

Appendix A Draft Supplemental Section 4(f)

A.1 Section 4(f) *De Minimis* Determination(s)

This section of the document discusses *de minimis* impact determinations under Section 4(f). The Section 4(f) statute and regulations allow a simplified approval process for projects that have only *de minimis* impacts on lands protected by Section 4(f). Once it is determined that a transportation use of Section 4(f) property, after consideration of any impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation or enhancement measures, results in a *de minimis* impact on that property, an analysis of avoidance alternatives is not required and the Section 4(f) evaluation process is complete. The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) final rule on Section 4(f) *de minimis* findings is codified in 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 774.3 and CFR 774.17.

Responsibility for compliance with Section 4(f) has been assigned to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) pursuant to 23 United States Code (USC) 326 and 327, including *de minimis* impact determinations, as well as agencies that have jurisdiction over a Section 4(f) resource that may be affected by a project action.

A.2 Introduction

This appendix provides an evaluation of whether the I-5/El Toro Road Interchange Project (Project) would trigger the requirements for protection under Section 4(f) for any publicly owned parks, recreational facilities, wildlife refuges, and/or listed or eligible National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) properties. The Project will receive federal funding; therefore, it is subject to Section 4(f) analysis.

A.3 Description of the Project

Caltrans is initiating the supplemental Section 4(f) preliminary *de minimis* determination process because there have been changes since public circulation of the 2019 initial study/environmental assessment (EA). Following the 2019 public review period, consensus on a preferred alternative could not be achieved and the Project was temporarily paused to determine the future course of action. Subsequently, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), Caltrans, City of Laguna Hills, City of Laguna Woods, and City of Lake Forest prepared an Alternatives Assessment Report in order to take "one more look" at the Interstate (I-) 5/El Toro Road interchange and determine if there were any other alternative interchange configurations that could be developed to meet the purpose and need of the Project. The I-5/El Toro Road Interchange Final Alternatives Assessment Report (FAAR) (2022) recommended two Build Alternatives (AA-1 and AA-5) for further evaluation.

In 2023, OCTA and Caltrans reinitiated development of the Project, based on the recommendations included in the FAAR. In January 2024, the Project Development Team (PDT) agreed to evaluate a third Build Alternative that would be limited to Transportation System Management (TSM)/Transportation Demand Management (TDM) improvements. In March 2026, Build Alternative 2 (previously AA-5 in the FAAR) was removed from further analysis. Through continued coordination with Caltrans and local jurisdictions, it was determined that Build Alternative 2 did not meet Caltrans policy under Project Development Procedures Manual (PDPM) Chapter 27, Article 3, and lacked local agency support. As a result, Build Alternative 2 was determined to be non-viable and was eliminated from further consideration.

Caltrans, as assigned by FHWA, is the Lead Agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Caltrans is also the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An environmental impact report (EIR) is in preparation pursuant to CEQA and an EA with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is in preparation pursuant to NEPA.

Caltrans, in partnership with OCTA, proposes to modify and improve the existing I-5/EI Toro Road interchange between post miles (PMs) 17.8 and 19.7 within the cities of Lake Forest, Laguna Woods, and Laguna Hills in Orange County, California (see Figure A-1). The proposed alternatives are Build Alternative 1 (southbound I-5 hook ramps), Build Alternative 3 (TSM/TDM), and the No-Build Alternative.

The Project limits on I-5 extend from approximately 0.2 mile south of the Los Alisos Boulevard overcrossing (PM 17.8) to approximately 0.2 mile south of the Lake Forest Drive overcrossing (PM 19.7), a distance of approximately 1.9 miles. Advanced signage for construction would extend from less than 0.2 mile south of the Los Alisos Boulevard overcrossing (PM 17.7) to 0.2 mile north of Bake Parkway (PM 21.0). Project improvements are also proposed along El Toro Road, Paseo De Valencia, Avenida De La Carlota, Bridger Road, Swartz Drive, and Rockfield Boulevard. Project limits are shown on Figure A-2.

The purpose of the Project is to improve traffic flow and traffic signal optimization, improve traffic mobility at and through adjacent local street intersections, reduce freeway ramp queuing, and apply technology to help manage traffic demand. The need for the Project stems from the fact that the area within the I-5/EI Toro Road interchange experiences traffic delays due to high traffic volumes, geometric deficiencies related to inadequate signal operations and intersection spacing, and traffic queuing at the intersections with on- and off-ramps and local streets, affecting both traffic operations and circulation within the Project area. The two Build Alternatives considered, including the design variation, Build Alternative 1a, are described below.



Figure A-1

I-5 El Toro Road Interchange Project
Project Vicinity

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A.3.1 Build Alternative 1: Southbound I-5 Hook Ramps

Build Alternative 1 proposes an additional I-5 southbound off-ramp to serve El Toro Road independently to the east and to the west. This would be accomplished with a new two-lane southbound I-5 off-ramp to El Toro Road that would be split, with one lane assigned to El Toro Road west and one lane assigned to El Toro Road east. El Toro Road west would use the existing hook off-ramp alignment. A new bridge would be constructed to accommodate the new El Toro Road east off-ramp. The new El Toro Road east off-ramp bridge would cross over the existing southbound I-5 hook on-ramp and El Toro Road and connect to Avenida De La Carlota south of El Toro Road. A new southbound I-5 hook on-ramp would be provided along the realigned Avenida De La Carlota, south of El Toro Road. The existing southbound direct on-ramp from El Toro Road would be eliminated, while the existing access provided by the southbound ramps, opposite Paseo De Valencia, would be maintained. The northbound (NB) I-5 on-ramp from westbound El Toro Road is a two-lane on-ramp. The Project would lengthen this ramp, merging with the NB I-5 mainline approximately 0.15 mile north of the existing merge point. The NB off-ramp would be in a configuration similar to that seen today, with improvements made by the I-5 South County Improvement Project (Segment 3) (EA 12-0K0234). In addition, TSM/TDM elements would be included in Build Alternative 1. TSM/TDM improvements would include technologies that focus on improving Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) at each of the intersections along I-5 and the critical arterials as well as in the region as a whole.

A.3.2 Design Variation: Build Alternative 1a

A design option is proposed for Build Alternative 1 that includes all features described above plus an approximately 90-foot public street entering the Village of Laguna Hills development at the new southbound I-5/Avenida De La Carlota ramp intersection south of El Toro Road. The addition of this public street would create a four-way intersection at the new southbound I-5 and Avenida De La Carlota ramp.

A.3.3 Build Alternative 3 – TSM and TDM

Build Alternative 3 proposes stand-alone TSM/TDM improvements. TSM strategies increase the efficiency of existing facilities; they are actions that increase the number of vehicle trips a facility can carry without increasing the number of through lanes. TDM focuses on regional means of reducing the number of vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled as well as increasing vehicle occupancy. Build Alternative 3 includes only technology improvements; no physical or geometric improvements are proposed. Ground disturbance would not be required under Alternative 3.

A.3.4 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative proposes no action. No construction would take place and no improvements would be made to the I-5/El Toro Road interchange, apart from the projects that are under development or currently under construction. The No-Build

Alternative would not address the issues and deficiencies within the Project limits. This alternative, however, does not preclude the construction of future improvements.

A.4 Section 4(f) Properties

Research was conducted to identify existing publicly owned recreational and park properties, including local, regional, state and federal properties; existing play and sports fields of public schools with public access; publicly owned wildlife and waterfowl refuges and conservation areas; and existing off-street public bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian trails within 0.5 mile of the maximum disturbance limits (Project footprint) for the Build Alternatives (study area), along with NRHP-eligible historic or archaeological sites within the area of potential effects (APE). The study area was defined to identify an area large enough to assess the potential for the Project to result in proximity impacts on properties protected under Section 4(f). Based on this research, there are 14 properties within the study area that qualify as Section 4(f) resources, consisting of nine public parks, three public schools, and two multi-use trails. A summary of the properties identified in the study area is provided in Table A-1, below.

Table A-1. Summary of Properties Subject to Section 4(f) Consideration

Type of Property	Geographic Location to Project	Number of Properties
Public schools	Within 0.5 mile	3
Public parks/recreational areas/open space	Within 0.5 mile	9
Trails	Within 0.5 mile	2
Wildlife and waterfowl refuges	Within 0.5 mile	0
NRHP-eligible historic sites	Within the APE	0
NRHP-eligible archaeological sites	Within the APE	0

Source: Caltrans 2025.

A park or recreational facility qualifies for protection under Section 4(f) if (1) the property is publicly owned, (2) the park is open to the general public, (3) it is being used for outdoor recreation, and (4) it is considered significant by the official with jurisdiction. The park must be publicly owned at the point at which “use” occurs.

Figure A-3 provides a map of the public parks, public schools with recreational facilities, and trails within the study area that are subject to Section 4(f). It was determined that a Section 4(f) use would occur at only one property, Cavanaugh Park (see Table A-2, below). Cavanaugh Park is discussed in more detail in Section A.5, *Resources Evaluated Relative to the Requirements of Section 4(f): Preliminary De Minimis Use Determination*.

Properties that would not trigger Section 4(f) protection because there would be no use of those properties are discussed in Section A.8, *Resources Evaluated Relative to the Requirements of Section 4(f): No-Use Determinations*.

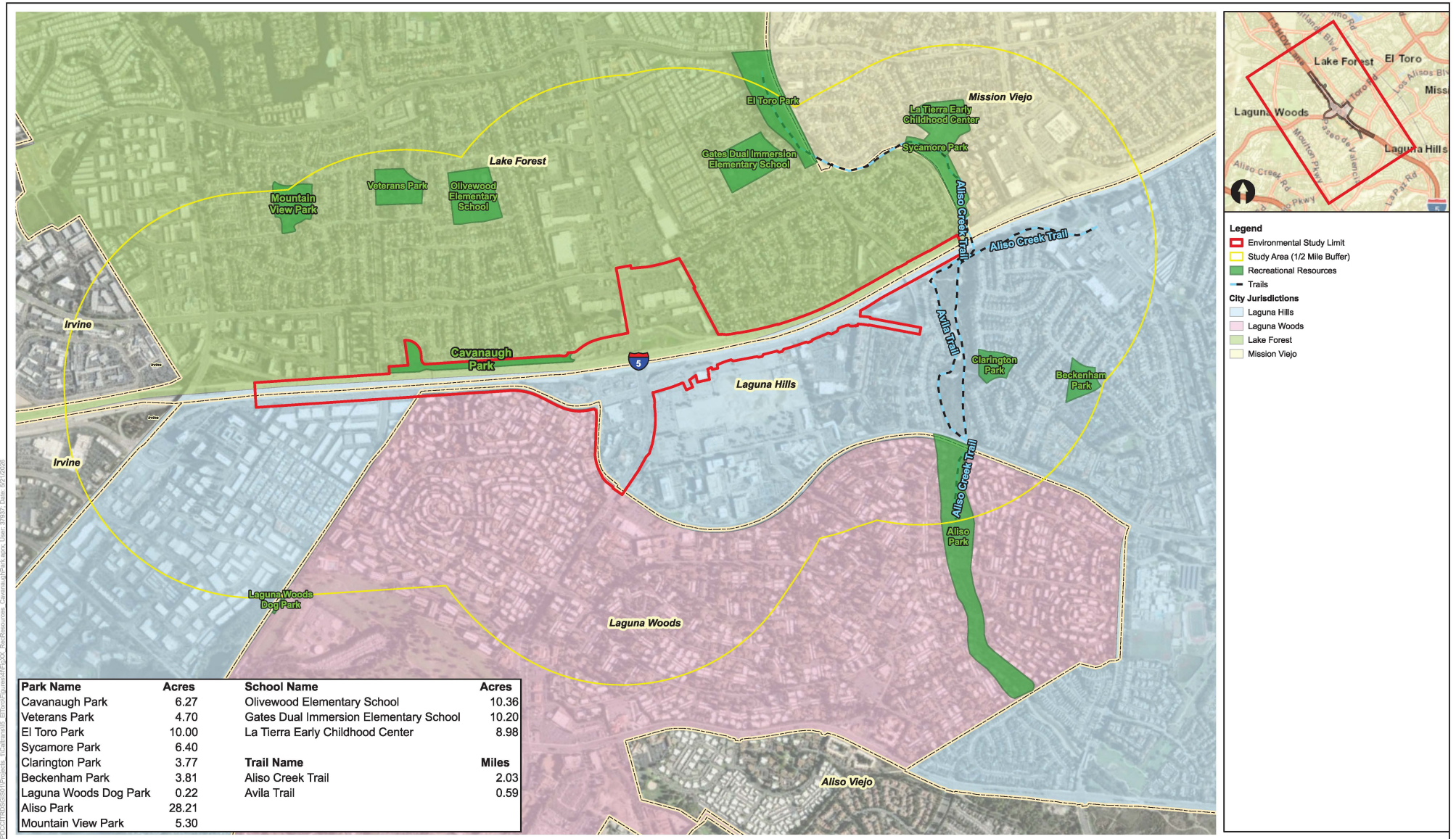


Figure A-3

I-5 El Toro Road Interchange Project
Resources Subject to Section 4(f)

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A.5 Resources Evaluated Relative to the Requirements of Section 4(f): Preliminary *De Minimis* Use Determination

It was determined that the Project could result in a use, as defined under Section 4(f), of one Section 4(f) property, Cavanaugh Park. The section that follows evaluates the use of Cavanaugh Park relative to the requirements of Section 4(f) and includes a preliminary *de minimis* determination for the park.

A.5.1 Description of Section 4(f) Property

Cavanaugh Park, at 23782 Cavanaugh Road, is one of 31 city parks and recreational facilities within Lake Forest, according to the City of Lake Forest Park Guide.¹ The park covers an area of approximately 6.27 acres, as shown on Figure A-4. The primary function of Cavanaugh Park is to provide an area for recreation, relaxation, and social gathering for the local community. The features and amenities of the park that support this function include a half basketball court with lighting, a picnic table, a small playground, and an open grass area (refer to Table A-2, below). In comparison to other local parks, the facilities at Cavanaugh Park are limited and outdated. According to the 2022 City of Lake Forest Draft Asset Inventory for Cavanaugh Park, most of the amenities and assets at the park were identified as needing replacement before or by 2025, with the exception of the playground structure, which would need to be replaced by 2027.

Table A-2. Section 4(f) Resource

Property Name (Official with Jurisdiction)	Description	Distance from Project Footprint	Potential for Use	Type of Use
Cavanaugh Park (City of Lake Forest)	Location: 23782 Cavanaugh Road, Lake Forest, CA 92630 Size: 6.27 acres Activities/Features/Attributes: Half basketball court with lighting, small playground structure, picnic table, large open grass area with scattered trees.	The Project intersects a portion of the park boundaries (see Figure A-4).	Acres: 0.5 acre of temporary use and 0.59 acre of permanent use under Build Alternative 1 and its design variation (Build Alternative 1a).	<i>de minimis</i>

A.5.2 Proposed Use (Permanent Use)

Use of a Section 4(f) property occurs when land is permanently incorporated into a transportation project, where there is a temporary occupancy of land that is adverse in

¹ City of Lake Forest. Available:

<https://cms2.revize.com/revize/lakeforest/Documents/Departments/Community%20Services/Parks%20And%20Fields/23-Parks-Guide.pdf?t=202508141138100>.

terms of the Section 4(f) preservation purpose, or when a project's proximity impacts are so severe that the protected activities, features, or attributes of a property are substantially impaired. The permanent and temporary uses of Build Alternative 1 and its design variation (Build Alternative 1a) are described below.

Temporary Occupancy Resulting in Use

Permanent and temporary uses of Cavanaugh Park by Build Alternative 1 and its design variation (Build Alternative 1a) would occur during construction and operation of the Project. Build Alternative 1 and its design variation (Build Alternative 1a) would affect approximately 0.5 acre of the park during construction, requiring temporary construction easements (TCEs) to support access and staging during construction activities (see Figure A-4). A half basketball court, playground equipment, picnic table, and portions of an open grass area would be affected during construction. As discussed in Section A.5.3, below, because the City of Lake Forest has plans to relocate park facilities prior to the Project starting construction, those relocation activities are not included in the Project's TCEs. Build Alternative 3 and the No-Build Alternative would not require TCEs of the park and, therefore, would not result in temporary occupancy and use of the park.

Permanent Use

Build Alternative 1 and its design variation (Build Alternative 1a) would require the acquisition of approximately 0.59 acre of Cavanaugh Park (permanent impact) to accommodate the Project improvements (see Figure A-4). Within the 0.59 acre, portions of the open grass area, half basketball court, playground, and other park facilities would be permanently converted to roadway uses, resulting in a permanent Section 4(f) use.

Build Alternative 3 and the No-Build Alternative would not require acquisition of right of way from Cavanaugh Park and, therefore, would not result in permanent use of the park.

A.5.3 Why the Use Is *De minimis*

To determine if construction activities associated with the Project would substantially affect normal activities at the park, field visits were conducted between June and October 2025 to observe the types of activities and number of people frequenting the park. A field visit was conducted on Wednesday, June 11, 2025, between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. No one was observed using the play equipment or the half basketball court. Another field visit was conducted on Monday, June 23, 2025, between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Once again, no one was observed using the park. Several other field visits were also conducted the following week. A few transients were found sleeping within the park and a few people were observed walking their dogs. A field visit was also conducted on a weekend, Sunday, October 26, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. A man and women were observed sitting at the picnic table near the play equipment, a man and young boy were walking on the grass, and another man with a dog was observed sitting on the grass in a lawn chair.

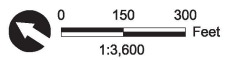


Figure A-4
I-5 El Toro Road Interchange Project
Section 4(f) Use of Cavanaugh Park

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The Project would permanently use approximately 0.59 acre of Cavanaugh Park, which is less than 10 percent of the park's total acreage. The use would require the removal of the half basketball court, playground, and picnic table as well as some of the park's open space along I-5, as shown on Figure A-4. If the City of Lake Forest's project to relocate the park is implemented and completed prior to the start of construction, permanent impacts from the Project would be limited to vegetated areas (e.g., areas with shrubs, groundcover, trees) because the park facilities would have already been relocated. Cavanaugh Park's existing facilities are modest and older compared to other parks in the city, which may contribute to lower usage by nearby residents. In addition, observations suggest that the area occasionally attracts transient activity.

Caltrans has been in close coordination with City of Lake Forest officials, who have expressed support for the Project and are in the process of revitalizing Cavanaugh Park. Through coordination with the City of Lake Forest, measures have been developed to address and minimize the impacts of the Project on Cavanaugh Park and take into account the City of Lake Forest's future plans for the park. These measures are detailed in Section A.7, *Consultation and Coordination*.

The City of Lake Forest is currently in the process of revitalizing Cavanaugh Park. On October 29, 2025, the City of Lake Forest presented conceptual design plans to the community, as shown on Figure A-5. Construction is anticipated to begin in early 2027. Caltrans will continue to coordinate with the City of Lake Forest regarding the timing for both projects. If the City of Lake Forest project moves forward ahead of the Caltrans Project, the impacts outlined above would be much less because the Caltrans Project would not be required to relocate the affected facilities. However, Caltrans would compensate the City of Lake Forest for the acreage acquired (permanent partial fee acquisition and TCEs) for the Project, in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (**REL-1**). If the City of Lake Forest project is not approved to move forward, then Minimization Measures **LU-4 (Section 4f-1)** and **LU-5 (Section 4f-2)** shall be incorporated.

Currently, the park area is adjacent to I-5 and does not contain any special-status plant species or designated critical habitats. Urbanization of the area and the existing I-5 adjacent to the park has already contributed to habitat degradation in the area to be acquired. An existing 16-foot noise barrier separating I-5 from Cavanaugh Park would be demolished to accommodate the proposed northbound I-5 on-ramp improvements. As a result, a new noise barrier to reduce traffic noise would be constructed along I-5, adjacent to Cavanaugh Park. For any visual impacts that may occur due to the partial acquisition, an Architectural Design Review Team, consisting of local representatives and the Caltrans District 12 Landscape Architect, would ensure that proposed architectural treatments would comply with the aesthetic requirements of the City of Lake Forest and that any replacement of park facilities would provide the same—if not improved—visual quality for the community compared to the existing park facilities. In addition, Avoidance and Minimization Measures **VIS-1** and **VIS-2** would be implemented during final design and construction.

In addition to the partial acquisition discussed above, Build Alternative 1 and its design variation (Build Alternative 1a) would require a TCE of approximately 0.5 acre from Cavanaugh Park. During the construction phase, there would be minor inconveniences to the community at that location. The Project Features described below under Section A.6, *Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures* (**PF-TRA-1**, **PF-CI-1**, **PF-CI-2**, and **PF-N-1**), would be implemented to minimize these temporary inconveniences to the community. Therefore, the partial acquisition and TCE needed would affect the activities, features, and attributes of Cavanaugh Park only temporarily. The impacts would be minimal with incorporation of the avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures, as discussed below. Based on the discussion presented above, and the inclusion of avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures, Caltrans has made a preliminary *de minimis* determination.

Formal consultation with the City of Lake Forest to confirm the findings of this Section 4(f) analysis, including the *de minimis* finding for Cavanaugh Park, will occur following public review of the draft supplemental EIR/EA and Section 4(f) documentation. Prior to finalizing the supplemental EIR/EA and Section 4(f) documentation, a request will be sent to the City of Lake Forest for concurrence on the *de minimis* determination and be included in Attachment A of this Section 4(f) appendix.

A.6 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures

To minimize the impact of the Section 4(f) use, the following Project Features and minimization measures are included in the Project and in the Environmental Commitments Record:

- PF-TRA-1** Transportation Management Plan. The Project will include preparation of a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) phase. “TMP” is an approach for alleviating or minimizing traffic delays by the effective application of traditional traffic handling practices and an innovative combination of various strategies. These strategies include public awareness campaigns, motorist information, incident management, construction methods, demand management, and alternate route planning.
- LU-4 (Section 4f-1)** Caltrans, in coordination with the City of Lake Forest, shall install new park facilities, similar to those removed, such as the half basketball court, playground, and picnic table within the remaining Cavanaugh Park limits. This measure shall be implemented in conjunction with measure **LU-5**, providing an opportunity to enhance and upgrade the park, based on the community’s input.
- LU-5 (Section 4f-2)** Caltrans and the City of Lake Forest shall perform outreach activities during the design phase to seek the community’s input on the choice of park facilities/features.

- REL-1** Property acquisition shall be conducted in compliance with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act) (Public Law 91-646, 84 Statutes 1894). The Uniform Act mandates that certain relocation services and payments be made available to eligible residents, businesses, and nonprofit organizations displaced by federal or federally assisted projects. The Uniform Act provides for uniform and equitable treatment by federal or federally assisted programs of persons displaced from their homes, businesses, or farms and establishes uniform and equitable land acquisition policies.
- VIS-1** *Preservation and Protection of Existing Landscape.* Damage to existing vegetation, especially mature, established trees, within the Project limits or in close proximity to the Project limits shall be minimized to the extent practicable, consistent with safety, design standards, and construction requirements. Vegetation designated for preservation shall be protected during construction through the installation of temporary high visibility fencing prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities. Tree trimming or pruning, where required, shall be conducted under the direction of a qualified arborist.
- VIS-2** *Replacement Landscape and Irrigation in Areas Impacted by Construction.* To maintain the context of the Project area (color, form, and texture), landscaping shall be installed that is compatible with the existing landscape along I-5 in the Project vicinity and surrounding area. Where feasible, landscaping shall include specimen sized trees and/or shrub/groundcover mass planting and landscape treatment along walls to soften the hardscape features and reduce glare and radiant heat from the walls. In areas where soundwalls are visible from adjacent residential land uses, vines and landscaping shall be utilized to screen views to the wall where feasible. The landscape concept, plan, and plant palette shall be determined in consultation with, and approved by, the District Landscape Architect in consultation with the Cities of Lake Forest, Laguna Hills, and Laguna Woods during the Plans, Specifications, and Estimate (PS&E) phase. All vine and landscape proposed shall conform with the planting policy requirements of Caltrans and the applicable goals and policies of the City of Lake Forest General Plan, Laguna Hills General Plan, and Laguna Woods General Plan as well as the tree preservation policies identified in the Lake Forest Municipal Code, Laguna Hills Municipal Code, and Laguna Woods Municipal Code. The planting plan shall be reviewed and approved by the Caltrans biologist to be in accordance with Executive Orders 13751, Safeguarding the Nation from the Impacts of Invasive Species (2016), and 13112, Invasive Species (1999).

- PF-CI-1** During construction, implement Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 5-1.31, which requires that the job site be neatly maintained in areas visible to the public.
- PF-CI-2** During construction and before contract acceptance, implement Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 5-1.39, which requires restoration of damaged work areas to the same state of completion as before the damage.
- PF-N-1** Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14.8-02: Control and monitor noise resulting from work activities. Do not exceed 86 A-weighted decibels maximum instantaneous noise level (dBA Lmax) at 50 feet from the job site from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

A.7 Consultation and Coordination

Caltrans has initiated consultation with the City of Lake Forest, the official with jurisdiction, regarding characterization of effects of the Project in the context of this Section 4(f) evaluation, consistent with 49 USC 303(d)(3)(B). Caltrans sent a preliminary Section 4(f) coordination letter, dated October 1, 2018, to the City of Lake Forest. On October 18, 2018, and November 27, 2018, meetings with the City of Lake Forest were held to discuss the Section 4(f) process and the original Project alternatives, which were later eliminated. It was determined during these meetings that the City of Lake Forest preferred to conduct outreach to the community to obtain input on replacement features for Cavanaugh Park during the design phase. A follow-up preliminary Section 4(f) coordination letter was sent to the City of Lake Forest, dated February 4, 2025, to provide updated information regarding the current Project alternatives. This letter is included in Chapter 4, *Comments and Coordination*. During the April 2025 PDT meeting, the City of Lake Forest communicated that it was initiating efforts to revitalize Cavanaugh Park and indicated it would continue coordinating with Caltrans to ensure park improvements align with the Project design. Two community outreach meetings were held on September 6, 2025 and October 29, 2025.

On December 8, 2025, Caltrans and the City of Lake Forest met to discuss final design plans for Cavanaugh Park. City Engineer Doug Erdman confirmed that the City of Lake Forest considered the I-5/EI Toro Road Interchange Project in the final concept design plans for Cavanaugh Park. Based on subsequent correspondence in May 2026, the City of Lake Forest anticipates that park construction will begin in late 2028. The City of Lake Forest indicated that it would share the most recent I-5/EI Toro Road Interchange Project design with its park design consultant to avoid conflicts between the proposed park improvements and planned interchange improvements. In addition, the City of Lake Forest has agreed to work with Caltrans and OCTA to provide concurrence on the preliminary *de minimis* determination, based on the analysis and findings thus far. Caltrans will continue to coordinate with the City of Lake Forest prior to approval of the EIR/EA to finalize the *de minimis* determination.

This Section 4(f) analysis will be made available for a 30-day public review period, starting July 31, 2026. After the public review period but prior to finalizing the final

environmental document, a request will be sent to the City of Lake Forest for concurrence on the *de minimis* determination.

A.8 Resources Evaluated Relative to the Requirements of Section 4(f): No-Use Determination

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified in federal law at 49 USC 303, declares that “it is the policy of the United States government that special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites.”

This section of the document discusses parks, recreational facilities, wildlife refuges, and historic properties found within or next to the Project area that do not trigger Section 4(f) protection because (1) they are not publicly owned, (2) they are not open to the public, (3) they are not eligible historic properties, or (4) the Project would not permanently use the property and would not hinder preservation of the property.

According to the supplemental natural environment study/minimal impacts (NES-MI) document, there are no wildlife or waterfowl refuges within 0.5 mile of the Project limits. The Build Alternatives are considered a covered action in conformance with the OCTA natural community conservation plan/habitat conservation plan (NCCP/HCP), implementing agreement, and NCCP/HCP agreement. In addition, no NRHP-eligible archaeological sites or NRHP-eligible historic sites are within the Project’s APE.

As discussed in Section A.4, above, there are eight public park/recreational areas, three public schools, and two multi-use trails, in addition to Cavanaugh Park, that are subject to Section 4(f) within 0.5 mile of the Project limits (see Table A-3 and Figure A-3).

Table A-3. Properties Subject to Section 4(f) within 0.5 mile of the Study Area (No-Use)

No.	Property (Official with Jurisdiction)	Address	Facilities
1	Olivewood Elementary School (Saddleback Valley Unified School District)	23391 Dune Mear Rd., Lake Forest, CA 92630	A 10.36-acre public school in the Saddleback Valley Unified School District with roughly 479 students in grades transitional kindergarten (TK) through 6. Has a playground, library, and two computer labs. Within 0.32 mile of the Project limits.
2	Ralph A. Gates Elementary School (Saddleback Valley Unified School District)	23882 Landisview Ave., Lake Forest, CA 92630	A 10.20-acre public school in the Saddleback Valley Unified School District with roughly 1,039 students in grades kindergarten (K) through 6. Within 0.41 mile of the Project limits.

No.	Property (Official with Jurisdiction)	Address	Facilities
3	La Tierra Early Childhood Center (adjacent to part of Sycamore Park) (Saddleback Valley Unified School District)	24150 Lindley St., Mission Viejo, CA 92691	An 8.98-acre public school serving students in preschool and TK in the Saddleback Valley Unified School District. Has a playground. Within 0.43 mile of the Project limits and adjacent to Sycamore Park.
4	Veterans Park (formerly known as Village Pond Park) (City of Lake Forest)	23102 Ridge Route Dr., Lake Forest, CA 92630	A City of Lake Forest–owned, 4.70-acre park, formerly known as Village Pond Park and later rededicated as Veterans Park. It has a new 1-acre pond, meandering sidewalks, and a butterfly garden. The park honors five branches of military service with a new monument and art designs. Within 0.44 mile of the Project limits.
5	Mountain View Park (City of Lake Forest)	24061 Dylan St., Lake Forest, CA 92630	A City of Lake Forest–owned, 5.3-acre park with a baseball field, full- and half-court basketball, outdoor exercise equipment, a playground, tennis courts, picnic tables, barbecues, and restrooms.
6	El Toro Park (City of Lake Forest)	23701 Los Alisos Blvd., Lake Forest, CA 92360	A City of Lake Forest–owned, 10-acre park with a paved bicycle path, shade trees, a playground, and tennis courts. Within 0.39 mile of the Project limits.
7	Sycamore Park (City of Mission Viejo)	25101 Charlinda Dr., Mission Viejo, CA 92691	A City of Mission Viejo–owned, 6.5-acre park with a sand volleyball court, playground equipment, picnic tables, and barbecues. Within 0.30 mile of the Project limits.
8	Clarrington Park (City of Laguna Hills)	24701 Jorie Dr., Laguna Hills, CA 92653	City of Laguna Hills–owned, 3.49-acre public park with swings, a grass area, and access to a walking trail, picnic tables, benches, a sports field, and a tot lot. Within 0.16 mile of the Project limits.
9	Beckenham Park (City of Laguna Hills)	24901 Wilkes Pl., Laguna Hills, CA 92653	City of Laguna Hills–owned, 2.75-acre public park with benches, drinking fountain, lighting, picnic tables, sports field, a tot lot, and walkways. Within 0.41 mile of the Project limits
10	Laguna Woods Dog Park (City of Laguna Woods)	23190 Ridge Route Dr., Laguna Woods, CA 92637	City of Laguna Woods–owned, 0.33-acre dog park with a play space. Within 0.36 mile of the Project limits.
11	Aliso Park (County of Orange – OC Parks)	189 Avenida Majorca, Laguna Woods, CA 92637	A 28.21-acre community park, now under the jurisdiction of OC Parks. Within 0.27 mile of the Project limits.

No.	Property (Official with Jurisdiction)	Address	Facilities
12	Aliso Creek Regional Bikeway and Riding and Hiking Trail (County of Orange Flood Control District and County of Orange – OC Parks)	Lake Forest, Laguna Hills, and Mission Viejo, CA	On land owned by the Orange County Flood Control District and maintained by OC Parks, the 15-mile bikeway and recreational trails extend from the foothills of Orange County to the boundary of Laguna Beach. The continuous asphalt bikeway is designed for multi-use travel through five South County cities. Trail types include equestrian trails, fitness trails, mountain bike trails, nature trails, and urban trails. The closest segment of the trail is approximately 75 feet from the Project limits.
13	Avila Trail (County of Orange)	Laguna Hills, CA	Dirt trail between Paseo De Valencia and the City of Laguna Hills Aliso Creek Access Trail. Maintained by the County of Orange. The closest segment of the trail is approximately 45 feet from the Project limits.

Source: Caltrans 2025.

There would be no use of land from the properties in Table A-3 under Section 4(f) (permanent incorporation of land from a property into a transportation facility), and there would be no TCEs or other temporary occupancies within the boundaries of the above-mentioned properties under Build Alternative 1 and its design variation (Build Alternative 1a). No permanent or temporary occupancy of land from these resources is anticipated under the Build Alternative 1 and its design variation (Build Alternative 1a); therefore, the requirements for protection under Section 4(f) are not triggered.

In terms of proximity or constructive use impacts, no staging areas or vehicular access points are proposed near the above-mentioned resources. Therefore, no substantial short-term or long-term visual impacts are anticipated to occur or adverse effects on water quality from construction activities. Project construction activities would not produce substantial operational air quality impacts, and no long-term substantial noise impacts are anticipated. Build Alternative 1 and its design variation (Build Alternative 1a) would not result in any direct or indirect vegetation impacts. Because of the distances, as well as intervening natural and built features, and the limited nature of construction activities, there would be no impacts that would rise to the level of substantial impairment.

A.9 Section 6(f) Consideration

State and local governments often obtain grants through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to acquire land or make improvements to parks and recreational areas. Section 6(f) of the LWCF prohibits the conversion of property acquired or developed with the grants to a non-recreational purpose without approval of

the Department of Interior's National Park Service. If the LWCF is used for acquisition or improvement, certain requirements must be met before the land can be acquired.

According to the City of Lake Forest Public Works Department, none of its parks were improved using money from the LWCF; therefore, Section 6(f) does not apply.