August 1, 2024.

As per Caltrans and United States Fish and Wildlife Service conversation of August 8, 2024, Caltrans agreed to pursue the cultural resources investigation portion and the bridge replacement portion of the proposed project as two separate actions. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service informed Caltrans that final listing decisions for species proposed for listing under the Federal Endangered Species Act are unlikely to occur until the spring of 2025. Caltrans and United States Fish and Wildlife Service discussed proceeding with Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation for the California tiger salamander for the cultural resources investigation action immediately and deferring the initiation of consultation the bridge replacement action until Caltrans has proceeded with further design. Caltrans and United States Fish and Wildlife Service also discussed that the northwestern pond turtle and western spadefoot have been proposed for listing under the Federal Endangered Species Act. As of the date of this environmental document, these species have not been formally listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Caltrans updated the Biological Assessment to analyze only the cultural resources investigation action on October 21, 2024, based on comments provided by United States Fish and Wildlife Service on October 10, 2024. United States Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Letter of Concurrence that agreed with Caltrans' determination that the Cultural Resources Investigation Project "may affect but is not likely to adversely affect" the California tiger salamander on November 6, 2024.

On August 12, 2025, Caltrans submitted a Biological Assessment for the Hood's Creek Bridge Replacement Project. On August 22, 2025, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service provided comments on the August 12, 2025 Biological Assessment, and on August 22, 2025, Caltrans provided an updated Biological Assessment in response.

On August 28, 2025, Caltrans Design notified Caltrans of proposed scope updates. Caltrans provided a second Biological Assessment Update on October 28, 2025, in response to recent Caltrans project scope updates.

Cultural and Native American Tribal Consultation

On September 15, 2023, the Caltrans Architectural Historian initiated local consultation by sending informational letters to regional stakeholders. Letters were addressed to the Stanislaus County Historical Society, the City of Oakdale Planning Department, and the Stanislaus County Community Development Department. These letters included a brief project description and an invitation to participate in the cultural resource review process. No responses were received.

The Caltrans District 10 Native American Coordinator submitted a request to the Native American Heritage Commission on January 17, 2023, for a search of their Sacred Lands File and a current list of tribal contacts for Stanislaus County. The Native American Heritage Commission responded on February 21, 2023, confirming a negative result for sacred lands in the immediate project area and providing a list of Native American groups traditionally affiliated with the region. These contacts included representatives of four Tribes, including the California Valley Me-Wuk Indians, North Valley Yokuts Tribe, Tule River Indian Tribe, and Wilton Rancheria.

On March 14, 2023, the Caltrans District 10 Native American Coordinator sent formal Section 106 consultation letters and a project location map to all Tribal representatives listed by the Native American Heritage Commission. Correspondence was sent via email and included a summary of the proposed bridge replacement project.

On April 3, 2024, follow-up emails were sent to all previously contacted Tribes providing updates to the project description, including minor design refinements and clarification of anticipated ground disturbance. On April 9, 2024, a response was received from a representative of the Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians requesting additional information and expressing interest in continued consultation. On April 11, 2024, a representative of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians requested information about the construction schedule and monitoring procedures.

Caltrans provided the requested information and confirmed that a representative of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians would participate as a Native American monitor during ground-disturbing activities, as detailed in the Archaeological Monitoring Plan. Consultation remains ongoing.

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
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September 2024

TITLE VI/NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the assurances set forth in the Caltrans' Title VI Program Plan, to ensure that no person in the United States shall on the grounds 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. Related non-discrimination authorities, remedies, and state law further those protections, including sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age, low income, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Caltrans is committed to complying with 23 C.F.R. Part 200, 49 C.F.R. Part 21, 49 C.F.R. Part 303, and the Federal Transit Administration Circular 4702.1B. 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 (including LEP). In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a non-discriminatory manner.

The overall responsibility for this policy is assigned to the Caltrans Director. The Caltrans Title VI Coordinator is assigned to the Caltrans Office of Civil Rights Deputy Director, who then delegates sufficient responsibility and authority to the Office of Civil Rights' managers, including the Title VI Branch Manager, to effectively implement the Caltrans Title VI Program. Individuals with questions or requiring additional information relating to the policy or the implementation of the Caltrans Title VI Program should contact the Title VI Branch Manager at title.vi@dot.ca.gov or at (916) 639-6392, or visit the following web page: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi.

TONY TAVARES
Director

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

Appendix B Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

The following measures would mitigate the project's potentially significant impacts to biological resources as discussed in Section 2.1.4 of this document.

- **BIO-1: Compensatory Mitigation – Waters of the United States and the State of California.** Compensatory mitigation would be required under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the estimated loss of 62.92 square feet (0.001-acre) of other waters of the United States. Compensatory mitigation would also be required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act for the estimated loss of 235.94 square feet (0.005-acre) of isolated wetlands qualifying as waters of the State of California.

  Compensatory mitigation is expected to be accomplished through participation in the United States Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento Office and National Fish and Wildlife Federation's in-lieu fees program.

- **BIO-6: Compensatory Mitigation – California Tiger Salamander.** Compensatory mitigation would be required for the total loss of 4.28 acres of California tiger salamander upland habitat due to significant impacts resulting from permanent fill and the temporary detour alignment during construction. Impacts would be compensated by acquiring 5.02 acre-credits from a United State Fish and Wildlife Service-approved mitigation bank. The loss of 0.16-acre from permanent fill and 0.58-acre from permanent impacts from the temporary detour alignment would be compensated at a 2:1 ratio (1.48 acre-credits). Temporary impacts to 3.54 acres of upland habitat from the detour alignment would be compensated at a 1:1 ratio (3.54 acre-credits).

The following measures would avoid or minimize the project's less than significant impacts to biological resources as discussed in Section 2.1.4 of this document.

- **BIO-2: Environmentally Sensitive Area Designation (Biology).** Additional direct and indirect impacts to sensitive biological resources throughout the project area would be avoided or minimized by designating "Environmentally Sensitive Areas". All areas outside of the proposed construction footprint shall be considered as Environmentally Sensitive Areas, as well as any areas determined by a qualified biologist during project planning or during pre-construction surveys to qualify for Environmentally Sensitive Area designation.

Environmentally Sensitive Area information would be shown on contract plans and discussed in Section 14-1.02 of the Caltrans Standard Specifications or any Special Provisions in Section 14-1.02. Environmentally Sensitive Area provisions may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the use of temporary orange fencing or other high-visibility marking to identify the proposed limit of work in areas adjacent sensitive resources or to locate and exclude sensitive resources from potential construction impacts. Contractor encroachment into Environmentally Sensitive Areas would be prohibited and immediate work stoppage and notification to the Caltrans Resident Engineer is required if an Environmentally Sensitive Area is breached. Environmentally Sensitive Area provisions would be implemented as a first order of work and remain in place until all construction activities are complete.

- **BIO-3: Designated Biologist.** A Designated Biologist or biologists shall be on-site during any activities that have the potential to affect sensitive biological resources. The Designated Biologist would monitor regulated species and habitats, ensure that construction activities do not result in the un-intended take of regulated species or disturbances to regulated habitats, would ensure that construction activities comply with any permits, licenses, agreements, or contracts, would immediately notify the Caltrans Resident Engineer or of any take of regulated species, disturbances to regulated habitats, or breaches of Environmentally Sensitive Areas, and would prepare, submit, and sign notifications and reports. A Designated Biologist who performs specialized activities must have demonstrated field experience working with the regulated species or performing the specialized task and regulatory agency approval would be required prior to Caltrans' acceptance of the Designated Biologist.

- **BIO-4: Limited Operation Period – Stream Zone Construction Activities.** It is proposed that construction activities occurring in aquatic habitat within the project construction footprint and Action Area shall occur between May 1 and October 15 of any construction season, unless earlier or later dates for in-channel construction activities are approved by regulatory agencies. By requiring contractors to adhere to these dates for stream-zone construction, the project proponent would minimize project effects to receiving waters.

- **BIO-5: Restore and Revegetate Temporarily Disturbed Areas Onsite.** Disturbed areas within the construction limits would be graded to minimize surface erosion and siltation into receiving waters. Disturbed areas would be re-contoured to as close to pre-project condition as possible and would be stabilized as soon as feasible as (and no later than October 15 of each construction season) to avoid erosion during subsequent storms and runoff. Permanent erosion control seeding would be performed at all disturbed sites by hydro-seeding over the course of construction as each

site is completed, with all sites seeded by the completion of construction activities.

- **BIO-7: Worker Environmental Awareness Training for Construction Personnel.** Before any work occurs in the project area, a qualified designated biologist (a Designated Biologist familiar with the resources to be protected) would conduct a mandatory Worker Environmental Awareness Training for all construction personnel. The awareness training would be provided to all personnel to brief them on the need to avoid and minimize effects to Federal Endangered Species Act-listed species within and adjacent to the construction areas and the penalties for not complying with applicable state and federal laws and permit requirements.

  The Designated Biologist would inform all construction personnel. about the life history and habitat requirements of Federal Endangered Species Act-listed species and their habitats known to occur or with potential for occurrence onsite, the importance of maintaining habitat, and the terms and conditions of regulatory requirements. The Worker Environmental Awareness Training would cover general restrictions and guidelines that must be followed by all construction personnel to reduce or avoid effects to Federal Endangered Species Act-listed species and their habitats during the investigation.

  Worker Environmental Awareness Training shall be required for any construction personnel. intending to enter the construction zone for more than 15 minutes. Any Designated Biologists conducting Worker Environmental Awareness Training must meet the qualifications of regulatory agencies, and copies of training sign-in sheets for construction personnel would be provided to regulatory agencies upon their request.

- **BIO-8: Temporary Exclusion Fencing.** Prior to commencing construction activities, temporary exclusion fencing shall be installed along the boundaries of the construction area footprint to prevent California tiger salamanders from dispersing into the project area during construction activities. Temporary exclusion fencing shall be designed to allow California tiger salamanders to leave the project area through one-way funnels or another method approved by United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The Designated Biologist shall inspect the temporary exclusion fencing for damage and for California tiger salamander daily, and during and after rain events. The Designated Biologist shall relocate animals found within the interior fence to outside the exclusion fence line as close as possible to the capture location. The exclusion fencing shall remain in place until all construction activities have been completed and related equipment has been removed from the project area.

- **BIO-9: Prevent Entrapment.** To prevent inadvertent entrapment of California tiger salamanders, the Designated Biologist shall check all open

excavations, including but not limited to open holes and trenches more than 6-inches deep, for trapped animals each day. During the workday, before any open trenches or holes are filled, the Designated Biologist shall thoroughly inspect the trenches or holes for California tiger salamander. At the close of each working day, the Designated Biologist shall check open excavations and ensure that all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than 6 inches deep are provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earthen fill or wooden planks with a slope of 3:1, or are covered with boards or metal plates placed flush to the ground with edges overlayed by loose dirt leaving no gaps for species entry. If a California tiger salamander is found, the Designated Biologist shall move the individual to a location outside the exclusion fence line as close as possible to the capture location.

If any open holes, trenches or other excavations greater than 6 inches deep cannot be covered or fitted with escape ramps as described above, then temporary exclusion fence shall be installed around these trenches, holes, or other excavations to prevent California tiger salamander from becoming trapped. Refuge opportunities, such as coverboards (2-foot by 3-foot or larger plywood), shall be provided on the outside perimeter of the barrier.

- **BIO-10: California Tiger Salamander Relocation.** The Designated Biologist shall prepare a California tiger salamander relocation plan. The relocation plan shall include, but not be limited to, an identification of the survey, capture, handling, and relocation methods, and identification of where the individuals would be relocated to. Relocation areas shall be identified by the Designated Biologist based upon best suitable habitat available and time of year and approved by United States Fish and Wildlife prior to the start of construction activities. The relocation plan shall be submitted to United States Fish and Wildlife for approval prior to the beginning of covered activities. Construction activities anywhere within the project area may not proceed until the relocation plan is approved in writing by United States Fish and Wildlife. Only the approved Designated Biologist is authorized to capture and handle California tiger salamander.

- **BIO-11: California Tiger Salamander – Restrict Work During Rain Events.** No activities would be conducted in habitat areas where the California tiger salamander may occur if it is raining, or if there is a greater than 70 percent chance of rain based on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service forecast on any given work day, or within 48 hours following a rain event greater than 0.25 inch.

- **BIO-12: Temporary Construction Lighting Minimization.** Nighttime work during the California tiger salamander active period shall be limited in extent, duration, and brightness to the minimum amount necessary to

complete the approved nighttime work. Lighting shall face downward and shall only be used in the immediate workspace. All nighttime work shall be suspended during rain events. If nighttime work occurs during the California tiger salamander migration/active season from November 1 to April 30, then all nighttime work shall be monitored by the Designated Biologist.

- **BIO-13: Construction Lighting – Color Temperature.** It is highly recommended that outdoor temporary construction lighting and outdoor temporary signal lighting luminaries have correlated color temperatures under approximately 3,000 Kelvin. Luminaries in this color range are more energy efficient, improve public health and safety, and are less disturbing to nocturnal wildlife including birds, insects, turtles, fish, amphibian, bats, and other species. Luminaries for both permanent and temporary lighting systems are specified in Caltrans 2024 Standard Specifications Section 86-1.02K.

  Luminaries for all lighting systems must be either low-pressure sodium or light emitting diode-type. Low-pressure sodium lamps have color temperature that generally range from 2,200 Kelvin to 2,700 Kelvin and these types of luminaries easily meet this recommendation. Caltrans 2023 Standard Specifications specify that all luminaries must have a correlated color temperature range from 2,700 Kelvin to 3,500 Kelvin. Non-standard special provisions may need to be developed under Caltrans 2024 Standard Specifications Section 86-1.02K to specify light emitting diode luminaries with color temperatures of under 3,000 Kelvin.

  To prevent unnecessary outdoor light pollution, temporary outdoor construction lighting as well as outdoor permanent roadway and signal lighting luminaries would be shielded in a manner that prevents light from penetrating above the 90-degree angle.

- **BIO-14: Aquatic Wildlife – Pre-Construction Surveys.** A focused survey for western pond turtles shall be conducted by a Designated Biologist within 10 days prior to the beginning to project-related activities. If western pond turtles are found, a protective no-work buffer would be established and Caltrans shall consult with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to comply with provisions of the Fish and Game Code of California and would consult with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to comply with provisions of the Federal Endangered Species Act. If a lapse in project related work of 10 days or longer occurs, another survey and, if required, consultation with California Department of Fish and Wildlife United States Fish and Wildlife Service would be required before the work can be reinitiated. Pre-construction surveys western pond turtles shall be specified under Caltrans 2024 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection).

- **BIO-15: Aquatic Wildlife – Protective Buffers.** If western pond turtles are detected by the Designated Biologist during the pre-construction survey, then a 50-foot no-disturbance buffer would be established around the work zone. No work would commence within the buffer until authorization is received from the Resident Engineer.

- **BIO-16: Aquatic Wildlife – Construction Monitoring.** If construction or other project related activities which may potentially cause adverse effects to western pond turtles are necessary, monitoring of the work site by a Designated Biologist would be required to ensure that protective radii are maintained.

- **BIO-17: Western Spadefoot – Pre-Construction Surveys.** A focused survey for western spadefoot shall be conducted by a Designated Biologist within 10 days prior to the beginning to project-related activities. If western pond turtles are found, a protective no-work buffer would be established and Caltrans shall consult with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to comply with provisions of the Fish and Game Code of California and would consult with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to comply with provisions of the Federal Endangered Species Act. If a lapse in project related work of 10 days or longer occurs, another survey and, if required, consultation with California Department of Fish and Wildlife United States Fish and Wildlife Service would be required before the work can be reinitiated. Pre-construction surveys western spadefoot shall be specified under Caltrans 2024 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection).

- **BIO-18: Western Spadefoot – Protective Buffers.** If western spadefoot are detected by the Designated Biologist during the pre-construction survey, then a 50-foot no-disturbance buffer would be established around the work zone. No work would commence within the buffer until authorization is received from the Resident Engineer.

- **BIO-19: Western Spadefoot – Construction Monitoring.** If construction or other project related activities which may potentially cause adverse effects to western spadefoot are necessary, monitoring of the work site by a Designated Biologist would be required to ensure that protective radii are maintained.

- **BIO-20: Migratory Birds and Raptors – Pre-Construction Surveys During Nesting Season.** If woody vegetation removal, structures construction, ground-disturbing activities, or other project-related activities are scheduled during the nesting season of protected raptors and migratory birds (February 1 to September 30), a focused survey for active nests of such birds shall be conducted by a Designated Biologist within 14 days prior to the beginning to project-related activities. If active nests are found, a protective no-work buffer would be established and Caltrans shall

consult with United States Fish and Wildlife Service regarding appropriate action to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to comply with provisions of the Fish and Game Code of California. If a lapse in project related work of 15 days or longer occurs, another survey and, if required, consultation with United States Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife would be required before the work can be reinitiated. Pre-construction surveys for nesting migratory birds and raptors shall be specified under Caltrans 2024 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection) and/or 14-6.03(B) (Bird Protection).

- **BIO-21: Migratory Birds and Raptors – Protective Buffers.** If nesting migratory birds or nesting raptors are detected by the Designated Biologist during the pre-construction survey, the appropriate no-work buffer would need be established around the nest or burrow. No work would commence within the buffer until authorization is received from the Resident Engineer. Protective buffer radii for nesting migratory birds and raptors shall be specified under Caltrans 2024 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection) and/or 14-6.03(B) (Bird Protection).

- **BIO-22: Migratory Birds and Raptors – Construction Monitoring.** If construction or other project related activities which may potentially cause nest destruction, nest abandonment or forced fledging of migratory birds are necessary, monitoring of the nest site by a Designated Biologist would be required to ensure that protective radii and any exclusionary devices are maintained and functioning properly.

- **BIO-23: Roosting Bats Avoidance – Pre-Construction Surveys.** If woody vegetation removal, structures construction, swallow mud nest removal, or other project-related activities in bat day-roosting sites are scheduled between February 1 to September 30, a focused survey for day-roosting bats shall be conducted by a Designated Biologist within 15 days prior to the beginning to project-related activities. If active day roosts are found, a protective no-work buffer would be established, and Caltrans shall consult with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to comply with provisions of the Fish and Game Code of California. If a lapse in project related work of 15 days or longer occurs, another survey and, if required, consultation with California Department of Fish and Wildlife would be required before the work can be reinitiated. Pre-construction surveys for roosting bats shall be specified under Caltrans 2024 Standard Specification and/or Standard Special Provision 14-6.03A (Species Protection).

- **BIO-24: Roosting Bats Avoidance – Protective Buffers.** If day-roosting bats are detected by the Designated Biologist during the pre-construction

survey, a fifty (50) -foot no-work buffer would be established around the roost. No work would commence within the buffer until authorization is received from the Resident Engineer.

- **BIO-25: Roosting Bats Avoidance – Construction Monitoring.** If construction or other project related activities which may potentially result in adverse effects to bats or bat day-roost sites, monitoring of the day-roost site by a Designated Biologist would be required to ensure that protective radii and any exclusionary devices are maintained and functioning properly.

- **BIO-26: Roosting Bats Avoidance – Bat Roost Management.** Because proposed bridge work would be subject to regulation under Section 1600 et seq. of the California Fish and Game Code, a Bat Roost Management Plan shall be prepared for review and approval of the California Department of Fish and Game prior to the onset of construction activities. The Bat Management Plan shall propose the timing, methodology, and materials for mud nest inspection, mud nest removal, and exclusion devices according to guidance provided in “California Bat Working Group 2022. Bats in Swallow Nests (rev. 4 April 2022).”

The following measures would avoid or minimize the project’s less than significant impacts to cultural resources as discussed in Section 2.1.4 of this document.

- **CU-1: Environmentally Sensitive Area Designation (Cultural).** A horizontal Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) would be established prior to construction using high-visibility fencing to protect cultural site features from direct and indirect project impacts. Details for the Environmentally Sensitive Area are described in an Environmentally Sensitive Area Action Plan and would be represented as needed in the project’s plans, specifications, estimates, and construction contract. 2024 Caltrans Standard Special Provision 14-1.02A (Environmentally Sensitive Area) would apply.

- **CU-2: Environmental Monitoring Area.** An Environmental Monitoring Area (EMA) would be established, and archaeological monitoring would be required during all project work within this monitoring area. Native American monitoring would also be required and must be scheduled at least five business days prior to work in the monitoring area. The monitoring area would be represented as needed in the project’s plans, specifications, estimates, and construction contract. 2024 Caltrans Standard Specification 14-2.03 and Caltrans Standard Special Provision 14-2.03A (Environmental Monitoring Area) would apply.

The following measures would avoid or minimize greenhouse gas emission impacts from temporary construction activities as discussed in Section 2.1.8 of this document.

- **GHG-1: Limit equipment idling**. The construction contractor would limit idling to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment.
- **GHG-2: Schedule truck trips**. The construction contractor would schedule truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.
- **GHG-3: Improve fuel efficiency**. The construction contractor would improve fuel efficiency by maintaining equipment, using the right size equipment for the job, and using equipment with new technologies where feasible.
- **GHG-4: Reduce waste**. The construction contractor would reduce waste by salvaging demolition material for usable fill, or reusing existing project features and materials on-site where feasible.

The following measures would avoid or minimize hazardous materials impacts from temporary construction activities as discussed in Section 2.1.9 of this document.

- **HW-1: Liner under stockpiles.** A liner must be utilized for materials stockpiling. Caltrans 2024 Standard Special Provision 14-11.05B (Liner) would be included in the construction contract.
- **HW-2: Hazardous materials management.** Caltrans Standard Special Provisions 14-11.08 (Regulated Material Containing Aerially Deposited Lead), 14-11.09 (Minimal Disturbance of Regulated Material Containing Aerially Deposited Lead), 14-11.14 (Treated Wood Waste), and 14-11.16 (Asbestos-Containing Construction Materials in Bridges) would be included in the construction contract.

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)

Air Quality Memorandum

Climate Change Study

Community Impact Assessment Memorandum

District Preliminary Geotechnical Report

Energy Analysis Technical Memorandum

Historical Property Survey Report

- Archaeological Evaluation Report
- Archaeological Survey Report

Initial Site Assessment

Location Hydraulic Study

Natural Environment Study

Noise Compliance Study

Paleontological Identification Report

Section 4(f) Memorandum

Visual Impact Assessment Questionnaire

Water Quality Assessment Report

To obtain a copy of one or more of these technical studies/reports or the Initial Study, please send your request to:

Laura Cook
District 10 Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
1976 East Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard, Stockton, CA 95205

Or send your request via email to: Laura.Cook@dot.ca.gov
Or call: 209- 662-2261

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title: Hoods Creek Bridge Replacement
General location information: East of Farmington on State Route 4
District number-county code-route-post mile: 10-STA-4-7.1/7.4
Project ID number: 10-1H230 / 1020000178