

Corralitos Creek Bridge ADA

On State Route 152, east of the City of Watsonville in Santa Cruz County

05-SCr-152-1.9/2.0

05-1400-0039 EA: 05-1F620

SCH #2020010514

Initial Study with Negative Declaration



Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

April 2020



General Information About This Document

The Draft Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration circulated for public review and comment from January 30, 2020 to February 28, 2020. A Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration, as well as an offer to hold a public meeting, was published in the local newspaper (The Pajaronian) on January 31, 2020. The Notice of Intent and offer to hold a public meeting was mailed to a list of stakeholders that included both governmental offices and private citizens who are near the project area.

Comments received during this period are included in Appendix A, Comment and Responses, and have been added since the draft environmental document circulation.

The project has completed the environmental compliance with the circulation of the draft document. When funding is approved, Caltrans can design and build all or part of the project.

Hard copies of this document as well as the technical studies are available at:

Caltrans District Office
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is 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: Jason Wilkinson, Central Region Environmental, 50 South Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, California 93401; (805) 542-4663 (Voice), or use California Relay Service 1 (800) 735-2929 (TTY), 1 (800) 735-2929 (Voice), or 711.

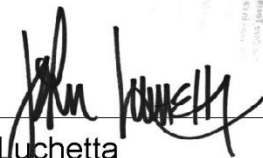
SCH #2020010514
05-SCr-152-1.9/2.0
0514000039

Construct an accessible pathway on Route 152 from post mile 1.9 to post
mile R2.0 in Santa Cruz County

**INITIAL STUDY
with Negative Declaration**

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

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation



John Luchetta
Office Chief
California Department of Transportation

April 10, 2020

Date

Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will improve pedestrian infrastructure along the eastbound side of State Route 152 across Corralitos Creek Bridge in Santa Cruz County. The existing pedestrian pathway will be updated to be accessible to persons with disabilities in compliance with all State and Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

Determination

The project would have no effect on: agriculture and forest resources, air quality, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, or wildfire.

The project would have a less than significant effect on: aesthetics and biological resources.



John Luchetta
Office Chief
California Department of Transportation

April 10, 2020

Date

Section 1 Project Description and Background

1.1 Project Title

Corralitos Creek Bridge ADA

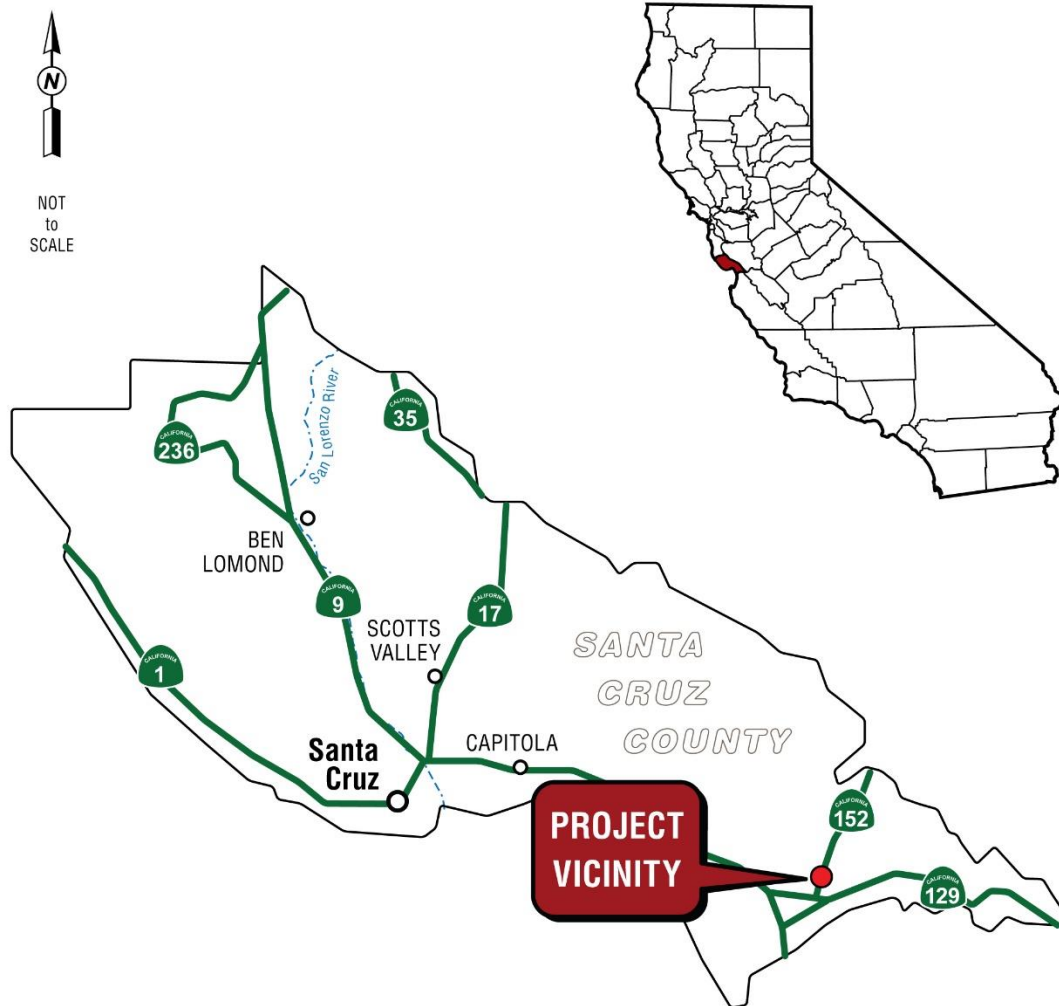
1.2 Project Location

The project site is in Santa Cruz County, California. It is located along the eastbound side of State Route 152 at Corralitos Creek Bridge from 0.1 mile east of Beverly Drive to the Holohan and College Road intersection.

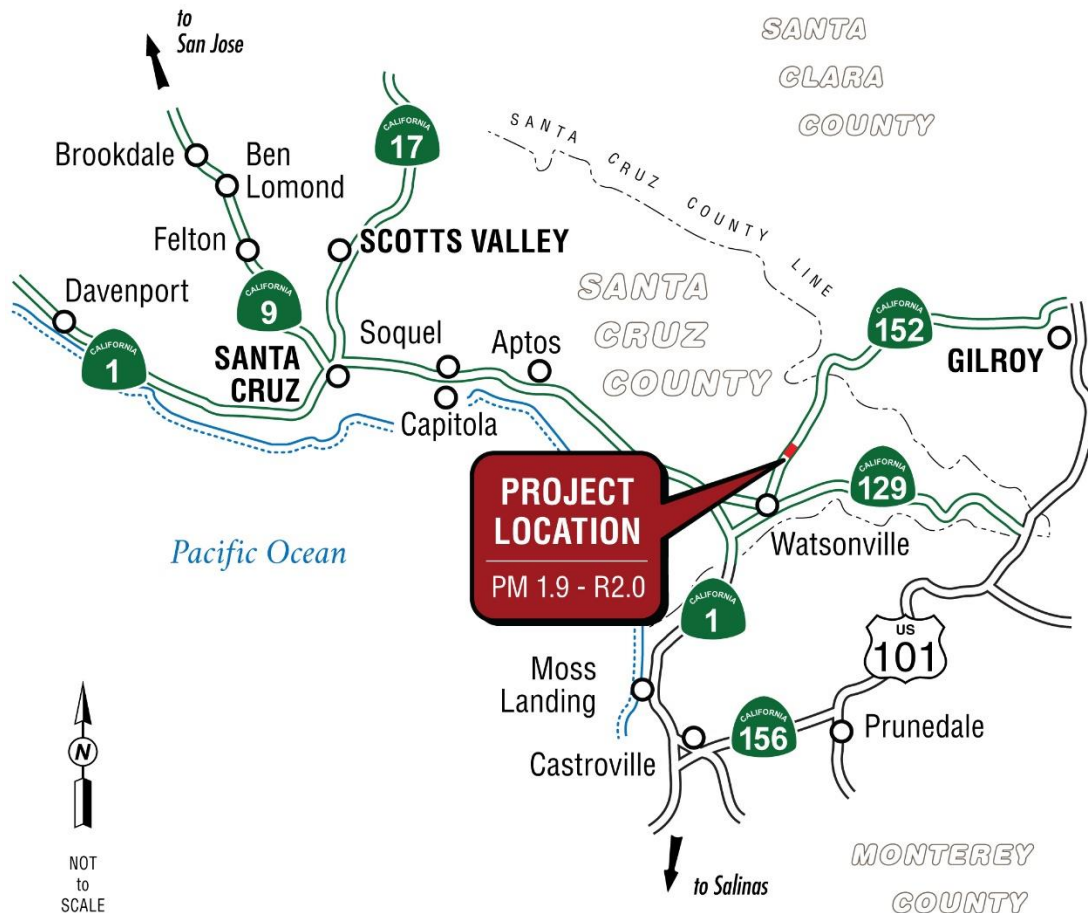
1.3 Description of Project

Caltrans will construct an accessible pathway on State Route 152 by widening the existing shoulder on the eastbound side of Corralitos Creek Bridge. The accessible pathway will also consist of constructing a concrete barrier rail and a sidewalk along the slope just north of the bridge, curb and gutter, Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant curb ramps, upgraded Metal Beam Guard Rail and drainage features. The sidewalk will extend from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flood control levee path just south of Corralitos Creek Bridge northward to the southeast corner of the intersection at State Route 152 and College Road. Temporary construction easements will be required for construction, and temporary utility relocation will be required for a gas and water line that run along the eastbound shoulder of State Route 152 and across the creek through bridge.

Project Vicinity Map



Project Location Map



1.4 Surrounding Land Uses and Setting

State Route 152 begins near State Route 1 as a series of local streets that run through downtown Watsonville, after which it becomes a winding two-lane conventional highway that crosses the Santa Cruz Mountains and ends at the Santa Clara County and Santa Cruz County line. It is an east-west corridor that passes urban land (Watsonville), farmland, and rural coastal foothills. The proposed project site crosses Corralitos Creek where the creek converges with Salsipuedes Creek in Interlaken, just outside the City of Watsonville.

The City of Watsonville is the fastest growing city in Santa Cruz County, and development is expanding east beyond the city limits. The surrounding land in Interlaken is primarily used for agricultural, commercial, and residential purposes. In addition to the two schools 0.3 mile north of Corralitos Creek Bridge, there are homes, restaurants, markets, and gas stations, east and west of the project limits. Santa Cruz Metro and Watsonville Transit Center provide public transportation options within Watsonville and to its surrounding areas. Watsonville Airport, 3 miles west of the proposed project location, is the only regional airport within Santa Cruz County.

1.5 Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required

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

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Nationwide Permit for impacts to waters of the United States	To be obtained before construction
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board	Section 401 Certification for impacts to waters of the United States	To be obtained before construction
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Programmatic Biological Opinion for California Red-legged Frog	Letter of Concurrence Obtained 1/3/2020
National Marine Fisheries Service	Biological Opinion for South Central California Coast Steelhead	Letter of Concurrence Obtained 3/30/2020
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement for impacts to Corralitos Creek	To be obtained before construction

Section 2 California Environmental Quality Act Environmental Checklist

2.1 CEQA 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 With Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, and No Impact. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with a project will indicate that there are no impacts to a resource. A No Impact answer reflects this determination. The words “significant” and “significance” used throughout the following checklist are related to CEQA, not National Environmental Policy Act, impacts. 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 an integral part of the project and have been considered prior to any significance determinations documented below.

2.1.1 Aesthetics

CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics

Information from the Scenic Resource Evaluation and Visual Assessment (November 5, 2019) prepared for this project was used to address questions in this section.

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No Impact—There are no scenic vistas within the project limits.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

No Impact—State Route 152 is not designated as a state scenic highway.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact—This project's features would be consistent with viewers' expectations along this section of the travel corridor and the change in character will be minimal. See *Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist* for more information.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

No Impact—The project proposes no new sources of lighting and therefore would not result in any visual impacts due to lighting and glare.

2.1.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources

CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forest 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.

Would the project:

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—The project is not on Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance based on California Department of Conservation maps.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact—The project is zoned as residential and commercial based on Santa Cruz County zoning maps and would not interfere with any Williamson Act contracts.

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, 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—The project is not located in any land zoned as forest or timberland based on the Santa Cruz County zoning maps.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact—The project would not result in the loss or conversion of forest land because the project area is zoned as residential and commercial.

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—The project would not result in the conversion of Farmland or forest land because the project area is zoned as residential and commercial.

2.1.3 Air Quality

CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality

Information from the Air Quality Report (September 14, 2018) prepared for this project was used to address questions in this section.

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.

Would the project:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

No Impact—The project is consistent with Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District air quality attainment goals as stated in the State Implementation Plan.

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—This project is in the North Central Coast Air Basin and is in attainment for all federal air quality standards. The North Central Coast Air Basin is nonattainment transitional for state ambient air quality standards for ozone and non-attainment for particulate matter 10 micrometers or smaller. It is anticipated that there will be no difference in long-term air emissions in the region with or without the project.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

No Impact—Based on the Air Quality Assessment, there would be no difference in long-term air emissions caused by the project. There is minimal potential to expose surrounding sensitive receptors to inhalable emissions during project construction. Additionally, temporary construction impacts would be minimized by using dust control practices as part of Caltrans' standard procedure.

d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

No Impact—The project is not expected to result in other emissions that would cause an adverse effect.

2.1.4 Biological Resources

CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources

Information found in the Natural Environment Study (November 2019) that was prepared for this project was used to address the questions in this section.

Would the project:

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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less Than Significant Impact—The project has the potential to temporarily impact south-central California coast steelhead trout (federally threatened) and its habitat, California red-legged frogs (federally threatened), and western pond turtles (California Species of Special Concern) if the species are present during project construction. However, the chances are very low that any of these species would be present during construction given the relatively small proposed project area and poor quality of habitat. See *Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist* for more information.

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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Less Than Significant Impact—The project has the potential to temporarily impact south-central California coast steelhead trout critical habitat and Black Cottonwood Forest during construction. Indirect impacts may occur due to temporary access, staging areas, and a potential stream diversion. However, avoidance and minimization measures would be implemented to avoid and minimize indirect impacts to jurisdictional areas. See *Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist* for more information.

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—The project is not expected to result in permanent impacts to jurisdictional areas. Indirect impacts may occur due to temporary access, staging areas, and a potential stream diversion. However, avoidance and minimization measures would be implemented to minimize indirect impacts to jurisdictional areas. See *Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist* for more information.

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?

Less Than Significant Impact—The proposed project would not significantly interfere with the movement of native resident, migratory fish, or wildlife species. During construction, stream flow (if present) would be maintained by a stream diversion timed to occur with the surface water is at a seasonal minimum. Impacts would be temporary, and the creek corridor would be restored to pre-project conditions. See *Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist* for more information.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

No Impact—The proposed project does not appear to conflict with any local policies or ordinances.

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—There is no existing Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan within the project area based on the plans and reports available through Santa Cruz County.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources

Information from the Archaeological Survey Report (May 2019) and Historical Property Survey Report (September 2019) prepared for this project was used to address the questions in this section.

Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

No Impact—There are no historical resources present in the project area.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

No Impact—There are no archaeological resources in the project area.

c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

No Impact—Cultural resources studies and consultation did not identify any cultural resources, including human remains, within the project area of potential effect.

2.1.6 Energy

CEQA Significance Determinations for Energy

Would the project:

a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

No Impact—The project would include standard construction practices and reasonable measures that will reduce wasteful, inefficient and unnecessary consumption (e.g. turning off idling equipment, limiting materials transport) of energy and non-renewable resources during project construction. The project is not anticipated to require excessive consumption of energy resources for construction.

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

No Impact—The project would not conflict with or obstruct the state or local energy plans.

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils

Would the project:

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—The project is not within an earthquake fault zone, according to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Hazard Zone Map. No known active or potentially active faults project towards or cross the highway alignment within the project limits. Therefore, there is low potential for surface fault rupture to occur.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

No Impact—Corralitos Creek Bridge was built with seismic reinforcing in accordance with the Highway Design Manual.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

No Impact—The project design would incorporate Caltrans standards and construction methods to minimize potential risks associated with strong ground shaking and potential liquefaction hazards.

iv) Landslides?

No Impact—Localized landslides or soil movement could potentially occur during construction and would be minimized with the implementation of Caltrans Standard Specifications for soil stabilization.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

No Impact—During construction, erosion control measures would be implemented and maintained by the contractor daily throughout the construction period.

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 on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

No Impact—The project design would incorporate Caltrans standards and construction methods to minimize potential risks associated with strong ground shaking and potential liquefaction hazards.

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

No Impact—Preliminary investigations have found that the project is located on soils that are composed of a mix of silt, sand, and clay. Clay is commonly identified as an expansive soil. Further geotechnical investigation will be conducted prior to project construction to better identify the soil characteristics within the project area. The project would incorporate design features to protect structures from expansive soils.

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—Based on the Draft Project Report, the project does not include the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems.

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

No Impact—A paleontological review was completed for this project and does not expect any paleontological resources or unique geologic features will be found in the proposed project site.

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Would the project:

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

No Impact—The project is not expected to generate enough greenhouse gas emissions to significantly impact the environment. Construction-related greenhouse gas emissions would be unavoidable due to material processing, delivery, on-site construction equipment and potential traffic delays. Emissions would be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase. Frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases.

The greenhouse gas emissions discussion is based on climate change guidance provided by the Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis.

According to the guidance, there are several categories of projects that most likely would have minimal or no increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions, including roadway improvement projects such as this.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

No Impact—The project would not conflict with plans, policy or regulations for reducing emission greenhouse gasses. All construction contracts will include all Caltrans Standard Specifications that require compliance with all Air Resources Boards and local air district rules, regulations ordinances and statues, some of which can contribute to reducing construction greenhouse gas emissions (i.e., idling equipment restrictions, appropriate source point, etc.).

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Would the project:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

No Impact—Expected use, transport, and disposal of potentially hazardous materials would be routine construction issues that would be handled in the construction contract through inclusion of standard special provisions. It is not expected that project construction will result in significant hazards to the public or to the environment.

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?

No Impact—The project will follow the 2018 Caltrans Standard Specifications for construction spill prevention. The project is not expected to result in significant hazards to the public or to the environment.

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—Lakeview Middle School and St. Francis High School are located within 0.25 mile of the project area. The use of any hazardous materials, substances, or waste would be routine construction issues that would be handled in the construction contract through inclusion of standard special provisions.

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—The State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker reported a completed cleanup at 2303 East Lake Avenue with low potential to affect the project.

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—There are no airports within 2 miles of the project area.

f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact—There could be delays due to one-way traffic or temporary road closures during construction. Emergency vehicles would be given priority and road barriers would be removed. A traffic management plan will be prepared to notify and coordinate with emergency responders during construction.

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

No Impact—The contractor must provide a fire plan and jobsite fire protection.

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality

Information found in the Draft Project Report, Water Quality Assessment (November 13, 2019), and Updated Hydraulic Recommendations (October 15, 2019) that were prepared for this project was used to provide responses for this section.

Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

No Impact—Standard construction practices and other best management practices would be incorporated into the plans to minimize potential risk of runoff from construction activities into the creeks. With the use of proper engineering controls, impacts to water quality are not expected.

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—The proposed shoulder widening project does not have the potential to deplete groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge.

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 on- or off-site;

No Impact—During construction, erosion control measures would be implemented and maintained by the contractor throughout the construction period.

ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;

No Impact—The project would not increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding. Best management practices would be incorporated to minimize potential risk of flooding from runoff due to construction.

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—All drainage systems are designed to convey the 100-year (1% probability) flood without objectionable backwater depths and velocities to prevent flooding of adjacent land.

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

No Impact—All drainage systems are designed to convey the 100-year (1% probability) flood without objectionable backwater depths and velocities to prevent flooding of adjacent land.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

No Impact—The project would not impact Corralitos Creek's floodplain because structures will not be constructed on the main creek. Permanent impacts to the floodplain along Salsipuedes Creek will be avoided by constructing the retaining structure in a way that the creek's conveying capacity will remain the same. Additionally, a Storm Water Pollution

Prevention Plan or a Water Pollution Control Plan would be prepared and implemented during construction to the satisfaction of the Resident Engineer to prevent the release of pollutants due to project inundation.

e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

No Impact—Construction and operation of the proposed accessible pathway project would comply with the water quality control and sustainable groundwater management plan.

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

CEQA Significance Determinations for Land Use and Planning

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact—The project would not physically divide an established community. Instead, the project would facilitate safer access for pedestrians to cross Corralitos Creek Bridge.

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—The project would not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted with the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

CEQA Significance Determinations for Mineral Resources

Would the project:

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—The project area is categorized as a Mineral Resource Zone-1, indicating an area where adequate geologic information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, according to the County of Santa Cruz Information Services Department's Mineral Classifications.

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—In addition to the project area’s categorization as a Mineral Resource Zone-1, the Santa Cruz County General Plan does not indicate the presence of a locally important mineral resource recovery site.

2.1.13 Noise

CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise

Information found in the Noise Study Report (September 14, 2018) prepared for this project was used to address questions in this section.

Would the project result in:

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—Operational noise levels are not predicted to approach or exceed Caltrans’ noise abatement criterion. Local noise levels will remain the same after completion of the project. There will be temporary increases in ambient noise levels during construction but will be controlled by Caltrans Standard Specifications.

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

No Impact—The project is not expected to generate excessive groundborne vibration or noise resulting from construction activities.

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—The nearest airport is about 3 miles from the project site.

2.1.14 Population and Housing

CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing

Would the project:

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—The project is not expected to induce unplanned population growth.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact—This project would not displace any people.

2.1.15 Public Services

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—During construction, there could be delays for emergency response vehicles due to one-way traffic or temporary road closures. Emergency vehicles would be given priority and road barriers would be removed. The completed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts that would cause the need for new or physically altered public facilities or services.

Police protection?

No Impact—During construction, there could be delays for emergency response vehicles due to one-way traffic or temporary road closures. Emergency vehicles would be given priority and road barriers would be removed. The completed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts that would cause the need for new or physically altered public facilities or services.

Schools?

No Impact—The completed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts that would cause the need for new or physically altered public facilities or services.

Parks?

No Impact—The completed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts that would cause the need for new or physically altered public facilities or services.

Other public facilities?

No Impact—The completed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts that would cause the need for new or physically altered public facilities or services.

2.1.16 Recreation

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—The project would not increase the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities.

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—The project does not include recreational facilities or the construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

2.1.17 Transportation

CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation

Would the project:

a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

No Impact—The project does not conflict with any program plans, ordinances or policies for transportation and would instead enhance access for pedestrians and bicycles across Corralitos Creek Bridge.

b) Conflict with or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Note: While public agencies may immediately apply Section 15064.3 of the updated Guidelines, statewide application is not required until July 1, 2020. In addition, uniform statewide guidance for Caltrans projects is still under development. The Project Development Team may determine the appropriate metric to use to analyze traffic impacts pursuant to section 15064.3(b). Projects for which a Notice of Preparation (NOP) will be issued any time after December 28, 2018 should consider including an analysis of vehicle miles traveled/induced demand if the project has the potential to increase vehicle miles traveled (see page 20 of the Governor's Office of Planning and

Research's updated Senate Bill 743 Technical Advisory), particularly if the project will be approved after July 2020.

No Impact—The project would not add capacity or increase vehicle miles traveled.

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—The project does not include geometric design features that would substantially increase hazards.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

No Impact—Emergency response vehicles could be delayed during construction if there is a traffic backup, but they would not be blocked from getting through even in the event of a full road closure.

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources

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:

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

No Impact—There are no California or local register-eligible resources within or next to the project area.

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 Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

No Impact—There are no resources determined to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1 in the project area.

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems

Would the project:

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—The project may involve temporary utility relocation for a gas and water line during construction. However, no permanent utility changes are expected, and the temporary relocation is not expected to cause significant environmental effects.

b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

No Impact—This project is not expected to require water service. Caltrans complies with water conservation requirements by Executive Orders issued during Governor Edmund J. Brown's term and maintains a goal of reducing water consumption by 50% comparing 2013 baseline usage.

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—There would be no wastewater treatment provider required for the project.

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—The project is not expected to generate excessive waste. Solid waste generated by construction of the project would be transported to a disposal site with appropriate facilities to accommodate waste materials.

e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

No Impact—The contractor would be required to abide by all laws and regulations, as well as all Caltrans Standard Specifications pertaining to hazardous waste.

2.1.20 Wildfire

CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact—During project construction, any emergency response or evacuation plan requiring access to the project site may encounter delays. Standard practice is to coordinate with local emergency agencies and develop a transportation management plan to minimize potential delays to emergency services during project construction. Once complete, the project is not expected to negatively affect evacuation plans in the area.

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—The project site is not located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones according to California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map.

The project construction crew would use standard precautions to prevent fire incidents during construction as part of the code of safe practices. The project will not construct any new housing or commercial facilities within the project area. Project occupants using the Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant pathway are expected to pass through the facility and not remain for extended periods of time.

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—Project work will include utility relocation which has the potential to create an unintended fire. However, coordination with the utility owners and implementation of the code of safe practices would prevent fire incidents during construction.

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—The project is not expected to increase the risk of downstream flooding or landslides due to post-slope instability or drainage changes.

2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

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?

No Impact—The project does not have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment.

The project has the potential to reduce the number of south-central California coast DPS steelhead trout, California red-legged frogs, and western pond turtles. However, the project would implement appropriate measures to avoid and minimize the impacts to wildlife species and their associated habitats. Further discussion follows this checklist under *Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist, Biological Resources*.

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—The project would result in minimal disturbance to the natural environment. However, the avoidance and minimization measures adopted for this project will minimize impacts to biological resources. Further discussion follows this checklist under *Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist, Aesthetics and Biological Resources*.

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

No Impact—The project is not expected to cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. Construction activities have the potential to cause nuisance effects from noise, dust, and traffic delays. None of these are expected to be significant. Caltrans standard construction measures would be implemented to reduce any potential inconveniences to local residences and the traveling public because of project construction activities. The final project would make it safer and more accessible for pedestrians to cross Corralitos Creek Bridge on the eastbound side. Further discussion follows this checklist under *Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist, Biological Resources*.

Additional Explanations for Questions in the Impacts Checklist

I. Aesthetics (checklist item I, question c)

Affected Environment

A Scenic Resource Evaluation and Visual Assessment was completed in November 2019. The project site is generally a transition zone between residential commercial and agricultural uses on the fringe of Watsonville in southern Santa Cruz County. Corralitos Creek provides a noticeable riparian swath for the community. Although the existing visual quality of the project vicinity is moderate, Corralitos Creek and nearby agricultural fields combined with views of the distant hills provide a semi-rural character that is valued by the local community. The existing bridge itself includes two different bridge rails and lacks visual unity.

A few on-highway and off-highway public viewpoints are in the vicinity of the project. The bridge provides pedestrian access between Lakeview Middle School and residential subdivisions to the south. In addition, the Levee Path intersects Highway 152 immediately south of the Corralitos Creek bridge. These proximity factors increase viewer exposure and sensitivity to the project and potential changes to the visual environment.

Environmental Consequences

The existing visual character of the project site and its surroundings defined primarily by its semi-rural and agricultural context. The visual character is defined equally by its transitional suburban development. Corralitos Creek serves as a community visual resource which increases the visual quality of the setting. Proposed project elements such as new bridge rail, new roadside concrete barrier, and taller guardrail would reduce visibility of Corralitos Creek as seen from Highway 152. Vegetation removal for construction access would also result in a temporary adverse effect to the visual character of the creek environment.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

With implementation of the following measures, the project would be consistent with the aesthetic and visual resource protection goals along the Highway 152 corridor, and potential visual impacts would be minimized:

1. New bridge rail along the east side of the bridge shall be designed to complement the existing railing on the west side. Tubular horizontal members shall be used. Railing dimensions and proportions shall appear similar to the existing west-side railing to the greatest extent possible.
2. Bridge-type railing or barrier required at locations other than on the bridge structure such as on retaining walls shall be open style metal type and pedestrian scale in appearance.

3. Abutments shall include rough aesthetic texturing to minimize graffiti potential.
4. Following construction, re-grade and re-contour any new construction access roads, staging areas and other temporary uses as necessary to match the surrounding natural topography.

IV. Biological Resources (Checklist Item IV, Questions a, b, and c)

The Natural Environmental Survey, prepared in November 2019, is the primary source of information used in the preparation of this section.

Natural Communities

The Biological Study Area is defined as the area that may be directly, indirectly, temporarily, or permanently impacted by construction and construction-related activities. The Biological Study Area is about 2.61 acres and occurs along State Route 152 just west of the Corralitos and Salsipuedes Creeks confluence, extending beyond the proposed construction footprint to include adjacent riparian and aquatic habitats.

Black Cottonwood Forest—Populus Trichocarpa Forest Alliance

Black Cottonwood Forest observed in the Biological Study Area is classified in the California Manual of Vegetation as the *Populus trichocarpa* Forest Alliance. This vegetation community occupies the vegetated riparian corridor along Corralitos and Salsipuedes Creeks. Black Cottonwood Forest in the Biological Study Area contains a tree canopy dominated by cottonwood, white alder, and willow. The principal understory species are Himalayan blackberry, cape ivy, and greater periwinkle, all considered invasive species by the California Invasive Plant Council. Riparian vegetation is treated and/or removed regularly along the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flood control levee east of the bridge, along the southern bank. West of the bridge, the riparian understory is heavily impacted by human activity and bank stabilization methods on the northern and southern banks, respectively.

Although no active bird nests were observed during reconnaissance surveys, several common bird species have the potential to nest and forage in the cottonwood forest in the Biological Study Area.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead Trout Critical Habitat

Reaches of Corralitos and Salsipuedes Creeks in the Biological Study Area are within designated critical habitat for south-central California coast steelhead trout. The physical and biological features for south-central California coast steelhead trout critical habitat are:

- Freshwater spawning sites with water quality and quantity and substrate to support spawning, incubation and larval development

- Freshwater rearing sites with water quality, floodplain connectivity, forage habitat and natural cover to support juvenile growth
- Freshwater migration corridors free of obstructions
- Estuarine areas for juvenile transition between fresh and salt water
- Nearshore marine areas for growth and maturation
- Offshore marine areas for growth and maturation

Within the Biological Study Area, Corralitos Creek is mostly dry in the summer at and immediately upstream of the union with Salsipuedes Creek, and pools are relatively shallow due to a lack of structure in the channel resulting from regular sediment and vegetation removal. Salsipuedes Creek from the College Lake outlet downstream to its union with Corralitos Creek is a silty, cloudy channel. Summer water temperatures are warm, and pools are shallow. However, steelhead are known to spawn and rear in the upper watershed of Corralitos Creek, and two tributaries to College Lake and Salsipuedes Creek may be used by spawning and rearing steelhead trout. Therefore, although the reaches of Salsipuedes Creek and Corralitos Creek within the Biological Study Area do not support spawning or over-summer rearing, steelhead trout may be present during the migration period.

Environmental Consequences

Black Cottonwood Forest—Populus Trichocarpa Forest Alliance

The project build alternative would result in temporary wildlife connectivity impacts in the Biological Study Area during construction. Stream flow would be maintained by a stream diversion for fish passage, if required during construction.

Temporary impacts would be primarily from the use of construction equipment and associated worker foot traffic. Trucks, bulldozers, backhoes, compactors, clamshells, excavators, compressors, pile drivers, boom lifts, cranes, water trucks, and any other equipment necessary during construction would be used. Access would occur from State Route 152 and equipment would be temporarily staged along developed and/or disturbed habitat in both the Caltrans right-of-way along the edges of State Route 152 and in temporary easements next to the proposed project area.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead Critical Habitat

The Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, south-central California coast steelhead trout critical habitat. There would be no permanent impacts to steelhead trout critical habitat along the streambed. While the placement of temporary dams, diversion and dewatering, and bridge widening work within Corralitos Creek could result in a temporary loss of service of available habitat (about 0.122 acre), the extent of these effects

are estimated to be minor and restricted to one construction season during the driest months of the year (June to October) when steelhead trout are not likely to be present. The effects to steelhead trout critical habitat are assessed to be not adverse.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing would be installed along the maximum disturbance limits to minimize disturbance to adjacent habitats and vegetation. Special provisions for the installation of Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing and silt fencing will be included in the Construction Contract and will be identified on the project plans. Prior to the start of construction activities, Environmentally Sensitive Area areas will be delineated in the field and will be approved by the Caltrans environmental division.

South-Central California Coast DPS Steelhead Trout Critical Habitat Avoidance and Minimization Measures

1. Prior to construction, Caltrans will complete Federal Endangered Species Act consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service.
2. Prior to construction, a qualified biologist will conduct an informal worker environmental training program including a description of protected species and habitats, their legal and protected status, proximity to the project site, avoidance and minimization measures to be implemented during the project, and the implications of violating Federal Endangered Species Act and other relevant permit conditions.
3. During construction, instream work will be limited to the low-flow period from June 15 and October 31 in any given year, when the surface water is likely to be at seasonal minimum and to avoid adult steelhead trout spawning migration and peak smolt emigration. Deviations from this work window will only be made with concurrence from relevant regulatory and resource agencies.
4. Prior to construction, the contractor will prepare and sign a Water Pollution Control Plan or a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan that complies with Caltrans Stormwater Quality Handbook (Caltrans 2011). Provisions of this plan will be implemented during and after construction as necessary to avoid and minimize erosion and stormwater pollution in and near the work area.
5. All equipment that will be stationary for more than 12 hours will have catch or drip pans placed underneath them. All compressors, pumps and fuel tanks will be placed inside fuel spill containment systems while operating at any time.
6. During construction, all project-related hazardous materials spills within the project site will be cleaned up immediately. Readily accessible spill

prevention and cleanup materials will be kept by the contractor on-site at all times during construction.

7. During construction, erosion control measures will be implemented. Silt fencing, fiber rolls, and barriers will be installed as needed between the project site and jurisdictional waters and riparian habitat.
8. During construction, the cleaning and refueling of equipment and vehicles will occur only within a designated staging area. This area will either be a minimum of 100 feet from aquatic areas or if the area is less than 100 feet from aquatic areas the area must be surrounded by barriers (i.e. fiber rolls or equivalent). The staging areas will conform to Caltrans Construction Site best management practices (Caltrans 2017) applicable to attaining zero discharge of stormwater runoff.
9. Immediately upon completing in-channel work, temporary fills, cofferdams, diversion cofferdams, and other in-channel structures will be removed in a manner that minimizes disturbance to downstream flows and water quality.
10. All temporary excavations and fills within project limits will be removed in their entirety and the affected areas returned to pre-construction elevations.
11. The Restoration Plan for impacts to jurisdictional waters will also mitigate impacts to federally designated steelhead trout critical habitat. The Restoration Plan will be prepared and approved by relevant regulatory agencies. The Restoration Plan will propose mitigation at a 1:1 ratio (acreage) for temporary impacts. Replacement plantings will include appropriate native tree and understory species. To ensure success, monitoring and a one-year plant establishment period will be required, and will include regular inspections, weeding, and replacement, as necessary.

Replacement plantings will be detailed in Caltrans' Landscape Architecture Landscape Planting Plan and the final Restoration Plan. The Plan will be developed in coordination with a biologist and will include developed planting specifications and grading plans to ensure survival of planted vegetation and reestablishment of functions and values. The final plan will detail mitigation commitments and will be consistent with standards and mitigation commitments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Restoration Plan will be prepared when full construction plans are prepared and will be finalized through the permit review process with regulatory agencies.

Invasive Species Avoidance and Minimization Measures

1. During construction, Caltrans will ensure that the spread or introduction of invasive exotic plant species will be avoided to the maximum extent possible.

2. If the use of imported fill material is necessary, the imported material will be obtained from a source that is known to be free of invasive plant species; or the material will consist of purchased clean material such as crushed aggregate, sorted rock, or similar.
3. Due to the high concentration of invasive species in the Biological Study Area, to prevent the spread of invasive species all vegetation removed from the construction site will be taken to a certified landfill, and if soil from weedy areas must be removed off-site, the top 6 inches containing the seed layer will be disposed of at a landfill.
4. Project plans will avoid the use of plant species that the California Invasive Plant Council, California Department of Agriculture, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, or other resource organizations consider to be invasive or potentially invasive.
5. Construction equipment will be certified as “weed-free” by Caltrans before entering the construction site. If necessary, wash stations on-site will be established for construction equipment under the guidance of Caltrans to avoid and minimize the spread of invasive plants and/or seeds within the construction area.

Species of Special Concern

Affected Environment

South-Central California Coast Steelhead

Steelhead trout are the anadromous (ocean-going) form of rainbow trout. Adults spawn in freshwater, and juveniles rear in freshwater before out-migrating to the ocean to mature and then return to freshwater as adults to reproduce.

Optimal in-stream habitat for steelhead trout throughout its entire range on the Pacific Coast can generally be characterized by clear, cool water with abundant cover (i.e., submerged branches, rocks, logs), well-vegetated stream margins, and relatively stable water flow; however, steelhead trout can also occupy reaches of streams containing less than optimal habitat.

Although steelhead trout were not observed during surveys conducted within the Biological Study Area in 2014, 2018, and 2019, and no intensive survey methods were used, Corralitos Creek and Salsipuedes Creek are known to support steelhead trout and its critical habitat.

California Red-Legged Frog

California red-legged frogs use a variety of areas, including aquatic, riparian, and upland habitats. They prefer aquatic habitats with little or no flow, the presence of surface water to at least early June, surface water depths to at least 27.6 inches, and the presence of sturdy underwater supports such as cattails.

The species was not observed during reconnaissance surveys, but aquatic habitat present in the Biological Study Area provide nonbreeding habitat for red-legged frogs dispersing between breeding and nonbreeding aquatic habitats in the project vicinity and therefore presence within the Biological Study Area is inferred.

Western Pond Turtle

The western pond turtle is considered a Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Western pond turtles live where water persists year-round in ponds along foothill streams or in broad washes near the coast. The ponds favored by turtles typically support emergent and floating vegetation such as cattails and algal mats.

No western pond turtles were detected during the wildlife reconnaissance-level surveys. However, western pond turtles have been recorded in several locations near the Biological Study Area and are likely residents in nearby perennial ponds on private property that have not been surveyed for this species (i.e., Kelly Lake, Drew Lake, Lake Tynan). Although there is no suitable nesting for pond turtles in the Biological Study Area, Salsipuedes and Corralitos Creeks provide suitable aquatic dispersal and foraging habitat, and pond turtles may occasionally disperse overland through the project footprint.

Special Status and Other Native Migratory Birds

The Biological Study Area has potentially suitable habitat for several common and rare bird species, but most are not expected due to the intensity of development and agricultural land use in the project vicinity and low-quality habitat in the Biological Study Area. Furthermore, there is a lack of records near the Biological Study Area. Although no records of listed bird species exist within or next to the Biological Study Area, the Cooper's hawk, a state watch listed species, does have a nearby record.

The Cooper's hawk can be found in forested areas up to 3,000 feet, especially near edges and rivers. They prefer hardwood stands when they are available but will use conifers as well. They prefer mature forests but can be found in urban and suburban areas where there are tall trees for nesting (Chiang et al. 2012). They breed from southern Canada to northern Mexico. Some individuals remain in their home territory year-round, but those in the northern part of their range migrate to warmer areas when winter sets in and prey generally becomes harder to find. Primarily bird hunters, Cooper's hawks have been known to hang around backyard bird feeders. They generally hunt small-sized to medium-sized birds, including doves, quail, and woodpeckers.

The Cooper's hawk is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Section 3503. In addition to this species, numerous other nesting bird species protected by these two regulatory laws have the potential to nest in habitats within the Biological Study Area.

An adult Cooper's hawk was observed foraging over the Biological Study Area in 2019. Common foraging bird species observed in or near the Biological Study Area included Brewer's blackbirds, black phoebes, Anna's hummingbirds, cliff swallows, and American crows. No active nests were observed but potential nesting habitat for birds occurs in trees and under the existing bridge within the Biological Study Area.

Environmental Consequences

South-Central California Coast Steelhead Trout

Widening the existing bridge may require stream diversion and dewatering efforts in Corralitos Creek. Stream diversion and dewatering has the potential to result in water quality impacts through the release of sediments, including more murkiness, less dissolved oxygen, and release of pollutants. Increases in murkiness, reduction of dissolved oxygen, and increase in pollutant level are expected to be temporary and of short-duration, mainly when the stream diversion is being installed and removed. The proposed project includes a sidewalk north of the bridge, next to Salsipuedes Creek that may also require temporary in-stream activities. The sidewalk will be supported by pile caps on Class 90 piling. Piles are 15-inch-diameter precast prestressed concrete that will be driven no more than 12 to 15 feet. Pile driving activities to support the sidewalk would occur where the current footpath exists, above the top of the bank. It is determined that pile driving activities for the sidewalk, conducted in the dry season and in uplands, would not adversely affect fish and a hydroacoustic analysis is not necessary.

The Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, south-central California coast steelhead trout. The basis for this determination is that since in-stream construction would occur during the dry season when water, if present at all, would be of a condition not suitable for steelhead trout adults or juveniles, the potential for take of steelhead trout would be very low.

California Red-Legged Frog

The potential for impacts to California red-legged frogs are expected to be low based on existing site conditions and absence of the species within the Biological Study Area during reconnaissance surveys. However, individuals of the species could potentially disperse through the Corralitos Creek and Salsipuedes Creek corridors.

Project construction could result in the injury or mortality of California red-legged frogs if they are present during diversion, dewatering and construction activities. The potential need to capture and relocate California red-legged frogs could subject these animals to stresses that could result in adverse effects. Injury or mortality could occur via accidental crushing by worker foot traffic or construction equipment. Erosion and sedimentation could also occur,

which could directly or indirectly affect water quality. While the placement of temporary dams and diversion and dewatering could result in a temporary loss of aquatic habitat for California red-legged frogs, the extent and effect of this are estimated to be minor.

The Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the proposed project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, California red-legged frogs. The basis for this determination is that California red-legged frog presence has been inferred and there would be a low but possible potential for take of the species during diversion and dewatering activities and construction.

Western Pond Turtle

Project construction could result in the injury or mortality of western pond turtles if they are present during diversion, dewatering and general construction activities. The potential need to capture and relocate western pond turtles could subject these animals to stresses that could result in adverse effects. Injury or mortality could occur via accidental crushing by worker foot traffic or construction equipment. Indirect impacts could also result from noise and disturbance associated with construction, which could alter foraging and/or dispersal behaviors. While temporary loss of vegetation supporting potential breeding habitat could occur, this would be offset by habitat restoration. The implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures such as appropriate timing of vegetation removal, pre-activity surveys, and exclusion zones will reduce the potential for adverse effects to this species.

Special Status and Other Native Migratory Birds

Caltrans typically expects the bird nesting season to occur from February 1 to September 30. The removal of vegetation and/or portions of the existing bridge could directly impact active bird nests and any eggs or young residing in nests. Indirect impacts could also result from noise and disturbance associated with construction, which could alter perching, foraging, and/or nesting behaviors. While temporary loss of vegetation supporting potential nesting habitat could occur, this would be mitigated by habitat restoration.

The implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures such as appropriate timing of vegetation removal, pre-activity surveys, and exclusion zones will reduce the potential for adverse effects to nesting bird species.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

South-Central California Coast DPS Steelhead Trout Avoidance and Minimization Measures

1. Prior to construction, Caltrans will complete Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service.
2. If stream diversion and dewatering is determined to be necessary, a Dewatering Plan will be submitted to the engineer at least six weeks prior to the start of dewatering for jurisdictional agency dewatering plan review and approval. Dewatering plans will include the description and location of the area to be dewatered, schematic drawing of the dewatering system, duration of dewatering, materials and methods of dewatering implementation and removal.
3. Prior to initiation of stream diversion and dewatering, if necessary, a District Biologist will conduct an informal worker environmental training program including a description of the steelhead trout, its legal and protected status, proximity to the project site, avoidance and minimization measures to be implemented during the project, and the implications of violating Federal Endangered Species Act and permit conditions.
4. During construction, any in-stream work will be limited to the low-flow period from June 1 to October 31 in any given year, when the surface water within drainages is likely to be dry or at seasonal minimum and to avoid adult steelhead trout spawning migration and peak smolt emigration. Deviations from this work window will only be made with permission from Caltrans and the relevant regulatory and resource agencies.
5. A biologist will monitor initial ground disturbance and vegetation removal, and the placement and removal of any required stream diversions.
6. The biologist will inspect erosion and sediment controls to identify and correct any conditions that could adversely affect fish habitat. The biologist will be granted the authority to stop work activity as necessary and to recommend measures to avoid and minimize adverse effects to steelhead trout and steelhead trout habitat.
7. During in-stream work, if pumps are incorporated to assist in temporarily dewatering the site, intakes will be completely screened with no larger than 3/32-inch (2.38-millimeter) wire mesh to prevent sensitive aquatic species from entering the pump system. Pumped water will be directed through a silt filtration bag and/or into a settling basin allowing the suspended sediment to settle out prior to re-entering the stream(s) outside of the isolated area. The form and function of all pumps used during the dewatering activities will be checked weekly, at a minimum, by a qualified biological monitor to ensure a dry work environment and minimize adverse effects to aquatic species and habitats.

8. If steelhead trout are unexpectedly observed in the work area during stream diversion activities, dewatering, or other construction activities, in-stream work activity will be stopped and the Resident Engineer/Inspector and District Biologist will be notified. The District Biologist will then coordinate with National Marine Fisheries Service before in-stream work continues.
9. The Restoration Plan for impacts to jurisdictional waters will also mitigate impacts to steelhead trout habitat. The Restoration Plan will be prepared and approved by relevant regulatory agencies. The Restoration Plan will propose mitigation at a 1:1 ratio (acreage) for temporary impacts. Replacement plantings will include appropriate native tree and understory species. To ensure success, monitoring and a one-year plant establishment period shall be required, which shall include regular inspections, weeding, and replacement, as necessary.

Replacement plantings will be detailed in Caltrans' Landscape Architecture Landscape Planting Plan and the final Restoration Plan. The Plan will be developed in coordination with a biologist and will include developed planting specifications and grading plans to ensure survival of planted vegetation and reestablishment of functions and values. The final Plan will detail mitigation commitments and will be consistent with standards and mitigation commitments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Restoration Plan will be prepared when full construction plans are prepared and will be finalized through the permit review process with regulatory agencies.

California Red-Legged Frog Avoidance and Minimization Measures

1. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will survey the project area no more than 48 hours before the onset of work activities. If any life stage of the California red-legged frog is found and these individuals are likely to be killed or injured by work activities, the approved biologist will be allowed enough time to move them from the site before work begins. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will relocate the California red-legged frogs the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by the activities associated with the project. The relocation site will be in the same drainage to the extent practicable. Caltrans will coordinate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the relocation site prior to the capture of any California red-legged frogs.
2. Before any activities begin on a project, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training will include a description of the California red-legged frog and its habitat, the specific measures that are being implemented to conserve the California red-legged frog for the current project, and the boundaries within which the project may be

accomplished. Brochures, books, and briefings may be used in the training session, with a qualified person on hand to answer any questions.

3. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will be present at the work site until all California red-legged frogs have been removed, workers have been instructed, and initial disturbance of habitat has been completed. After this time, Caltrans will designate a person to monitor on-site compliance with all minimization measures. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist will ensure this monitor receives the training outlined in Measure 2 above and in the identification of California red-legged frogs. If the monitor or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist recommends that work be stopped because California red-legged frogs would be affected in a manner not expected by Caltrans and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during review of the proposed action, they will notify the Resident Engineer immediately. When work is stopped, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be notified as soon as possible.
4. During project activities, all trash that may attract predators or scavengers will be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of at the end of each work week. Following construction, all trash and debris will be removed from work areas.
5. All refueling, maintenance and staging of equipment and vehicles will occur at least 100 feet from riparian habitat or water bodies and not in a location from where a spill would drain directly toward aquatic habitat, unless otherwise preapproved by the necessary agencies. The monitor will ensure contamination of habitat does not occur during operations. Prior to the onset of work, Caltrans will ensure that a plan is in place for prompt and effective response to any accidental spills.
6. Habitat contours will be returned to a natural configuration at the end of the project activities. This measure will be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with the project, unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible, or modification of original contours would benefit the California red-legged frog.
7. The number of access routes, size of staging areas, and the total area of activity will be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project. Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be established to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete construction and minimize the impact to California red-legged frog habitat; this goal includes locating access routes and construction areas outside of wetlands and riparian areas to the maximum extent practicable.
8. Caltrans will attempt to schedule work for times of the year when impacts to the California red-legged frog would be minimal. For example, work that would affect large pools that may support breeding would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the breeding season (November through May). Isolated pools that are important to maintain California red-

legged frogs through the driest portions of the year would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the late summer and early fall. Habitat assessments, surveys, and technical assistance between Caltrans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during project planning will be used to assist in scheduling work activities to avoid sensitive habitats during key times of year.

9. To control sedimentation during and after project completion, Caltrans will implement best management practices outlined in any authorizations or permits issued under the authorities of the Clean Water Act received for the project. If best management practices are ineffective, Caltrans will attempt to remedy the situation immediately, in coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
10. If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes will be completely screened with wire mesh no larger than 0.2 inch to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water will be released or pumped downstream at an appropriate rate to maintain downstream flows during construction. Upon completion of construction activities, any diversions or barriers to flow will be removed in a manner that would allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate. Alteration of the streambed will be minimized to the maximum extent possible; any imported material will be removed from the streambed upon completion of the project.
11. Unless approved by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, water will not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.
12. If Caltrans demonstrates that disturbed areas have been restored to conditions that allow them to function as habitat for the California red-legged frog, these areas will not be included in the amount of total habitat permanently disturbed.
13. Project sites will be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area. Locally collected plant materials will be used to the extent practicable. Invasive, exotic plants will be controlled to the maximum extent practicable. This measure will be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with the project, unless U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Caltrans determine that it is not feasible or practical.
14. Caltrans will not use herbicides as the primary method to control invasive, exotic plants.
15. The Restoration Plan for impacts to jurisdictional waters will also mitigate impacts to California red-legged frog habitat. The Restoration Plan will be prepared and approved by relevant regulatory agencies. The Restoration Plan will propose mitigation at a 1:1 ratio (acreage) for temporary impacts. Replacement plantings will include appropriate native tree and understory species. To ensure success, monitoring and a one-year plant

establishment period will be required, which will include regular inspections, weeding, and replacement, as necessary. Replacement plantings will be detailed in Caltrans' Landscape Architecture Landscape Planting Plan and the final Restoration Plan. The Plans will be developed in coordination with a biologist and will include developed planting specifications and grading plans to ensure survival of planted vegetation and reestablishment of functions and values. The final Plan will detail mitigation commitments and will be consistent with standards and mitigation commitments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Restoration Plan will be prepared when full construction plans are prepared and will be finalized through the permit review process with regulatory agencies.

Western Pond Turtle Avoidance and Minimization Measures

1. Prior to mobilization of construction equipment, Caltrans will conduct a worker environmental training program including a description of western pond turtles, their legal and protected status, proximity to the project site, and avoidance and minimization measures to be implemented during the project.
2. Prior to the start of construction activities, a qualified biologist will survey the area of potential impact and, if present, capture and relocate any western pond turtles to suitable habitat downstream of the area of potential impact.
3. Observations of western pond turtles will be documented on California Natural Diversity Database forms and submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife upon project completion.

Special Status and Other Native Migratory Birds Avoidance and Minimization Measures

1. If feasible and regulatory approvals allow, all vegetation removal for this project will be scheduled to occur from October 1 to January 31, outside of the typical nesting bird season, to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds.
2. If vegetation removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential nesting habitat during the nesting season (February 1 to September 30), a nesting bird survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than three days prior to construction.
3. Prior to construction of build Alternative 1 in the typical nesting season, proactive exclusion measures will be implemented (i.e., exclusion film or other measures approved by California Department of Fish and Wildlife) to prevent cliff swallows or other native migratory birds from occupying nests on the bridge.
4. To the extent feasible, all inactive nests under the bridge will be removed prior to construction under the supervision of the District Biologist.

5. If an active nest of a native migratory bird is found, Caltrans will determine an appropriate buffer and monitoring strategy based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area will be avoided until a qualified biologist has determined that the juveniles have fledged and are no longer dependent on the nest.

Wetlands and Other Waters of the U.S.

Affected Environment

Potential jurisdictional features and riparian habitat were delineated within the Biological Study Area during August 2018.

Approximately 0.628 acre of potential U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdictional Other Waters of the U.S. were delineated within the Biological Study Area. No federal jurisdictional wetlands were delineated because there were no locations where all three wetland parameters (hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology) were present in the same location.

Approximately 0.508 acre of Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdictional area along the riparian corridor of Corralitos Creek and Salsipuedes Creek was also delineated.

Environmental Consequences

No permanent impacts to jurisdictional features will occur from the proposed project. However, temporary impacts to jurisdictional features will occur due to temporary access and staging areas. Additionally, widening the existing Corralitos Creek Bridge may require temporary stream diversion and falsework to construct the project.

Approximately 0.122 acre of potential U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdictional Other Waters of the U.S. and approximately 0.112 acre of Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdictional riparian habitat would be temporarily impacted by the proposed project.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Wetlands and Waters of the U.S. Avoidance and Minimization Measures

1. Prior to construction, Caltrans will obtain a Section 404 Nationwide Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. All permit terms and conditions will be incorporated into construction plans and implemented.

2. Prior to construction, Caltrans will prepare a Mitigation and Monitoring Plan to mitigate impacts to vegetation and natural habitats. The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan shall be consistent with federal and state regulatory requirements and will be amended with any regulatory permit conditions, as required. Caltrans will implement the Mitigation and Monitoring Plan as necessary during construction and immediately following project completion.
3. Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing will be installed around jurisdictional waters, and the dripline of trees to be protected within the project limits. Caltrans-defined Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be noted on design plans and delineated in the field prior to the start of construction activities.
4. If needed during construction, the temporary stream diversion will be timed to occur between June 1 and October 31 in any given year, or as otherwise directed by the regulatory agencies, when the surface water is likely to be dry or at seasonal minimum. Deviations from this work window will only be made with permission from the relevant regulatory agencies.
5. During construction, all project-related hazardous materials spills within the project site will be cleaned up immediately. Readily accessible spill prevention and cleanup materials will be kept by the contractor on-site at all times during construction.
6. During construction, erosion control measures will be implemented. Silt fencing, fiber rolls, and barriers will be installed as needed between the project site and jurisdictional other waters and riparian habitat. At a minimum, erosion controls will be maintained by the contractor daily throughout the construction period.
7. All equipment and vehicles will be checked and maintained by the contractor daily to ensure proper operation and avoid potential leaks or spills.
8. Prior to the removal of the diversion, stream contours will be restored as close as possible to their original condition.

List of Technical Studies

Air Quality Report

Hazardous Waste Studies

Historical Property Survey Report

- Historic Resource Evaluation Report
- Historic Architectural Survey Report
- Archaeological Survey Report

Natural Environment Survey

Noise Study Report

Paleontology Review

Scenic Resource Evaluation and Visual Impact Assessment

Water Quality Assessment

To obtain a copy of one or more of these technical studies, reports or the Initial Study, please send your request to the following email address:
d5.public.info@dot.ca.gov.

Please indicate the project name and project identifying code (under the project name on the cover of this document) and specify the technical report or document you would like a copy of. Provide your name and email address or U.S. postal service mailing address (street address, city, state and zip code).

Appendix A **Comment Letters and Responses**

This appendix contains the comments received during the public circulation and comment period from January 30, 2020 to February 28, 2020, retyped for readability. A Caltrans response follows each comment presented.

Comment from California State Clearinghouse

Comment 1:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named NEG to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on 2/28/2020, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, please visit: <https://cequanet.opr.ca.gov/2020010514/2> for full details about your project.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan

Director, State Clearinghouse

Response to comment 1: Thank you for your letter noting that the State Clearinghouse did not receive and comments on the Initial Study and that the public comment period has been completed in accordance with CEQA.



Gavin Newsom
Governor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit



Kate Gordon
Director

March 2, 2020

Jason Wilkinson
Caltrans, District 5 - San Luis Obispo/Santa Barbara
50 Higuera Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Subject: Corralitos Creek Bridge ADA
SCH#: 2020010514

Dear Jason Wilkinson:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named NEG to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on 2/28/2020, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, please visit: <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2020010514/2> for full details about your project.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan
Director, State Clearinghouse

1400 TENTH STREET P.O. BOX 3044 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95812-3044
TEL 1-916-445-0613 state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov www.opr.ca.gov

