Alamo Pintado Bridge Replacement

On State Route 246 in Santa Barbara County
05-SB-246-PM 30.173-30.435
Project ID Number 0519000148

Initial Study
with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2

Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

July 2025

General Information About This Document

What's in this document:

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

What you should do:

- Please read the document. Additional copies of the document and the related technical studies are available for review at the Caltrans District 5 office at 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, California 93401, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. If you would like to receive a printed version of this document, please contact Dianna Beck at dianna.beck@dot.ca.gov or by phone at 805-459-9406. This document may be downloaded at the following website: https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-5/district-5-current-projects/1m420

- Attend the hybrid public meeting at 5:30 p.m. on August 7, 2025, at the Solvang City Hall Council Chamber at 1644 Oak Street, Solvang, California 93463. To join remotely, the virtual public meeting link will be posted at the following website: https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-5/district-5-current-projects/1m420.

- Tell us what you think. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, please attend the hybrid public meeting and/or send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to: Dianna Beck, District 5 Environmental Division, California Department of Transportation, 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, California 93401. Submit comments via email to: dianna.beck@dot.ca.gov.

- Submit comments by the deadline: August 15, 2025

What happens next

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

Accessibility Assistance

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For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please write to or call Caltrans, Attention: Dianna Beck, District 5 Environmental Division, 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, California 93401; phone number 805-459-9406 (Voice), or use the California Relay Service 1-800-735-2929 (Teletype to Voice), 1-800-735-2922 (Voice to Teletype), 1-800-855-3000 (Spanish Teletype to Voice and Voice to Teletype), 1-800-854-7784 (Spanish and English Speech-to-Speech), or 711.

05-SB-246-PM 30.173-30.435
Project ID Number 0519000148

Replace the Alamo Pintado Bridge (Bridge Number 51-0130), improve connectivity to the existing bike path, and upgrade existing outdated Americans with Disabilities Act curb ramps on State Route 246 from post miles 30.173 to 30.435 in Santa Barbara County.

INITIAL STUDY
with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

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

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation
and
Cooperating Agencies:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fisheries Service
Responsible Agencies:
California Transportation Commission
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Scott Smith Digitally signed by Scott Smith
Date: 2025.05.06 17:46:45 -07'00'

Scott Smith
Environmental Office Chief, District 5
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

5/6/2025
Date

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

Dianna Beck, Caltrans District 5 Environmental, 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, California 93401; 805-459-9406; dianna.beck@dot.ca.gov

DRAFT
Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

State Clearinghouse Number: [pending]

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 05-SB-246-PM 30.173-30.435

EA/Project Number: EA 05-1M420 and Project ID Number 0519000148

Project Description

This project, located in Santa Barbara County on State Route 246 from post miles 30.173 to 30.435, proposes to replace the Alamo Pintado Bridge (Bridge Number 51 0130), which is rated scour critical. The scope of work includes installing straight abutment walls under the bridge, placing rock slope protection to protect the abutments, road embankment, and nearby existing infrastructure, and upgrading four existing outdated Americans with Disabilities Act curb ramps at the Alamo Pintado Road intersection. The proposed bridge work includes building a 14-foot-wide Class 1 Bikeway (multiuse path) with a 2-foot-wide barrier separating the path and the travelway. A retaining wall is proposed on the northeast side of the bridge, connecting the new Class 1 Bikeway to the existing one and allowing continuous travel to the Alamo Pintado Road intersection.

Determination

This proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is Caltrans' intent to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project. This does not mean that Caltrans' decision regarding the project is final. This Mitigated Negative Declaration is subject to change based on comments received by interested agencies and the public.

An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans District 5. On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The project would have no effect on agriculture and forestry resources, energy, land use and planning, mineral resources, paleontological resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire.

The project would have less than significant effects on aesthetics, air quality, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, and tribal cultural resources.

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

- Caltrans proposes to restore all temporarily impacted areas to pre-project conditions, functions, and values and compensate for unavoidable permanent and degradation impacts to jurisdictional aquatic features with replacement plantings, vegetating newly installed rock slope protection along the streambank, conducting invasive species control along the Alamo Pintado Creek corridor, and other potential means of mitigation. Caltrans would restore all areas temporarily impacted for access needs on-site at a 1-to-1 ratio. Additionally, for areas treated with buried/backfilled rock slope protection (degradation impacts), Caltrans would restore vegetation over the buried/backfilled rock slope protection. Caltrans would also restore an additional 0.5 acre of riparian vegetation for each acre of vegetated backfilled rock slope protection, resulting in a 1.5-to-1 ratio of restoration for degraded areas.

- Trees scoped for removal within jurisdictional areas would also be mitigated. Trees with a diameter at standard height between 6 and 12 inches would be mitigated at a 3-to-1 ratio, trees with a diameter at standard height between 12 and 24 inches would be mitigated at a 5-to-1 ratio, and trees with a diameter at standard height greater than 24 inches would be mitigated at a 10-to-1 ratio.

_____

Scott Smith
Environmental Office Chief, District 5
California Department of Transportation

_____

Date

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Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes the Alamo Pintado Bridge Replacement Project on State Route 246 in Santa Barbara County.

For the proposed project, Caltrans is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Caltrans is also the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Caltrans has determined that the project qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion under NEPA and will complete that documentation before project approval.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this project is to address the stability issues associated with the existing Alamo Pintado Creek Bridge (Bridge Number 51-0130), maintain improved traffic flow on State Route 246, and upgrade existing outdated Americans with Disabilities Act curb ramps.

1.2.2 Need

The existing Alamo Pintado Creek Bridge is scour critical, and during high-flow events, it may not have sufficient bearing capacity, which could lead to bridge closure if not replaced. Cracking, which has been documented in the 1972 widening portion of the structure, is indicative of Alkali-Silica Reaction (ASR). Existing outdated curb ramps within the project limits do not meet current Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

1.3 Project Description

This project, located in Santa Barbara County on State Route 246 from post miles 30.173 to 30.435, proposes to replace the Alamo Pintado Bridge (Bridge Number 51-0130), which is rated scour critical. The scope of work includes installing straight abutment walls under the bridge, placing rock slope protection to protect the abutments, road embankment, and nearby existing infrastructure, and upgrading four existing outdated Americans with Disabilities Act curb ramps at the Alamo Pintado Road intersection. The proposed bridge work includes building a 14-foot-wide Class 1 Bikeway (multiuse path) with a 2-foot-wide barrier separating the path and the

travelway. A retaining wall is proposed on the northeast side of the bridge, connecting the new Class 1 Bikeway to the existing one and allowing continuous travel to the Alamo Pintado Road intersection.

Figure 1-1 shows the project vicinity map for the project, and Figure 1-2 shows the project location map for the project.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

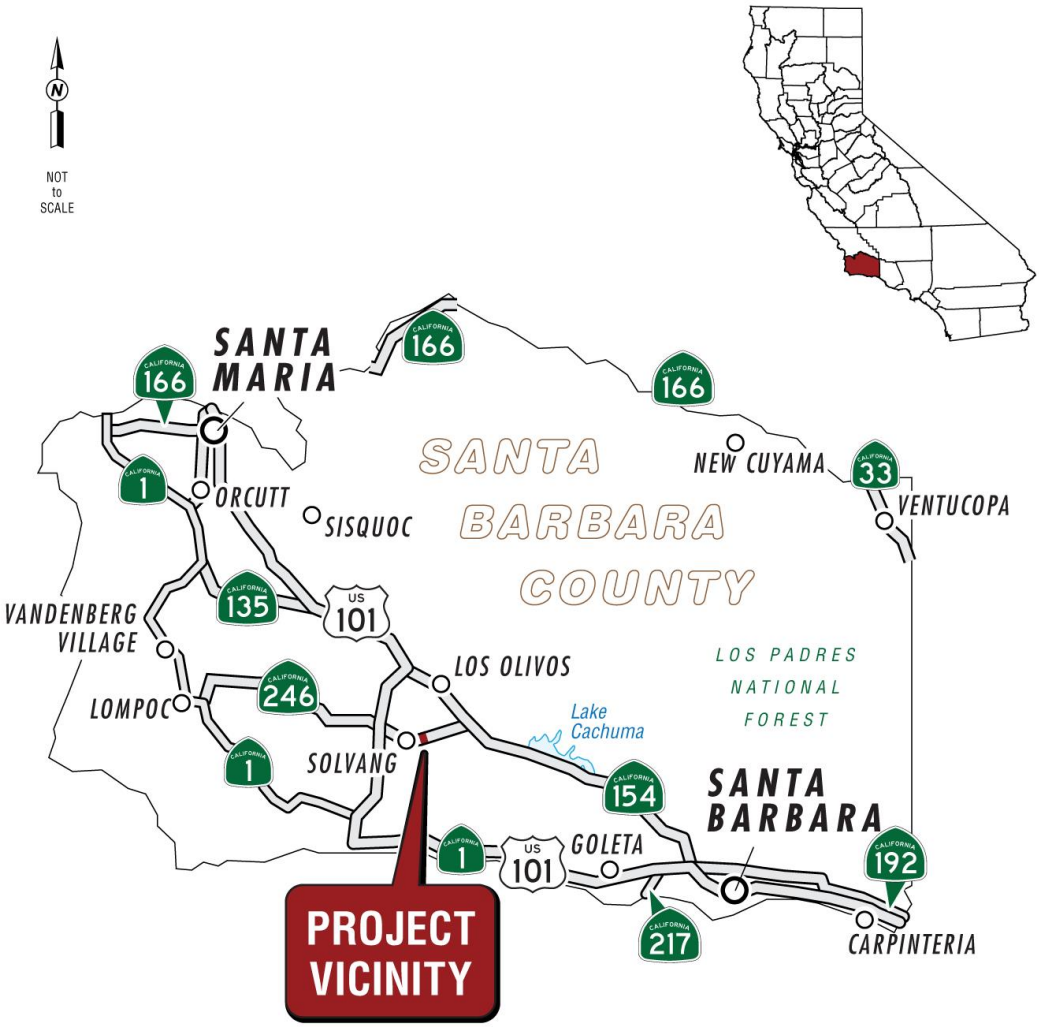
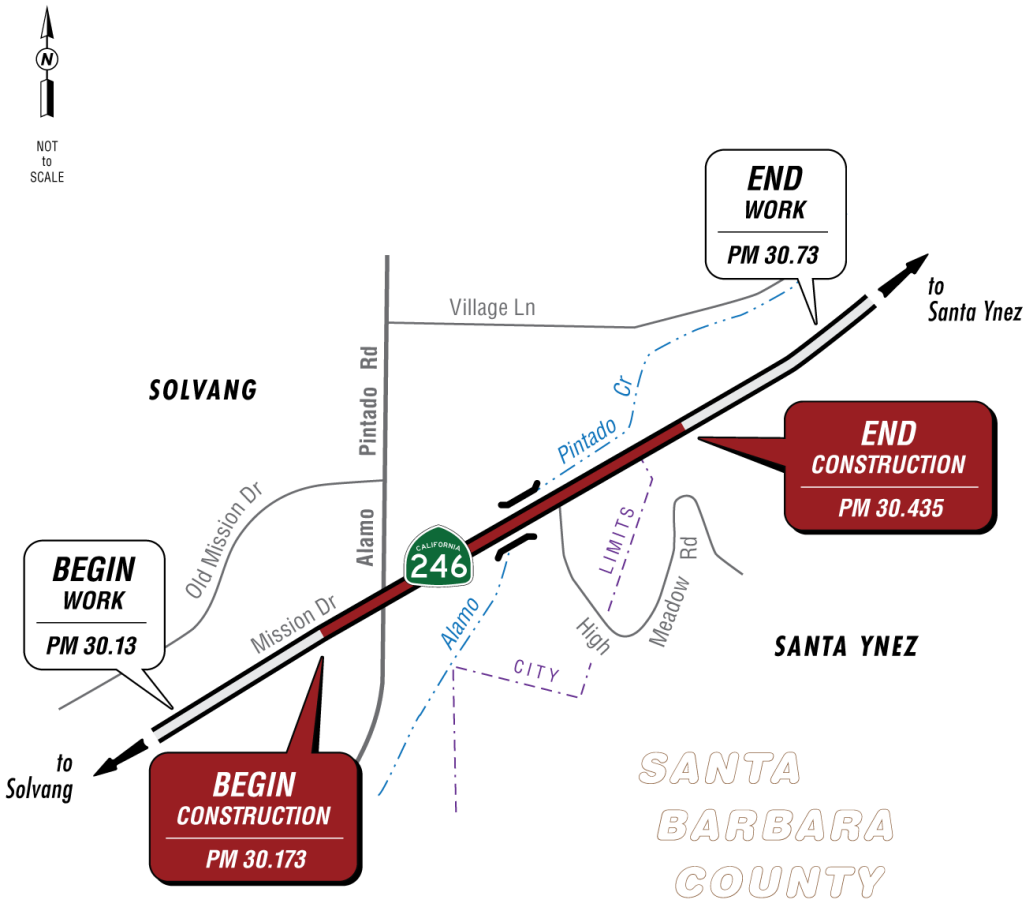


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



1.4 Project Alternatives

The project development team has analyzed two alternatives: the Build Alternative and the No-Build (No-Action) Alternative.

1.4.1 Build Alternatives

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

See Figures 1-3 and 1-4 for the Build Alternative’s Bridge Profile and Typical Cross Section, respectively. See Figure 1-5 for the Build Alternative’s Area of Potential Impact.

The Build Alternative proposes the following asset improvements:

1. *Bridge Replacement*

The Alamo Pintado Bridge (Bridge Number 51-0130) at post mile 30.23 would be replaced with a 3-span concrete deck bridge. The new structure would be 120 feet 8 inches long and 59 feet wide with a 1-foot 3-inch structure depth and a 50-degree skew angle. The proposed bridge accommodates a 14-foot-wide Class 1 Bikeway with 2-foot-wide barriers (ST-75) between the path and the travelway. The bridge would have 2-foot outside railings (ST-75) along the south side of the bridge and 1-foot outside railings along the north side of the bridge, two 8-foot-wide shoulders, and two 12-foot-wide lanes.

The proximity of the bridge to the Alamo Pintado intersection is a constraint, and design options for raising the bridge are limited. The proposed bridge aims to replace the existing structure in-kind and maintain the current profile while incorporating a permeable ST-75 barrier to ensure that the 100-year flood event surface water elevation is achieved. The project includes straight abutment walls under the bridge, a retaining wall along State Route 246 east of the bridge, and rock slope protection to protect the road embankment and nearby existing infrastructure.

To connect the existing Class 1 Bikeway to the Alamo Pintado Road intersection, the new bridge would be widened to accommodate a new Class 1 Bikeway, alongside two 12-foot-wide travel lanes and two 8-foot-wide shoulders, along with modifications to meet the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s 100-year flood elevation requirements. These improvements would not only ensure safer biking conditions but also help facilitate better traffic flow.

Various aesthetic treatments would be included in the project design to meet the project's purpose and need, as well as the community goals, recommendations, and expectations outlined in the City of Solvang's Streetscape Plan. Locations, quantities, and types of aesthetic treatments would be coordinated with the city of Solvang, other local partners, and the community during community engagement and as part of maintenance agreement discussions.

2. *Americans with Disabilities Act Curb Ramps*

The existing curb ramps at the State Route 246 and Alamo Pintado Road intersection would be replaced to meet the new Americans with Disabilities Act curb ramp standards. The northwest corner of the intersection would be modified to accommodate the Class 1 Bikeway (described below).

3. *Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure*

Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements include the construction of a new Class 1 shared-use path along the north side of the bridge, with the existing Class 1 Bikeway phasing east of the bridge to accommodate bicycle movements through the intersection of the Alamo Pintado Road at the terminus of the Class 1 path. New signs for bicyclists and pedestrians for the new 14-foot-wide Class 1 Bikeway would be added. Extension of the trail to the intersection would include a separation barrier between the shoulder and the Class 1 Bikeway. Two secondary driveways may be consolidated into one driveway located between the bridge and a gas station to improve operations along State Route 246.

Currently, two design variations for the shared-use path are being reviewed by the project development team. In both instances, the Class 1 shared-use path would be 14 feet wide from the existing path to the bridge. Each variation would accommodate the following on the westbound roadway: a left-turn lane, a through lane, a right-turn lane, a 2-foot shoulder, a 1.5-foot buffer, and the Class 1 path.

Design Variation 1 proposes the remaining Class 1 shared-use path would be between 9 and 14 feet wide from the bridge to the intersection at Alamo Pintado Road.

Design Variation 2 proposes the remaining Class 1 shared-use path would be between 12 and 14 feet wide from the bridge to the intersection at Alamo Pintado Road. A slight shift in striping along existing State Route 246 would be required to accommodate this width.

Both design variations would stay within the existing Caltrans right-of-way and would not result in any differing environmental impacts. The project development team would determine the best option in the design phase after the circulation of the environmental document and public input.

Sidewalk improvements to improve connectivity to an existing bus stop along the eastbound corner of State Route 246 and Alamo Pintado Road are currently being analyzed by the project development team; however, these improvements are not programmed (funded) into this project. Nevertheless, these sidewalk improvements may be added to the project and constructed as future funding becomes available. This will be determined either before the signing of the final environmental document or during the project's design phase.

Currently, phase.

4. *Earth Retaining Systems*

A 307.75-foot-long retaining wall is proposed along the edge of the Class 1 Bikeway on the north side of State Route 246, beginning from the eastern abutment. This proposed retaining wall from the Caltrans Standard Type 1 Wall would be built to minimize slope encroachment and reduce impacts on the creek.

5. *Erosion Control*

Temporary and permanent erosion control measures and Best Management Practices would be implemented during construction to provide erosion control and to control stormwater discharges in all areas that have been disturbed by the proposed work.

Disturbed areas must be treated with permanent erosion control. Erosion control materials would be selected to best address the various conditions within the project site. Areas that are steep and exposed to concentrated flows would require aggressive erosion control techniques that may include bioengineering at creek banks, application of duff (chipped vegetation), netting, fiber rolls, compost berms and socks, and hydroseeding to control erosion and establish vegetation for long-term protection. Incorporation of erosion control materials and/or decompaction of compacted soils to promote better vegetation establishment may be required.

Duff and/or topsoil must be collected before grading work and stockpiled for use later during revegetation. To promote the establishment of native vegetation, compacted areas would be decompacted and receive compost incorporation and hydroseeding.

Existing vegetation in the river/creek that is required to be cleared for equipment access must be cut at the base, leaving the root ball in place, and if needed, temporarily covered with fill. This would facilitate resprouting of the cut vegetation and allow the existing root systems to protect the channel from erosion.

Energy dissipation systems will be defined during the project design phase to ensure concentrated stormwater flows do not accelerate erosion on the embankments.

6. *Construction Activities*

It has been determined that approximately 23 native trees would need to be removed and/or pruned for construction access and bridge work. Planting restoration with native vegetation is intended to mitigate for visual and biological impacts to the creek system as described in Sections 2.1.1 Aesthetics and 2.1.4 Biological Resources. Tree species include arroyo willow, coast live oak, cottonwood, red willow, sycamore, and valley oak species. Some restoration may take place at off-site locations within the same watershed if sufficient on-site planting is not feasible.

During the project design phase, boring investigations would be completed to gather data necessary for project design decisions. These investigations are needed to determine the site conditions by drilling vertical soil borings to perform in-situ soil testing (Standard Penetration Tests), collecting soil samples for laboratory testing and classification, and developing a subsurface soil profile. The subsurface investigation is also needed to assess the potential for liquefaction and lateral spreading.

A total of five borings are proposed: four for the bridge (one at each of the two abutments and one at each of the two piers) and one along the retaining wall layout line. All are anticipated to use the rotary wash drilling method, and each boring would be drilled at the approximate location of each bridge support.

Temporary dewatering and diversion may be required in Alamo Pintado Creek to allow for bridge replacement work to be completed.

Figure 1-3 Bridge Profile

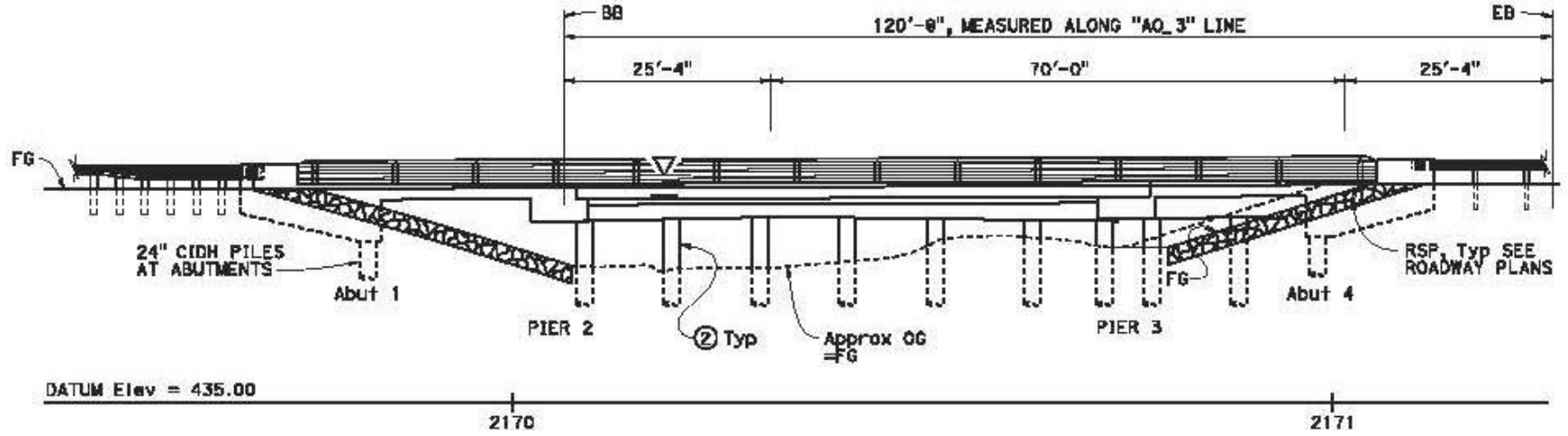


Figure 1-4 Typical Cross Section

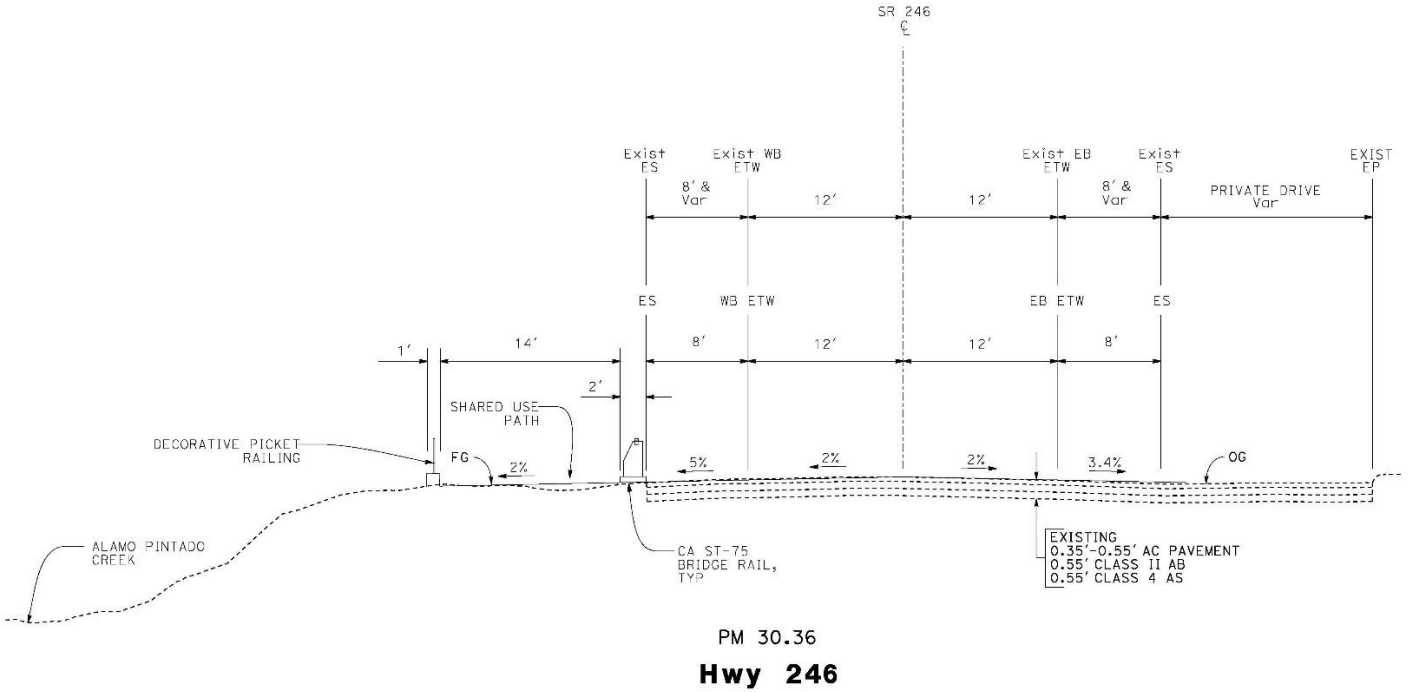


Figure 1-5 Area of Potential Impact

1.4.2 No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would not improve the bridge or bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This alternative would not provide improvements compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The roadway would continue to deteriorate, and the bridge would continue to scour. Routine maintenance throughout the project limits would continue.

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

The project would include Caltrans standard measures that are typically used on all Caltrans projects. Caltrans standard measures are considered features of the project and are evaluated as part of the project. Caltrans standard measures are not implemented to address any specific effects, impacts, or circumstances associated with the project but are instead implemented as part of the project's design to address common issues encountered on projects. The measures listed below are related to environmental resources and are applicable to the project. These measures can be found in the Caltrans 2024 Standard Specifications document.

- 7-1 Legal Relations and Responsibilities to the Public
- 10-4 Water Usage
- 10-5 Dust Control
- 10-6 Watering
- 12-1 Temporary Traffic Control
- 12-3 Temporary Traffic Control Devices
- 12-4 Traffic Control Systems
- 13-1 Water Pollution Control
- 13-2 Water Pollution Control Program
- 13-4 Job Site Management
- 13-6 Temporary Sediment Control
- 13-7 Temporary Tracking Control
- 13-10 Temporary Linear Sediment Barriers
- 14-1 Environmental Stewardship

- 14-2 Cultural Resources
- 14-6 Biological Resources
- 14-7 Paleontological Resources
- 14-8 Noise and Vibration
- 14-9 Air Quality
- 14-10 Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling
- 14-11 Hazardous Waste and Contamination
- 14-12 Other Agency Regulatory Requirements
- 17-2 Clearing and Grubbing
- 18-1 Dust Palliatives
- 20-1 Landscape
- 20-2 Irrigation
- 20-3 Planting

Additional standard measures would be added to the project as necessary or appropriate.

1.6 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

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

1.7 Permits and Approvals Needed

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

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
California Transportation Commission	Project Funding for Future Phases	To be obtained before the beginning of the project's design phase.
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit	To be obtained before construction starts.
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board	Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification	To be obtained before construction starts.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement	To be obtained before construction starts.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Programmatic Biological Opinion for California red-legged frog; Letter of Concurrence for least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher	To be obtained before construction starts.
National Marine Fisheries Service	Letter of Concurrence for Southern California steelhead	To be obtained before construction starts.

Chapter 2 CEQA Evaluation

2.1 CEQA Environmental Checklist

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. Potential impact determinations include Significant and Unavoidable Impact, Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated, Less Than Significant Impact, and No Impact. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with a project will indicate that there are no impacts to a particular resource. A "No Impact" answer reflects this determination. The questions in this checklist are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

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

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

2.1.1 Aesthetics

Considering the information in the Visual Impact Assessment dated March 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from a publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

State Route 246 within the project limits is not within the Designated Scenic Highway limits and is not eligible for inclusion in the State Scenic Highway Program. Throughout the project limits, State Route 246 traverses several communities, including the cities of Buellton and Solvang. Land use includes low-density residential, light service commercial, recreational, open space, and agricultural. The overall topography is generally flat to gently rolling with scattered oak trees and riparian corridors, including the Alamo Pintado Creek. The Santa Ynez Valley is a popular tourist destination, and recreational activities, such as bicycling, walking, jogging, and equestrian activities, are commonly seen throughout the area. State Route 246 serves as the “Main Street” for the city of Solvang.

A Class 1 Bikeway parallels the corridor and, in addition to the roadway itself, is a dominant built feature on the eastern portion of the project limits. Oak woodland is the predominant habitat type, intermixed with low-density residential and commercial buildings. As the corridor traverses west, riparian habitat flanks both sides of the Alamo Pintado Bridge while transitioning into low-rise commercial land use.

Previously quite lush, the habitat along Alamo Pintado was heavily impacted by the 2023 winter storms. Water topped the bridge structure, flooded nearby businesses, and uprooted trees along the creek. Downed trees, loss of understory vegetation, and soil disturbance from repair work are evident at the time of this analysis.

Environmental Consequences

Scenic vistas throughout the project area primarily include close-up to medium views of hillsides and riparian areas with native vegetative patterns.

The most noticeable aspect of the project would be the widened bridge to accommodate bike and pedestrian facilities. The bridge barrier and pedestrian railing would be slightly taller than the existing ones. Depending on the height of the driver's viewing position, views from the roadway to the riparian areas would be affected to some degree by the taller bridge rails. However, barriers would be an open style to preserve views.

Based on the preliminary permit search information and field review observation, there are existing utility joint poles with electric and telecom overhead lines and underground pipes within the project limits. Gas lines and sewer lines run along the northeast side of State Route 246. Additionally, there is a 3-inch gas line that is located on the bridge. Workarounds and utility encroachment exceptions would be considered before relocation of any utility is proposed. If a conflict is discovered, Caltrans Environmental staff will review the proposed relocation, and the project development team will work with the utility owner to ensure the utility is moved before project construction starts. It would be preferable to underground or mount relocated overhead facilities; however, if not feasible, overhead utilities would still have a backdrop of vegetation so that the change would be largely unnoticed by the casual observer. If overhead utilities are relocated to within the bridge structure, the scenic vistas of surrounding vegetation would be improved.

The proposed retaining wall would be parallel to and lower than the elevation of the highway and would therefore not impact the scenic vista. While the new bridge railing would be slightly taller than the existing one, the effect on the scenic vista would be minimal. The proposed removal of riparian vegetation may increase views of the surrounding hills, and the proposed multiuse path would increase viewing opportunities of the riparian habitat for non-motorist users.

The existing scenic quality of State Route 246 is based, to a large degree, on its well-established oak woodlands and riparian habitat. Existing buildings, parking, and urban infrastructure visible from the project site slightly lower the overall visual quality within the project limits. Proposed project elements, such as the widened shoulders, metal guardrail and transitions, tie-back wall, and new bridge rails, would be readily visible from the roadway. By themselves, these types of elements are not uncommon and would not be seen as unexpected visual elements in a highway setting. The new guardrail and bridge rails would be slightly taller than the existing guardrail and bridge rails, which, combined with multiuse paths flanking the structure, would increase the visual scale and engineered appearance of the highway.

Various design alternatives for pedestrian railing include Caltrans standard chain link, metal picket, or tension cables. Chain-link fencing would contribute to the urbanizing look of the rural area and potentially degrade the visual character and quality of the site, given that the existing bridge conditions consist of low, open-style barrier railing. A railing that is more in character

with community aesthetic goals and is consistent with a gateway to a world-renowned tourist location could improve the visual character and quality of the project.

The addition of all these elements together, including a newer, taller bridge railing, pedestrian railing, and wider shoulders, would create a slightly more engineered-looking highway facility and would add a degree of visual clutter to the setting. These visual changes would result in a minor reduction of rural character and visual quality in the immediate project area from the roadway.

The new wider bridge structure, retaining wall, and bridge elements would be visible from the public path, sidewalks, and commercial areas. However, they are not out of character with existing conditions or surrounding development. The new bridge structure would be 3 feet higher and just over 40 feet longer than the existing structure. However, the modifications would not obstruct scenic views. Engineered elements would not be out of character with the built environment because the rock slope protection, concrete debris, and other built features currently exist in the project area. Although existing riparian trees and other plants would be removed by the project, vegetation removal would be replaced and established. As a result, the riparian areas would, over time, be fully revegetated and result in a somewhat natural-appearing visual condition. Final restoration results may improve overall damage caused by the 2023 atmospheric river events. Construction access roads and areas of demolition, if restored to natural-appearing landforms, would reduce the noticeability of disturbance and engineered alterations.

It is expected that following project construction and revegetation, the project would be generally unnoticed by the casual observer on State Route 246. Pedestrian railing design selection would affect the visual character and quality of the project. However, the pedestrian railing, regardless of style, could be modified with color treatment to be more consistent with the setting. In addition, scenic vistas of riparian areas would remain intact as seen from State Route 246 and may improve with proposed revegetation given baseline conditions. New active transportation facilities allow more users to experience scenic riparian vistas.

Views from public areas to the new bridge, retaining wall, and project elements would be slightly modified by the larger structure and removal of vegetation. However, the proposed aesthetic treatments for the wall texture and bridge railing, along with the proposed creek revegetation, would minimize this impact. Architectural treatments would ensure consistency with nearby development and local character. The overall visual impact would be low.

The project proposes no new sources of lighting and, therefore, would not result in any visual impacts related to lighting or glare.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the following minimization measures would ensure that the project's visual effects are consistent with local scenic values along State Route 246.

VIS-1: Following construction, regrade and recontour any new construction access roads, staging and storage areas, and other temporary uses as necessary to match the surrounding natural topography along State Route 246; avoid unnatural-appearing remnant landforms where possible.

VIS-2: Preserve existing vegetation to the maximum extent feasible.

VIS-3: Bridge rails shall be an open style to preserve views and be approved by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-4: Bridge rail shall be aesthetically treated to visually recede or appear consistent with the architectural character and community setting. The aesthetic treatment shall be developed and approved by Caltrans District 5 Structure Design in conjunction with District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-5: Bicycle and pedestrian railing shall be selected or treated to reduce glare and minimize contrast and noticeability. Style and color should be consistent with local character and aesthetic goals, as well as be compatible with the vehicular railing. Railing type and treatment would be developed and approved by District 5 Structure Design in conjunction with District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-6: Depending on the final design, some metal elements, such as bridge railing, pedestrian railing, guardrail, posts, transitions, and end treatments attached to the proposed bridge, may require staining or darkening. The color or treatment, if any, shall be determined and approved by District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-7: The retaining wall shall be textured or treated to reduce potential graffiti and the urbanizing effect. Proposed tie-back wall aesthetics should blend with the area's architectural character in style and color. Wall aesthetics shall be selected by District 5 Landscape Architecture staff to complement community architecture guidelines in harmony with the natural environment.

VIS-8: Rock slope protection shall be backfilled with soil and revegetated. If this is not feasible, rock slope protection shall be stained to reduce glare and be more visually compatible with the landscape.

VIS-9: If feasible, all existing overhead utilities next to the new bridge shall be placed in the bridge structure. If it is not technically possible to locate conduit within the structure, surface-mounted conduits shall be painted to match the bridge structure as determined by District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-10: Replacement planting shall include aesthetic considerations and inherent biological goals. Revegetation shall include native trees and plants as determined by a Caltrans District 5 biologist and landscape architect. Revegetation shall occur to the maximum extent horticulturally feasible. Planting should be maintained until established.

2.1.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

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

The project is located near prime farmland, unique farmland, and farmland of statewide importance. While additional right-of-way is needed for this project, the project would not convert any farmland under these designations to nonagricultural use or conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract.

Considering this information, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Agriculture and Forestry Resources
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	**No Impact**
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	**No Impact**

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

2.1.3 Air Quality

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

Considering the information in the Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Noise Technical Memorandum dated February 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	**No Impact**
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	**No Impact**
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The proposed project is in the South Central Coast Air Basin. This basin consists of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties. The Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District regulates air quality in Santa Barbara County. The county is non-attainment for the state ambient air quality standards for airborne particulate less than 10 microns in diameter (Particulate Matter 10). The county is in attainment for the state ozone, airborne particulate less than 2.5 microns in diameter (Particulate Matter 2.5), and carbon monoxide standards. Lastly, the county is in attainment for all federal air quality standards.

Environmental Consequences

Since no additional lanes or capacity are being added to the highway, there would be no difference in long-term air emissions with or without the proposed project. However, there would be a temporary increase in air emissions and fugitive dust during the construction period. The use of equipment during project construction can generate fugitive dust that may have substantial temporary impacts on local air quality if large amounts of excavation, soil transport, and subsequent fill operations are necessary. Minor earthwork would be required for the demolition of the existing bridge structure, so minimal dust generation would be expected from the earthwork component of this project.

Due to the scope of work and location, this project presents minimal potential to subject surrounding sensitive receptors to inhalable construction emissions that would be considered significant. With the use of standard construction dust and emission minimization practices and procedures, it is anticipated that the project emissions of particulate matter (dust) and equipment emissions would be well within the daily thresholds of the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. Construction emissions are further calculated and discussed in the greenhouse gas section (Section 2.1.8).

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measure would avoid or minimize impacts on air quality:

AIR-1: To minimize dust emissions from the project, Section 14-9.02 (Air Pollution Control) of the 2023 Standard Specifications states that the contractor is responsible for complying with all local air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes that apply to work performed under the contract, including those provided in Government Code Section 11017 (Public Contract Code Section 10231). Additionally, the project-level Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would address water pollution control measures that cross-correlate with standard dust emission minimization measures such as covering soil stockpiles, watering haul roads, watering excavation and grading areas, and so on. By incorporating appropriate engineering design

and stormwater Best Management Practices during construction, minimal short-term air quality impacts are anticipated.

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the Natural Environment Study and Jurisdictional Delineation Report, dated March 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries?	**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated**
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated**
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?	**No Impact**
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**
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated**
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?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

The Area of Potential Impact, identified by the Caltrans design engineer, consists of potential disturbance areas for both permanent and temporary direct impacts and assumes the maximum amount of disturbance and/or impact associated with project construction, including cut and fill, staging, and access. The Biological Study Area is defined as the area that may be directly, indirectly, temporarily, or permanently impacted by construction and construction-related activities and has a buffer to encompass all indirect effects on surrounding natural areas.

The Biological Study Area contains a diversity of land use and habitat types, including a reach of Alamo Pintado Creek; portions of State Route 246, Alamo Pintado Road, Village Lane, and Hill Haven Road; a commercial center next to the north bank of the creek that includes parking lots, a service station, two banks, a veterinarian hospital, and a grocery market; commercial centers west of Alamo Pintado Road; and residences. Residences in the Biological Study Area are present on large lots south of the creek along its east side, and a state historical museum is present next to the south end of the Biological Study Area along the east bank of Alamo Pintado Creek. Some undeveloped areas are still present, supporting willow riparian forest, coast live oak woodland, and ruderal and annual grasslands next to State Route 246.

Much of the Biological Study Area occurs on relatively level terrain, some of which has been modified for commercial, residential, and transportation uses. The elevational range of the Biological Study Area is 450 feet to 590 feet. The flow in the creek is nearly perennial, due in part to the runoff from the surrounding development. Multiple culverts contribute water to the creek, including culverts draining parking lots and road areas. Existing rock slope protection occurs along the left bank, and an existing revetment fence occurs along the right bank throughout much of the Biological Study Area upstream of the bridge and immediately downstream of the bridge. Slope paving is present under the existing bridge on both banks.

The reach of Alamo Pintado Creek within the Biological Study Area appears to have been modified in the past and continues to be modified. Alamo Pintado Creek is included in the Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District's Annual Routine Maintenance Plans. Recent annual plans indicate that the county regularly implements maintenance activities to maintain approximately 12-foot-wide bank-full channels by removing obstructions. Activities documented in the most recent routine maintenance plans include brushing, trimming back vegetation overhanging the active channel, removing downed trees and debris (or cutting downed wood into small sections), and removing sediment and debris plugs. During a site visit in August 2024, Caltrans noted that county staff were implementing vegetation trimming in the channel bed and lower banks throughout the Biological Study Area reach. Removal of debris and sediment also occurs

during emergencies when warranted, such as during the 2023 atmospheric river event that resulted in water overtopping the bridge and local flooding.

The biological resources that could be affected by the project are discussed in more detail below. See Table 2.1 for a breakdown of the area (acreage) of each community within the Biological Study Area.

Natural Communities and Habitats of Concern

Willow Riparian: This natural community occurs along Alamo Pintado Creek immediately downstream of the bridge and upstream from the commercial complex that borders the north creek bank upstream of the bridge. Red willow appears to be the dominant species in the overstory, with western sycamore and Fremont cottonwood as associates in the overstory. California black walnut and white alder are also present in the overstory. The understory consists primarily of arroyo willow, California blackberry, poison oak, and coyote brush. In much of the Biological Study Area, existing rock slope protection is present in conjunction with willow riparian along the left bank facing downstream. Additionally, existing pipe and wire fence revetments are present along much of the right bank facing downstream within this community.

Based on species composition and relative abundance of the trees present, this vegetation community most closely aligns with the Goodding's Willow-Red Willow Riparian Woodland and Forest Alliance, which has a state rank of S3 and is considered a special-status natural community. This community encompasses elements of two special-status natural communities within the vicinity: southern cottonwood-willow riparian forest and southern willow scrub. Both of these natural communities are documented at several locations along the Santa Ynez River. The riparian forest in the Biological Study Area includes more sycamore trees and fewer cottonwoods and lacks sandbar willows compared to these two special-status communities.

Oak woodland: The sole tree species in this community is the coast live oak. Oak woodland occurs on hillslopes next to but outside the stream corridor. The oak woodland in the Biological Study Area is mostly closed-canopy stands with an occasional solitary oak, primarily on the south side of State Route 246 east of the bridge and in patches along the existing bike path. Where canopy cover is high, there is little to no understory; where the canopy is more open, there may be a sparse shrub layer consisting mostly of poison oak and coyote bush. There are also a few individual oaks within landscaped areas and margins of development. This vegetation community most closely aligns with the Coast Live Oak Forest and Woodland Alliance. This community has a state rank of S4 and is not considered a special-status natural community.

Annual Non-Native Grassland: Most vegetated open areas within the Biological Study Area that are not dominated by trees or shrubs and not

considered riverine habitat are predominantly vegetated with non-native annual grasses and herbs. Where annual grasses are dominant, most of these areas fall within the wild oats and annual brome grasslands Herbaceous Semi-Natural Alliance. This community is found along the southeast corner of State Route 246 and High Meadow Drive. Species dominance varies throughout the Biological Study Area but typically includes slender wild oat, ripgut brome, ryegrass, and wall barley. Short-pod mustard, wild radish, and redstem filaree are common forbs in this community. Despite the abundance of non-native species, these communities also support some natives, such as California poppy and California everlasting.

Ruderal/Disturbed: In addition to areas dominated by annual grasses, portions of the Biological Study Area support invasive non-native herbs. The term ruderal is used to describe non-native vegetation dominated by non-native forbs (that is, herbaceous plants that are not grasses). Ruderal vegetation is abundant throughout the Biological Study Area, growing on disturbed road shoulders, along the existing bike path, and on the outer edges of the riparian area south of the bridge. The vegetation includes small to extensive patches, often monocultures, of poison hemlock, short-pod mustard, Italian thistle, smooth cat's ear, English plantain, and wild radish. Some of these areas are consistent with recognized semi-natural alliances, including the Poison Hemlock or Fennel Patches Semi-Natural Alliance and the Upland Mustard or Star Thistle Semi-Natural Alliance. However, within the Biological Study Area, these areas are discontinuous and patchy. Existing rock slope protection is present in conjunction with ruderal habitat directly upstream and downstream of the bridge.

Landscaped: Landscaped areas are generally vegetated with a variety of ornamental trees, ornamental shrubs, herbs, and perennial grasses, and the plantings tend to be interspersed with ruderal herbs and non-native grasses. Use of native plants in landscapes is increasingly common in California, and several of the species present in landscaped areas on-site are species native to California. Though some of the plants in this community are native species, they are planted in an ornamental fashion with visible irrigation systems, evidence of mulch, and routine care such as pruning, rather than growing there naturally. This community occurs immediately upstream of the bridge near the parking lot of the commercial area, on both sides of the stream north of State Route 246, along Alamo Pintado Road, along the parking lot of another commercial area, and south of State Route 246 on High Meadow Road. Species in this community within the Biological Study Area include valley oak, Peruvian pepper tree, coast redwood, queen palm, deer grass, Coulter's Matilija poppy, and rosemary. Some sycamore and coast live oak are also present at the margins of this community. Existing rock slope protection is present in conjunction with landscaped habitat along the left bank facing downstream. Additionally, existing pipe and wire fence revetments are present along much of the right bank facing downstream within this community.

Developed: Developed areas are locations that have been constructed or otherwise physically altered to an extent that native vegetation is no longer supported. Developed land is characterized by permanent or semipermanent structures and pavement or hardscape. Areas where no natural land is present due to frequent use that prevents vegetation from growing, or areas that have materials such as gravel placed upon them, may also be considered developed. This includes State Route 246 and its existing shoulders, Alamo Pintado Road and its existing shoulders, residential development, roads and driveways, the commercial areas, and the existing multiuse path.

Streambed: The bed of Alamo Pintado Creek within the Biological Study Area is fairly flat and low gradient, without well-defined riffles and pools. Vegetation in the channel is seasonal and mostly present during the dry season, when herbs, such as watercress, spearmint, and brooklime, can recruit into the bed of the channel without being scoured away. During winter months, when flows are higher, herbaceous vegetation tends to scour out. The channel bed is a mixture of sand, gravel, and cobble. As noted above, the banks adjoining the channel are armored or partially armored throughout much of the project area by either pipe and wire revetment, rock slope protection, and vegetated rock slope protection, or concrete. Multiple culverts contribute water to the creek, including culverts draining parking lots and road areas. Routine maintenance is conducted in the stream on an annual basis by the county. The bankfull width is fairly consistent throughout most of the Biological Study Area, averaging between 15 and 20 feet, but is wider at the approach to the bridge and under the structure, averaging 30 to 35 feet, compared with areas farther upstream and downstream of the bridge. Mapping before the 2023 atmospheric river events indicated a narrower bankfull width, and photos from 2022 show more vegetation in the channel bed, so the emergency response to flooding in 2023 may have resulted in temporary widening of the bankfull cross section near the bridge due to removal of vegetation and debris that would normally anchor substrates. No other streams, wetlands, or other aquatic features were found in the Biological Study Area.

Table 2.1 Vegetation Communities Within the Biological Study Area

Vegetation Community	Areas Within the Biological Study Area (Acres)
Willow Riparian	6.7
Oak Woodland	4.5
Annual Grassland	0.7
Ruderal	4.2
Landscaped	1.74
Developed	5.0
Streambed	1.39

Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Areas

No wetlands are present within the Biological Study Area. Jurisdictional U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' other waters are areas within the Ordinary High Water Mark of drainages and ponded areas with connectivity to jurisdictional waters but lacking one or more of the three wetland parameters (hydric soil, hydrophytic vegetation, and wetland hydrology). These are typically delineated as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' other waters. The Regional Water Quality Control Board also has jurisdiction over wetlands and other waters. Additionally, the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board interprets Waters of the State as including riparian areas and streambanks above the Ordinary High Water Mark. California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction encompasses rivers, streams, and lakes extending from the lowest bed elevation to the top of the surrounding banks and/or outer edge of nearby riparian vegetation, whichever is greater.

One aquatic resource was identified in the Biological Study Area: Alamo Pintado Creek. No other wetlands, lakes, ponds, streams, or ditches were observed. Alamo Pintado Creek is an intermittent perennial stream within the Biological Study Area. Flows in the dry season are extremely low, but a small amount of surface water has been observed at all times of year during studies.

The creek was mapped and separated into three reaches to reflect differences in vegetation and bank armoring as well as differences in average Ordinary High Water Mark and bank-full width:

- The upstream-most reach has banks that have existing armoring in the form of rock slope protection and vegetated rock slope protection along the left bank and intermittent pipe and wire revetment on the right bank

(facing downstream). Despite the armoring, mature willow riparian forest is present in this reach.

- The middle reach extends from 450 feet upstream of the bridge to approximately 35 feet downstream of the bridge. In this section, most of the banks are also armored, with a continuation of the rock slope protection along the left bank, as well as some short sections of concrete retaining wall and slope paving under the bridge. The right bank has several sections of pipe and wire revetment and additional concrete sections, as well as slope paving under the bridge. Vegetation along the stream in this section is a mixture of landscape trees and native trees with a landscaped understory. Vegetation shows signs of regular trimming and disturbance. The Ordinary High Water Mark is wider in this section, and this reach was significantly disturbed during flooding in 2023.

- The third reach extends from the middle section downstream to the end of the Biological Study Area. In this section, short sections of rock slope protection were noted where they were exposed following the 2023 atmospheric river events. However, bank armoring was far less evident, and no pipe/wire revetment was noted. In all reaches, the streambed characteristics are relatively uniform with very little development of pools and riffles. The Ordinary High Water Mark and bankfull width in this section are narrower than in the middle reach, and vegetation consists of willow riparian forest.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jurisdiction: Alamo Pintado Creek in the Biological Study Area is not known to be traditionally navigable and lacks a known interstate or foreign commerce use. However, it has a direct, relatively permanent connection to the Santa Ynez River, which flows directly into the Pacific Ocean, a traditionally navigable water. Although recent changes to the Corps' implementation of the Clean Water Act have resulted in differing interpretations of the extent of federal jurisdiction in non-navigable tributaries, Caltrans anticipates that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over Alamo Pintado Creek as a tributary to a traditional navigable water. Caltrans has assumed that all waters meeting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' criteria (with an Ordinary High Water Mark) would be subject to federal regulation for this project.

Regional Water Quality Control Board Waters of the State: Other waters subject to Clean Water Act Section 404 are regulated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board under Clean Water Act Section 401 and are also Waters of the State. All other waters described above that have an Ordinary High Water Mark (streambeds) are Waters of the State. Additionally, the riparian zone and streambanks, described above, are also treated as Waters of the State by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Caltrans also evaluated the site to determine if any additional features are not meeting the criteria of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, but meeting the state definition would be considered state wetlands. No additional features were identified.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife 1600 Jurisdiction: Alamo Pintado Creek, including banks and riparian zones, will be subject to the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction over streams extends up streambanks to the top of the bank or to the edge of the riparian dripline where present. Some of the streams in the Biological Study Area have banks with herbaceous vegetation undifferentiated from surrounding upland areas, such that the limits of jurisdiction are generally to the top of the bank. However, some areas have woody vegetation overhanging the system, ranging from species dependent on supplemental shallow groundwater from the stream system, such as willows, to upland species that interact with the stream primarily by providing shade and organic matter inputs. Where riparian vegetation is present, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction has been mapped to include the riparian vegetation.

Special-Status Plant and Animal Species

The term special-status species refers to plants or animals that are federally or state listed as endangered, threatened, or rare species that are candidates or proposed for federal or state listing and species considered special-concern species by federal or state agencies. There are 20 special-status plant species and 22 special-status animal species known to occur within the Biological Study Area and the surrounding area. Of these, the special-status plant and animal species that have habitats present and could be affected by the project are described in greater detail below:

Late-flowered mariposa lily: The late-flowered mariposa lily is a California Rare Plant Rank 1B.3, which means it is rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere, though not very threatened in California. This species is a perennial bulbiferous herb and occurs in cismontane woodland, riparian woodland, and chaparral. The nearest California Natural Diversity Database occurrence is 5.5 miles south of the Biological Study Area, in the Santa Ynez Mountains, from 2014. No late-flowered mariposa lilies were seen during surveys.

Sonoran maiden fern: The Sonoran maiden fern is a California Rare Plant Rank 2B.2, which means it is rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere and moderately endangered in California. This species is a perennial rhizomatous herb and occurs in seeps and streams. The nearest California Natural Diversity Database occurrence is 7.5 miles south of the Biological Study Area, near Refugio State Beach, from 1976. No Sonoran maiden fern was seen during surveys.

California red-legged frog: The California red-legged frog is federally threatened and considered a Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Federal critical habitat has been designated for the species, but the Biological Study Area does not overlap with it. The California red-legged frog historically ranged from Marin County southward to northern Baja California. It also historically occurred in California's Central Valley and the Sierra Nevada foothills, where it is now known from only a few isolated foothill occurrences. California red-legged frogs use a variety of areas, including aquatic, riparian, and upland habitats. The California red-legged frog uses riparian and upland habitats for foraging, shelter, cover, and non-dispersal movement. Terrestrial dispersal distances depend on habitat availability and environmental conditions, but have been observed up to 1 mile from aquatic habitat in San Luis Obispo County and over 2 miles from aquatic habitat in northern Santa Cruz County.

No protocol surveys were conducted for the California red-legged frog, and the species was not seen during general wildlife surveys. Biological surveys were also conducted in 2007 and 2008 for an earlier version of this project, which was ultimately not funded, and no California red-legged frogs were observed. However, additional daytime and nighttime surveys were done in 2010 at the request of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and one subadult California red-legged frog was observed within the Biological Study Area during the nighttime survey. This observation occurred in the riparian area to the east of the Valley Fresh Market parking lot upstream of the bridge. There are seven other California Natural Diversity Database occurrences of the California red-legged frog within 5 miles of the Biological Study Area. These occur along the Nojoqui Creek, Quiota Creek, and the Santa Ynez River south of the Biological Study Area, ranging from 1960 to 2019. Development within the vicinity of the project location has increased in the past few decades, modifying the creek channel and degrading the quality of the California red-legged frog dispersal habitat within the Biological Study Area. Despite this, habitat for the California red-legged frog in the Biological Study Area consists of the willow riparian forest for upland and dispersal habitat. The reach of Alamo Pintado Creek in the Biological Study Area does not contain pools of water generally needed for California red-legged frog breeding; however, the creek channel and riparian zone along Alamo Pintado Creek provide potentially suitable dispersal habitat for California red-legged frogs.

Southern California steelhead distinct population segment: The Southern California steelhead distinct population segment is a federally endangered and a state candidate endangered species. Federal critical habitat has been designated for the species, but the Biological Study Area does not overlap with it. This distinct population segment occurs in coastal drainages and coastal waters from the Santa Maria River south to the border with Mexico. Steelhead are generally anadromous; adults breed in freshwater rivers and streams in winter and early spring, where juveniles live for one to three years

before migrating to the ocean in late winter or spring to mature. There they stay for two to four years before returning to their natal stream or river to spawn. Adults may migrate after breeding, although they rarely spawn more than twice. Spawning habitat for steelhead consists of clear and cold water with a rocky substrate, approximately a 1-to-1 pool-to-riffle ratio, vegetated streambanks, ample in-stream cover, fairly stable water temperature and flow, and streambanks.

Between January and February, adult steelhead migrate from the ocean to spawn in the upper Santa Ynez River and its tributaries, as far upstream as Bradbury Dam. After spawning, adult steelhead may migrate back to the ocean and return to spawn again in later years. Steelhead may rear for one to four years in freshwater before migrating to the ocean as smolts, although Southern California steelhead tend to migrate after one to two years. The juvenile migration period is typically February through May, but the timing of migration is dependent on streamflow; therefore, migrating juveniles may move through the watershed from January through June.

No steelhead were observed in the Biological Study Area during project surveys. Recent survey work has indicated that steelhead primarily use tributaries south of the Santa Ynez River. Tributaries to the north, including Alamo Pintado Creek, are used to a much lesser extent. However, small steelhead have been observed in the upper reaches of Alamo Pintado Creek in the vicinity of Midland School in the nearby community of Los Olivos. The Area of Potential Impact contains marginal spawning habitat and low-quality rearing habitat. Some of the substrate in the channel is composed of gravel; however, the water level remains quite low during most of the year, and there are no pools in the Area of Potential Impact. Additionally, the creek channel upstream of the State Route 246 bridge over Alamo Pintado Creek has been altered in the past and is regularly disturbed during county flood control maintenance activities, diminishing the spawning and rearing value for steelhead.

In addition to the low potential for steelhead to spawn and/or rear in the Area of Potential Impact, migrating adult steelhead could be within the Area of Potential Impact during January through April. As such, if steelhead occur in Alamo Pintado Creek, they could be present in the Area of Potential Impact when there is adequate surface water. January through April would be the most likely time of year for occurrence. The Biological Study Area does not contain critical habitat for steelhead. A fish passage hydraulic analysis done for this project indicated that high flow velocities met fish passage criteria throughout the reach. However, the analysis found that low flow depth criteria for adult and juvenile salmonids were not met anywhere within the stream reach, including areas upstream and downstream and outside the influence of the bridge.

Southwestern pond turtle: The southwestern pond turtle is a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern and was recently proposed as federally threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Historically, southwestern pond turtles were present in most Pacific slope drainages between the Oregon and Mexican borders. Southwestern pond turtles live where water persists year-round, in ponds along foothill streams or broad washes near the coast. The ponds favored by southwestern pond turtles typically support emergent and floating vegetation, such as cattails and algal mats. They also bask on half-submerged logs, rocks, or flat shorelines close to the edge of the water. The southwestern pond turtle is mostly aquatic, leaving its aquatic site to reproduce, estivate, and overwinter. It may overwinter on land or in water, but it may remain active in water during the winter season. In warmer areas along the Central and Southern California coast, southwestern pond turtles may be active all year. Breeding for southwestern pond turtles typically occurs from late April to July. Upland nesting sites are required near the aquatic site and are typically located in open, clay, or silt slopes to ensure proper incubation temperature. Eggs hatch in late fall or overwinter and hatch in early spring of the following year. Some females lay two or more clutches of eggs during the year.

No southwestern pond turtles were observed during any surveys for this project. Suitable aquatic and nesting habitat occurs within the Biological Study Area for the southwestern pond turtle along Alamo Pintado Creek and its associated riparian areas. The reach of Alamo Pintado Creek in the Biological Study Area represents wintering and dispersal habitat, as well as marginal breeding habitat. There is near-perennial surface water, basking sites, and summer cover in the form of aquatic vegetation, especially watercress. There are 14 known California Natural Diversity Database occurrences of the southwestern pond turtle within 5 miles of the Biological Study Area between 1975 and 2019. The nearest occurrence is from 2012, along the Santa Ynez River, approximately 1.4 miles southwest of the Biological Study Area, near the confluence with Alisal Creek.

Southwestern willow flycatcher and least Bell’s vireo: The following species are addressed here as a group because they have similar habitat requirements.

The southwestern willow flycatcher is a federally and state-endangered species. The southwestern willow flycatcher is one of several subspecies of the willow flycatcher, three of which occur in California. The current breeding range of the southwestern willow flycatcher includes Southern California, but the quantity of suitable habitat is heavily reduced from historical levels. The southwestern willow flycatcher occurs from near sea level to over 8,500 feet, but is found mostly in lower-elevation riparian habitats. The southwestern willow flycatcher usually breeds in patchy to dense riparian habitats along streams or other wetlands, near or next to surface water, or underlain by

saturated soil. Southwestern willow flycatchers typically arrive on breeding grounds between early May and early June.

The least Bell's vireo is a federally and state-endangered species. The current range includes populations in Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, and Inyo counties, with a few isolated individuals and/or breeding pairs observed in Kern, Monterey, San Benito, and Stanislaus counties. Least Bell's vireos require riparian areas to breed and typically live in structurally diverse woodlands along watercourses, including cottonwood-willow woodlands and forests, oak woodlands, and mule fat scrub. Least Bell's vireos usually arrive in California during mid-to-late March. They build their nests in a variety of plants that provide concealment in the form of dense foliage.

No least Bell's vireos or southwestern willow flycatchers were observed during reconnaissance wildlife surveys. Riparian habitat within the Biological Study Area may provide suitable foraging habitat for the least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher. However, the width of the corridor and proximity to State Route 246 and the city of Solvang likely decrease the overall value of the site to provide nesting habitat. Historical records of breeding southwestern willow flycatchers occurred 2 to 3 miles west of Buellton (approximately 6 to 7 miles west of the Biological Study Area) from 1989 to 1995 along the Santa Ynez River. An additional record of a singing male least Bell's vireo occurred in the same location in 2016. No designated critical habitat occurs for either species within or near the Biological Study Area. Nesting pairs of both species are considered unlikely but cannot be ruled out due to the presence of suitable riparian habitat.

Crotch's bumblebee and obscure bumblebee: The following species are addressed here as a group because they have similar habitat requirements.

Crotch's bumblebee is a candidate for listing as endangered under the California Endangered Species Act. The current range of this species is from coastal California to the Sierra Crest, extending into western and southern Nevada and into Baja California, Mexico. Habitat for this species includes grassland and scrub, but it is not specific because the food plants used by Crotch's bumblebees are widely distributed in different habitats. These plants include snapdragons, milkweed, phacelia, Chaenactis, Clarkia, poppies, buckwheat, lupines, Medicago, and sage.

Like most other species of bumblebees, Crotch's bumblebees typically nest in underground cavities such as animal burrows, though nests have also been reported in aboveground structures that provide suitable cavities. The flight period for Crotch's bumblebee queens in California is from late February to late October, and the period for workers and males in California is from late March through September. Little is known about overwintering sites for

queens, but other bumblebee species are known to overwinter in soft soil or under leaf litter and debris.

No focused surveys were conducted for Crotch's bumblebee or the obscure bumblebee, and no individuals were observed during wildlife surveys. There are no California Natural Diversity Database occurrences of either species within 5 miles of the Biological Study Area. However, there is one occurrence approximately 5.5 miles east of the project location from 1959. There are also no records of either species near the Biological Study Area from Bumble Bee Watch. The ornamental flowering plants within the Biological Study Area may provide foraging habitat. The non-native grassland on the south side of State Route 246 by the private driveway on High Meadow Road may also provide suitable foraging habitat. Any mammal burrows in that area may also provide suitable nesting habitat.

Coast range newt: The coast range newt is a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern. This species is broadly found in the coastal ranges from central Mendocino County southward to northern San Diego County. Populations of coast range newts from the Salinas River in Monterey County south constitute a Priority 2 Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Coast range newts occur primarily in valley-foothill hardwood, valley-foothill hardwood-conifer, coastal scrub, and mixed chaparral, but are also found in annual grassland and mixed conifer types.

Terrestrial coast range newts seek cover under surface objects such as rocks and logs, or in mammal burrows, inside the bases of standing trees, or in human-made structures such as wells. Aquatic larvae find cover under submerged rocks, logs, debris, leaf packs in in-stream pools, and root mats along undercut banks. Terrestrial individuals are relatively inactive most of the year. Migrations to and from breeding areas usually occur at night, during, or just following, rains. Breeding adults and aquatic larvae are active both during the day and at night.

The coast range newt was not seen during wildlife reconnaissance-level surveys. Potentially suitable aquatic and upland habitat occurs within the Biological Study Area, similar to that of the California red-legged frog and southwestern pond turtle. Although the nearest California Natural Diversity Database occurrence of this species is 5.3 miles southeast of the Biological Study Area, its presence is still inferred.

Two-striped garter snake: The two-striped garter snake is considered a Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Two-striped garter snakes occur along the southern coast of California, from Salinas to the Mexican border, at elevations ranging from sea level to about 8,000 feet. The species is closely associated with freshwater streams, creeks, and pools near willow, oak woodlands, cedar, coastal sage scrub, sparse

pine, scrub oak, and chaparral vegetation; however, the snakes will also use artificial stock ponds. Even though the two-striped garter snake has been found active for most of the year (as long as January through November), there is likely local variation in activity periods due to differences in surface water availability. Seasonal variation in habitat use has also been observed, with snakes using sites near water during the summer and upland chaparral and grassland during the winter. Breeding occurs in late March, and young are born from July to late October.

No two-striped garter snakes were observed during surveys. There is one California Natural Diversity Database occurrence approximately 3.5 miles west of the Biological Study Area, along Nojoqui Creek, from 2008.

The Biological Study Area contains wintering and dispersal habitat, as well as breeding habitat. The creek and rocky channel bed within the Biological Study Area provide suitable aquatic habitat. There is near-perennial surface water and summer cover in the form of aquatic vegetation.

Northern California legless lizard: The Northern California legless lizard is considered a Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. This species occurs in scattered locations in California in moist, warm, loose soils with leaf litter and plant cover. Habitats include beach dunes, pine-oak woodland, chaparral, desert scrub, sandy washes, and stream terraces. Northern California legless lizards do not bask in direct sunlight and live mostly underground, burrowing in loose, sandy soil. They are mostly active in the morning and evening when foraging beneath leaf litter. This species breeds between early spring and July and bears young between September and November.

No Northern California legless lizards were observed during surveys of the project's Biological Study Area, and there are no California Natural Diversity Database occurrences of the species within 5 miles of the Biological Study Area.

American badger: The American badger is considered a Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. They are active during the day and night and are active year-round, with variable periods of hibernation in winter. Badger dens are generally identified by the D-shaped entrance and pile of soil from excavation. Badgers prefer open habitats such as grasslands, oak savannahs, and shrublands with friable soils. Studies also indicate that badgers have large home ranges, spanning hundreds to thousands of acres. Badgers mate in summer and early fall, with births mostly occurring between March and April. Threats to the American badger include habitat loss, indiscriminate trapping, and persistent poisons.

No American badgers, live or dead, or potential dens were observed during surveys of the project's Biological Study Area. No dirt piles, prey remains,

claw marks inside burrows, or other signs were observed within the project site. There is one California Natural Diversity Database occurrence of an American badger approximately 4 miles west of the Biological Study Area from 1989. This occurrence was a roadkill badger on U.S. 101.

Townsend's big-eared bat, pallid bat, and other roosting bats: The following roosting bat species are addressed here as a group because they have similar habitat requirements.

Roosts are important habitat features for bats. Bats often select roost locations because they are within range of foraging areas. Bats also select roost sites based on thermal characteristics, predation potential, noise, light levels, and other disturbance levels. Bats use night roosts between nighttime foraging flights to rest and process food. Night roosts provide easily accessed resting areas with suitable temperature characteristics that bats require for proper digestion at any time of the year. Day roosts provide shelter from weather and predators and are essential for sleeping, pup rearing, torpor, and socialization. Maternity roosts offer the cover, thermoregulation, and safety required for birthing and raising young.

Day roosts and maternity roosts are often regarded as the most important to protect because they allow for reproduction that perpetuates colonies. Disturbing maternal roosts when young are present can cause the adults to abandon young and to abort fetuses. Day and maternity roosts may be limiting factors for many bat populations, influencing species' distribution.

The Townsend's big-eared bat is a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern. It forages over a wide variety of grassland, wetland, shrub, and wooded habitats, although it is most common in mesic forests. This species roosts in small colonies of 12 to 200 individuals, typically in caves and rock crevices. Bridges, buildings, and tree cavities are also occasionally used for roosting. Nursery roosts are most often located in caves, tunnels, mines, and buildings. Most breeding occurs in the winter, with peak mating activity ranging from November to February.

The pallid bat is a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern. The pallid bat occurs throughout most of California, especially in open areas below 6,500 feet in elevation. The species is absent from Del Norte and western Siskiyou counties, south to northern Mendocino County, and in the high Sierra Nevada Mountains from Shasta to Kern counties. Pallid bat day roosts are typically in cliff fissures and other crevices, caves, mines, abandoned buildings, bird boxes, and occasionally under bridges and in hollow trees, while night roosts are in more open areas such as porches and open buildings. In the winter, pallid bats hibernate near summer day roost locations. Habitats where pallid bats are found include grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, and forests. Foraging usually occurs 1.6 to 8 feet above open ground, and prey consists of insects and arachnids.

Breeding occurs from late October through February, but implantation is delayed, so pups are not born until the following spring and early summer. Maternity colonies form in early April, and pups are born mostly in May and June, but can be born as early as April and as late as July.

No Townsend's big-eared bat, pallid bat, or other species of roosting bats were observed during surveys. The bridge did not show signs of use by bat species and lacks the features that could support roosting. The trees within the riparian woodland provide potentially suitable roosting habitat; however, it is unlikely that these features could support maternity roosts due to a lack of optimal roosting habitat, which, when present in trees, typically requires long vertical crevices approximately 0.75 to 2 inches wide; dark, wind-sheltered areas with suitable temperatures; and areas away from anthropogenic disturbances and predator access. The riparian and non-native grassland provides foraging habitat for these and other common bat species.

There is one California Natural Diversity Database occurrence of a Townsend's big-eared bat approximately 5.5 miles east of the Biological Study Area along the Santa Ynez River from 1989 and one California Natural Diversity Database occurrence of a pallid bat approximately 4.5 miles west of the Biological Study Area near Buellton along the Santa Ynez River from 2015.

Cooper's hawk, purple martin, and other nesting birds: The following species are addressed here as a group because they have similar habitat requirements.

The Cooper's hawk is included in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Watch List. It is a fairly large accipiter hawk that ranges throughout the U.S. and is widely distributed throughout California. The Cooper's hawk occupies forests and woodlands, especially near the edges. The species is rarely found in areas without dense tree stands or patchy woodland habitat. Nests are built in deciduous trees, usually 20 to 50 feet above ground. Breeding occurs from March to August, peaking from May to July.

Purple martins have been eliminated from much of their previous range across the U.S. due to the introduction of non-native European starlings and house finches. The species has experienced extreme declines in recent decades through the loss of riparian habitat and competition for nest sites from non-native starlings. Purple martins are the largest North American swallow and are considered uncommon to rare in California.

Several nesting bird species that are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Section 3503 could nest in habitats within the Biological Study Area. The nesting bird season for the Biological Study Area is considered to be February 1 to September 31.

No Cooper's hawks or purple martins were observed during surveys. A red-tailed hawk and a red-shouldered hawk were observed soaring overhead during surveys. There is one California Natural Diversity Database occurrence of a Cooper's hawk approximately 2 miles southeast of the Biological Study Area from 1989 along Zanja De Cota Creek. There is also one California Natural Diversity Database occurrence of a purple martin that overlaps the Biological Study Area from 1932, along with two additional occurrences within 5 miles of the Biological Study Area from 1928 and 1938.

The riparian corridor and the bridge itself provide nesting habitat for various bird species protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Section 3503. One mud nest was observed on the underside of the Alamo Pintado Creek Bridge during surveys on June 17, 2024, likely belonging to a black phoebe, though the status of the nest was undetermined. The bridge showed signs of mud nests from previous years, but it does not appear to house several nests at a time.

Invasive Species

Executive Order 13112 defines invasive species as any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem and whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Biological surveys identified 31 plant species in the Biological Study Area that are listed as invasive by the online California Invasive Plant Council Database. Of these identified plant species, two were rated as highly invasive, eight were rated as moderately invasive, and 21 were rated as having limited invasiveness. The distribution of invasive plant species is scattered throughout the Biological Study Area and is most common in ruderal/disturbed areas.

Environmental Consequences

Natural Communities and Habitats of Concern

Impacts on natural communities and habitats of concern have been determined by overlaying the project's Area of Potential Impact with the mapping of natural communities and habitats within the project's Biological Study Area. The disturbance would occur at proposed work areas, staging locations, access locations, and more. These estimates of permanent and temporary impacts on natural communities and habitats of concern are presented in Table 2.2.

Red Willow Riparian Woodland and Forest Natural Community: Red willow riparian woodland and forest occupy 6.7 acres within the Biological Study Area at Alamo Pintado Creek. This community makes up the primary riparian area associated with the creek and includes other trees such as western sycamore and Fremont cottonwood within the alliance. Temporary impacts to red willow riparian woodland and forest would occur from vegetation removal

for temporary access, equipment staging, and foot traffic at the bridge, and a total of approximately 13,605 square feet (0.31 acre) of red willow woodland and forest would be temporarily impacted as part of this project. Approximately 226 square feet (0.005 acre) of red willow riparian woodland and forest would be permanently impacted by the installation of new rock slope protection just downstream of the bridge. Red willow riparian woodland and forest is also considered a jurisdictional riparian area.

Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Areas

Impacts on wetlands, other waters, and riparian areas have been determined by overlaying the project's Area of Potential Impact with the preliminary jurisdictional determination for the project's Biological Study Area location. Estimates of degraded, temporary, and permanent impacts on potential jurisdictional wetlands, other waters, riparian habitats, and other upland habitats are presented in Table 2.2. Other waters of the U.S. (streambeds) are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Riparian and streambank habitats surrounding the streambed, including armored and unarmored sections of willow riparian habitat and armored and unarmored sections of streambanks with other vegetation types or lacking vegetation, are regulated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife jurisdiction. Red willow woodland and forest is the primary willow riparian type present in the Biological Study Area. The existing condition of the stream corridor in the Biological Study Area includes existing rock slope protection, hardscape, and pipe/fence revetments due to past human modification.

Permanent impacts to jurisdictional features would occur from portions of the new abutment and retaining wall along the new multiuse path and the placement of new rock slope protection that would extend farther downstream from the bridge than existing hardscaping. The existing pier columns would be replaced with new, larger pier columns, but the new columns would mostly be farther outside of the Ordinary High Water Mark than the existing ones. The removal of old columns balances out the footprint of new columns within the Ordinary High Water Mark, so there are no new permanent impacts to Other Waters and Streambeds. A total of approximately 226 square feet (0.005 acre) of unarmored willow riparian habitat and 772 square feet (0.018 acre) of streambank (armored and unarmored areas combined) would be permanently impacted due to changes in the bridge column size and locations, as well as construction of new abutments and a retaining wall.

Temporary impacts to jurisdictional features would occur due to temporary access, staging areas, replacement of concrete slope paving with new rock slope protection, and temporary stream diversion if implemented in this project. A total of approximately 14,076 square feet (0.33 acre) of other waters and streambeds would be temporarily impacted. A total of 13,605 square feet (0.31 acre) of willow riparian habitat (armored and unarmored

areas combined) and 12,826 square feet (0.29 acre) of streambank (armored and unarmored areas combined) would be temporarily impacted. To minimize these temporary impacts to the streambed, the diversion system and temporary fills would be removed during the wet seasons to allow the stream to flow unobstructed.

Habitat degradation would occur along the streambank within ruderal herbaceous and landscaped vegetation where armoring currently exists. These areas have existing rock slope protection along the streambank, some of which is buried within soil and vegetated, including some mature trees. Trees would be removed, and new rock slope protection would be placed, degrading the existing quality of the already disturbed streambank; this is considered degradation because the configuration of new rock slope protection would differ somewhat in size, shape, and degree of backfill from existing streambank armoring and would result in changes to the amount of vegetation due to the removal of some large trees currently shading the stream corridor. A total of 815 square feet (0.02 acre) of other waters/streambeds would be degraded, and a total of 7,745 square feet (0.18 acre) of armored streambank would be degraded.

An estimated total of 23 trees may need to be removed from the riparian habitat and streambank for temporary access. Approximately five trees with a diameter at standard height, measured 4.5 feet from ground level, of 6 to 12 inches, 17 trees with a diameter at standard height of 12 to 24 inches, and one tree with a diameter at standard height greater than 24 inches may be removed. Trees scoped for removal include Arroyo willow, coast live oak, cottonwood, red willow, sycamore, and valley oak.

Table 2.2 Summary of Potential Impacts to Jurisdictional Aquatic Resources, Natural Communities, and Habitats of Concern

Land Cover Type	Degraded Impacts (Square Feet/Acres)	Temporary Impacts (Square Feet/Acres)	Permanent Impacts (Square Feet/Acres)
Other Waters/Streambed	815 square feet/0.02 acre	14,076 square feet/0.33 acre	None
Willow Riparian Habitat: Unarmored	None	10,014 square feet/0.23 acre	226 square feet/0.005 acre
Willow Riparian Habitat: Armored	None	3,591 square feet/0.08 acre	None
Streambank: Unarmored	None	496 square feet/0.01 acre	736 square feet/0.017 acre
Streambank: Armored	7,745 square feet/0.18 acre	12,330 square feet/0.28 acre	36 square feet/less than 0.001 acre
Red Willow Riparian Woodland and Forest (also captured above as willow riparian)	None	13,605 square feet/0.31 acre	226 square feet/0.005 acre

Special-Status Plant and Animal Species

The project as proposed is not expected to impact the late-flowered mariposa lily, Sonoran maiden fern, or any other special-status plant species.

California red-legged frog: Impacts on California red-legged frogs and their respective habitat are presented in Table 2.3. The proposed project may result in up to 7,745 square feet (0.18 acre) of degradation impacts, up to 26,431 square feet (0.60 acre) of temporary impacts, and up to 998 square feet (0.022 acre) of permanent impacts to potential upland/dispersal habitat, including armored and unarmored willow riparian and streambank. Project construction could result in the injury or mortality of the California red-legged frog if present. 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. The potential for impacts to the California red-legged frog is anticipated to be low due to no observations of the species within the Biological Study Area during recent reconnaissance surveys, but this could change over time, where the species could potentially disperse and/or expand populations throughout the Biological Study Area.

The Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the proposed project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the California red-legged frog. The basis for this determination is that presence

has been inferred, and there would be a low but possible potential for take of the species due to project activities. No critical habitat occurs within the Biological Study Area.

Southern California steelhead: The Area of Potential Impact includes potential migratory habitat for the Southern California steelhead, as well as marginal spawning habitat and low-quality rearing habitat. The potential for steelhead to be present within the project work area is very low because of the following reasons: Few steelhead are expected due to consistently low water levels, the lack of pools, and regular disturbance by maintenance activities. To the extent practicable, work in the channel would be done during the dry season of the year, when the water level would be lowest and steelhead are unlikely to be moving through the Area of Potential Impact.

The Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, Southern California steelhead. No critical habitat occurs within the Biological Study Area. The California Endangered Species Act determination is that there would be no take of the Southern California steelhead.

Southwestern pond turtle: Impacts on southwestern pond turtles and their respective habitat are presented in Table 2.3. As mentioned in the California red-legged frog discussion above, the proposed project may result in up to 7,745 square feet (0.18 acre) of degradation impacts, up to 26,431 square feet (0.60 acre) of temporary impacts, and up to 998 square feet (0.022 acre) of permanent impacts to potential upland/dispersal habitat, including armored and unarmored willow riparian and streambank. Additionally, the proposed project may result in up to 815 square feet (0.02 acre) of degradation impacts and 14,076 square feet (0.33 acre) of temporary impacts to aquatic stream habitat for the southwestern pond turtle. Causes of temporary, permanent, and degradation impacts on southwestern pond turtles are similar to those described above for jurisdictional aquatic features. These estimated impacts represent the worst-case scenario based on the assumption that all upland habitat impact areas within the dispersal range of the southwestern pond turtle are suitable migratory and refuge habitat and that the creek provides suitable aquatic habitat.

Project construction could result in the injury or mortality of southwestern pond turtles (if present) during diversion and/or dewatering, along with other general construction activities. The potential need to capture and relocate southwestern 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. Erosion and sedimentation could also occur, which would directly or indirectly affect water quality. The potential for these impacts is anticipated to be low due to no

observations of the species within the Biological Study Area during surveys. However, this could change over time, where these species could potentially expand populations or colonize within the streams and/or ponds in the Area of Potential Impact.

The Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the southwestern pond turtle. The basis for this determination is that southwestern pond turtle presence is inferred, and there would be a low but possible potential for take of the species because of project activities.

Table 2.3 Estimated Impact to Habitats

Habitat	Degraded Impacts (Square Feet/Acres)	Temporary Impacts (Square Feet/Acres)	Permanent Impacts (Square Feet/Acres)
Southwestern pond turtle and California red-legged frog upland habitat	7,745 square feet/0.18 acre	26,431 square feet/0.60 acre	998 square feet/0.022 acre
Southwestern pond turtle aquatic habitat	815 square feet/0.02 acre	14,076 square feet/0.33 acre	0 square feet/0 acre

Southwestern willow flycatcher and least Bell's vireo: Based on historical data in the vicinity of the Biological Study Area, there is very low potential for least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher to be present within the Area of Potential Impact. The project would have small temporary impacts on marginal foraging habitat at Alamo Pintado Creek (13,605 square feet/0.31 acre of willow riparian habitat: armored and unarmored). Additionally, the willow riparian habitat that would be impacted by project activities is at the edges of the riparian corridor dispersed throughout the project area, rather than in one consolidated area.

With the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures used to protect all nesting bird species protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act, the California Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the California Fish and Game Code, the Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that the proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher. The project would not impact the designated critical habitat for these species.

The southwestern willow flycatcher and least Bell's vireo are also state-listed taxa under the California Endangered Species Act. No California Endangered Species Act take of these species is expected. However, if either of these species is detected during preconstruction surveys, coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife would be required.

Crotch's bumblebee and obscure bumblebee: Potential for project activities to impact these species is low because work would be limited to the bridge location, the existing roadway, and highly disturbed areas along the shoulders. However, temporary impacts to Crotch's or obscure bumblebees could occur if the species is present during vegetation removal, staging, and ground-disturbing activities at locations beyond the highway shoulder where suitable habitat exists. Permanent impacts to the species are unlikely to occur because rock slope protection would be placed in areas not suitable for nesting or foraging, and primarily in areas already partially armored in some form. If Crotch's or obscure bumblebees are present on the project site, there is a potential for individuals to be directly impacted by construction-associated ground-disturbing activities, which could lead to mortality for individual bees or a colony. While Crotch's or obscure bumblebees are not anticipated to be nesting in the project area, additional focused surveys would be conducted during the design phase. If the Crotch's bumblebee is observed using the project area, Caltrans will coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and apply for a Section 2081 Incidental Take Permit if necessary.

Coast range newt: Like the impacts described previously for the California red-legged frog, construction activities for the proposed project could result in the injury or mortality of coast range newts, if present. The potential need to capture and relocate coast range newts would subject these animals to

stresses that could result in adverse effects. Injury or mortality could occur from accidental crushing by worker foot traffic or construction equipment. Erosion and sedimentation could also occur, which would directly or indirectly affect water quality. The potential for these impacts is anticipated to be low due to a lack of observations of the species within the Biological Study Area locations during surveys, but this could change over time.

Two-striped garter snake: The proposed project could impact the two-striped garter snake if found in the Area of Potential Impact. However, the chances are low due to poor habitat conditions immediately next to the highway and commercial areas where most of the work would take place. With the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures described below, impacts to the two-striped garter snake are anticipated to be minimized.

Northern California legless lizard: The Biological Study Area supports habitat for the Northern California legless lizard, primarily in the intact oak woodland areas. Most construction activities would occur within the streambed, riparian habitat, and disturbed ruderal areas next to the bridge. However, the disturbance of dirt and vegetation could directly impact the species. Indirect impacts could also result from noise and disturbance associated with construction, which could alter foraging and/or nesting behaviors. With the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures described below, impacts to the Northern California legless lizard are not anticipated.

American badger: While the Biological Study Area supports habitat for the American badger, the area within the Biological Study Area was assessed to be marginal habitat at best because it occurs next to the State Route 246 travel corridor and is next to the urban area of Solvang. The disturbance of dirt and vegetation could directly impact burrows of any size or crush the species. Indirect impacts could also result from noise and disturbance associated with construction, which could alter foraging and/or nesting behaviors. With the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures described below, impacts to the American badger are not anticipated.

Townsend’s big-eared bat, pallid bat, and other roosting bats: Although no bat roosts or bat roost signs were observed during surveys, there is a marginal potential that bats could establish new roosts in trees within the Area of Potential Impact. There is a potential that woody riparian trees proposed for removal could support a variety of roosting bat species. However, the likelihood is low due to the low density of trees near the bridge within the landscaped area and the high amount of paved areas, creating less sheltering habitat. Tree removal could impact roosting bats if present during construction.

If bats were to be present during construction, indirect impacts could result from noise and disturbance associated with construction, which could alter roosting behaviors. Much like with bird species, the removal of trees and

other vegetation could directly impact roosting bats, if present. Direct effects could result in injury or mortality of bats, and harassment could alter roosting behaviors. The implementation of pre-activity surveys and exclusion zones, if necessary, would reduce the potential for adverse effects to roosting bat species.

Cooper's hawk, purple martin, and other nesting birds: Vegetation removal and site grading could impact active bird nests and any eggs or young living in nests. Indirect impacts could also result from noise and disturbance associated with construction, which could alter foraging or nesting behaviors. While a temporary loss of vegetation that provides potential nesting habitat could occur, this would be offset by revegetation efforts for the project. The implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures described below would reduce the potential for negative impacts to nesting bird species.

Invasive Species

Ground disturbance and other aspects of project construction could potentially spread or introduce invasive species within the Biological Study Area. The proposed project could cause an increase in invasive terrestrial species in communities and spread into areas not currently dominated by them. However, the project also has the opportunity to reduce the abundance and spread of invasive species through avoidance and minimization efforts.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The measures listed below would reduce potential impacts on biological resources. The measures have been organized by the primary resource or species they are designed to protect, but they may apply to several biological resources. Also note that the Water Pollution Control Program and many of the Best Management Practices and standard specifications outlined in Section 1.6 would avoid and minimize impacts on biological resources.

The following general measures would apply for biological resources:

BIO-1: Before construction, a qualified biologist would conduct a Worker Environmental Awareness Training course for all personnel regarding all the identified biological resources in the project area. The contractor shall submit a written request to the resident engineer to schedule the training 14 calendar days before performing any work on the project.

BIO-2: Observations of any special-status plant and animal species would be documented on California Natural Diversity Database forms and submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife upon project completion.

BIO-3: Before the start of excavation or construction activities, a qualified biologist would conduct a preconstruction survey for all identified special-status animal species discussed in this document. If any of these species are found within the Area of Potential Impact, they would be relocated to a

suitable location outside the Area of Potential Impact. If Southern California steelheads are found, then all project activities would immediately stop, and the appropriate regulatory agencies would be contacted to pursue take coverage. The qualified biologist would use the most current survey protocols available for the species to ensure the highest level of species detection, including visual encounter surveys and nesting survey techniques.

Natural Communities and Habitats of Concern

The avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation measures proposed for jurisdictional aquatic resources described above have been assessed as sufficient to minimize impacts to red willow riparian woodland and forest.

Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Areas

Before construction, Caltrans shall 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 for activities that impact their respective jurisdictions. Permit conditions would be implemented during construction.

BIO-4: Before the start of any ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing, flagging, or another boundary marking system shall be used to demarcate (distinguish) jurisdictional features and the dripline of trees to be protected within the project limits. Caltrans-defined environmentally sensitive areas shall be noted on design plans and delineated in the field before the start of construction activities.

BIO-5: No work shall occur in areas of standing or flowing surface water. If dewatering or diversion operations are necessary, a detailed dewatering and diversion plan, inclusive of water quality monitoring requirements, would be prepared and implemented.

BIO-6: Construction activities in jurisdictional areas and temporary stream diversion, if needed, shall be timed to occur during the dry season, when the surface water is likely to be dry or at a seasonal minimum, typically between June 1 and October 31 in any given year, or as otherwise directed by the regulatory agencies. Deviations from this work window would only be made with permission from the relevant regulatory agencies. Activities that may be approved outside the typical construction window include tree removal and trimming that does not require grubbing or ground disturbance; restoration seeding, planting, and maintenance of plantings; and stormwater measures that require the use of equipment, subject to prior agency approval. Maintenance of Stormwater Best Management Practices using hand tools is permitted year-round.

BIO-7: During construction, sediment and erosion control measures shall be implemented and maintained. Fiber rolls, barriers, and other Best Management Practices shall be installed as needed to stabilize the project site. Jurisdictional areas shall be stabilized for winter before November 1, either by completing construction in these areas, including installation of permanent erosion control measures, or by implementing winterization stabilization measures that ensure disturbed soils in jurisdictional areas are stabilized to withstand the 10-year, 24-hour storm event. At a minimum, erosion controls shall be maintained by the contractor on a daily basis throughout the construction period.

BIO-8: Other than the implementation of stormwater measures and water quality sampling, work would not occur in jurisdictional areas when rain is falling or when the National Weather Service forecast predicts a 25 percent chance or greater of at least 0.1 inch of rain within a 24-hour period. Work can resume if rain does not occur, or after rain has stopped, the forecast predicts at least 72 hours of clear weather, and site conditions are dry enough to avoid discharges of sediment into jurisdictional areas.

BIO-9: No concrete shall be poured if the National Weather Service forecast predicts a 10 percent or greater chance of rain for the city of Solvang within the next 72 hours. All poured concrete must be protected from contact with rainwater or surface waters for 30 days or until testing levels for pH (potential for hydrogen) with tap water measure below 9.5.

BIO-10: To the extent feasible, staging, parking, and refueling of equipment and vehicles must occur at least 100 feet from jurisdictional areas. If staging of equipment and materials must occur closer than 100 feet from jurisdictional areas, the staging areas must have adequate Best Management Practices to prevent discharges from leaving the staging area and entering jurisdictional areas. If fueling must occur in areas less than 100 feet from streams, a refueling plan outlining secondary containment and spill prevention measures must be prepared and approved by Caltrans and agency staff.

BIO-11: At a minimum, all equipment and vehicles shall be checked and maintained by the contractor on a daily basis to ensure proper operation and avoid potential leaks or spills. Drip pans must be placed under equipment that is stationary for more than 12 hours. Stationary equipment used in jurisdictional areas, such as generators, must be placed in secondary containment. Equipment must be removed from the channel if the National Weather Service predicts a chance of at least 0.1 inch of rain within a 24-hour period for the city of Solvang.

BIO-12: Limited night work is permitted within jurisdictional areas. Lighting must be angled down and pointed toward work areas to minimize illumination of nearby jurisdictional areas outside project limits.

BIO-13: All litter, construction debris, equipment, loose materials, and soil spoils shall be removed from jurisdictional areas at the end of every work shift. Stockpiles of materials, including temporarily stockpiled soils, may not be stored within jurisdictional areas. Stockpiles not actively being used for construction must be covered and surrounded with a linear sediment barrier.

BIO-14: Stream contours shall be restored as close as possible to their original condition.

BIO-15: The temporary stream diversion and temporary fills would be removed during the wet seasons to allow flow and to minimize the temporal loss of jurisdictional features.

Mitigation Measure BIO-16: Caltrans shall restore all temporarily impacted areas to pre-project conditions, functions, and values and install replacement plantings, vegetate newly installed rock slope protection along the streambank, implement invasive species control along the Alamo Pintado Creek corridor, and implement other potential means of mitigation. Caltrans would restore all areas temporarily impacted for access needs on-site at a 1-to-1 ratio. Additionally, for areas that are treated with buried/backfilled rock slope protection (degradation impacts), Caltrans would restore vegetation over the buried/backfilled rock slope protection and would also restore an additional 0.5 acre of riparian vegetation for each acre of vegetated backfilled rock slope protection, resulting in a 1.5-to-1 ratio of restoration for degraded areas.

Trees that are removed within jurisdictional areas shall be replanted as follows: trees with a diameter at standard height between 6 and 12 inches shall be replanted at a 3-to-1 ratio, trees with a diameter at standard height between 12 and 24 inches shall be replanted at a 5-to-1 ratio, and trees with a diameter at standard height greater than 24 inches shall be replanted at a 10-to-1 ratio.

Late-Flowered Mariposa Lily, Sonoran Maiden Fern, and Other Special-Status Plant Species

BIO-17: To avoid impacts to special-status plant species, all staging and equipment storage areas shall occur in existing pullouts or at paved locations that have been cleared by Caltrans Environmental.

California Red-Legged Frog

All temporary impacts to native vegetation would be offset by replacement plantings within the project limits. In addition to the measures detailed below, the mitigation proposed for jurisdictional aquatic resources described above would also mitigate impacts to California red-legged frog habitat.

BIO-18: Caltrans anticipates the proposed project would qualify for Federal Endangered Species Act incidental take coverage under the Programmatic

Biological Opinion for Projects Funded or Approved under the Federal Highway Administration's Federal Aid Program, which contains an extensive list of measures for each phase of the construction period. Some of the notable measures are summarized below:

- Only U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologists shall participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California red-legged frogs.

- Ground disturbance shall not begin until written approval is received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the biologist is qualified to conduct the work.

- Preconstruction surveys must be completed 48 hours before any construction work starts. If any life stage of the California red-legged frog is detected, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be notified prior to the start of construction.

- Biologists would conduct Worker Environmental Awareness Training for construction personnel.

- A biological monitor shall be on-site until all California red-legged frogs have been removed, workers have been instructed, and all disturbances to the habitat area are completed.

- During project activities, all trash that may attract predators or scavengers shall be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, all trash and debris shall be removed from work areas.

- All refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles shall occur at least 60 feet from riparian habitat or water bodies and not in a location from which a spill would drain directly toward aquatic habitat, unless otherwise preapproved by the necessary agencies.

- Habitat contours shall be returned to a natural configuration at the end of project activities. This measure shall 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.

- The number of access routes, the size of staging areas, and the total area of activity shall be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project.

- Caltrans shall 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.

- If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes would be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.2 inch to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water would 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 would be removed in a manner that would allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate.

- Unless approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, water would not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.

- A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall permanently remove any individuals of exotic species, such as bullfrogs.

- The fieldwork code of practice developed by the Declining Amphibian Task Force shall be followed at all times to prevent the introduction of diseases.

- Restore the site to natural contours and revegetate it with native plants suitable for the habitats within the project area.

Southern California Steelhead

In addition to the measures detailed below, the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures, including the work windows, proposed for jurisdictional aquatic resources described above, would also mitigate impacts to Southern California steelhead.

BIO-19: During in-stream work, a qualified biologist would be retained with experience in steelhead biology and ecology, aquatic habitats, biological monitoring (including diversion/dewatering), and capturing, handling, and relocating fish species. During in-stream work, a biological monitor would continuously monitor placement and removal of any required stream diversions and would capture stranded fish species and relocate them to suitable habitat, as appropriate.

BIO-20: If any steelhead are found during construction monitoring, all work activities would stop, and the appropriate regulatory agencies would be contacted to pursue take coverage.

BIO-21: Caltrans would design replacement bridge structures without scuppers, deck drains, or other facilities that drain stormwater directly into the stream to prevent pollutants such as 6PPD-quinone (an oxidation product of

6PPD, which is an additive intended to prevent damage to tire rubber from ozone) from directly entering waterways.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

In addition to the measures detailed below, the compensatory mitigation proposed for jurisdictional aquatic resources described above would also mitigate impacts to the southwestern pond turtle. Further, implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures outlined for jurisdictional aquatic resources and the California red-legged frog would avoid and minimize impacts to individuals of the southwestern pond turtle as well. Lastly, Caltrans Best Management Practices implemented to avoid impacts on water quality would avoid impacts on aquatic habitat for the southwestern pond turtle.

BIO-22: The project includes environmentally sensitive areas to minimize impacts to sensitive areas and species. The project plans would delineate environmentally sensitive areas that restrict access to the minimum required for construction, minimizing impacts to southwestern pond turtles and their habitat. No vehicle access within these environmentally sensitive areas would be permitted. During construction, the resident engineer and biological monitor would determine and agree upon the exact placement of environmentally sensitive area markers, based on the project plans, and would determine and agree upon the appropriate material for marking environmentally sensitive areas.

Least Bell's Vireo and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

In addition to the measures described below, the compensatory mitigation measures proposed for riparian habitat in the jurisdictional aquatic features section would also mitigate the impacts to least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher habitat. Further, the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures used to protect all nesting bird species would also minimize any potential impacts to the least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher. Lastly, impacts to vegetation would be offset by replacement plantings within the project limits, which would also replace in-kind nesting habitat.

BIO-23: Focused surveys following U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey guidelines for the least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher shall be completed to determine the presence/absence of the least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher wherever suitable habitat is present within 500 feet of the limits of construction. Surveys shall be conducted within one year before the start of construction activities. If the least Bell's vireo or southwestern willow flycatcher is detected during these surveys, formal Section 7 consultation would be initiated. Caltrans would provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with a report detailing least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher survey efforts for the breeding season preceding construction.

BIO-24: Before construction starts, vegetation removal shall be scheduled to occur from October 1 to January 31, outside the typical nesting bird season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds. If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the nesting season (February 1 to September 30), a nesting bird survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than five calendar days before the start of construction.

BIO-25: If the least Bell's vireo or southwestern willow flycatcher is observed within 100 feet of the project area during construction or the preconstruction surveys, all project activities shall stop immediately, and the relevant resource agencies shall be consulted. Development of additional avoidance and minimization measures would occur as necessary in coordination with the pertinent agencies.

Crotch's Bumblebee and Obscure Bumblebee

BIO-26: During the design phase, a Crotch's bumblebee habitat assessment would be conducted following the California Department of Fish and Wildlife "Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species," dated June 6, 2023. If Crotch's bumblebee habitat is determined to be present within the project site:

- A focused non-invasive survey would be conducted before ground disturbance for the Crotch's bumblebee and its nests, following California Department of Fish and Wildlife guidance.

- A Worker Environmental Awareness Training course would be provided for all construction personnel before the start of any ground disturbance or vegetation removal to discuss Crotch's bumblebee identification, ecology, habitat, and avoidance and minimization measures.

- Before starting any ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing shall be installed, as appropriate, around Crotch's bumblebee feeding and nesting habitat to be avoided. Environmentally sensitive areas shall be noted on design plans and delineated in the field before the start of construction activities.

BIO-27: If a Crotch's bumblebee is identified in the project area, Caltrans would coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and, if necessary, a Section 2081 Incidental Take Permit would be acquired, on-site mitigation may be required, and the following would be implemented:

Any blooming flowering plants that are scoped for removal would be inspected immediately before work to ensure that no bumblebees are on or near the plant. If a Crotch's bumblebee is identified on or next to vegetation that is to be removed, work in that area would not proceed until the bumblebee leaves the area of its own accord (voluntarily).

- No work would occur within 50 feet of an active Crotch's bumblebee nest unless approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

American Badger

BIO-28: No rodent control pesticides shall be used, including anticoagulant rodenticides such as brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difethialone, and difenacoum. This is necessary to minimize the possibility of primary or secondary poisoning of American badgers or other special-status species.

Townsend's Big-Eared Bat, Pallid Bat, and Other Roosting Bats

BIO-29: Tree removal shall be scheduled to occur from September 1 to February 14, outside the typical bat maternity roosting season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts to roosting bats.

BIO-30: If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the bat maternity roosting season (February 1 to September 1), a bat roost survey shall be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans within 14 days before construction. The biologist conducting the preconstruction survey would also identify the nature of the bat utilization (in essence, no roosting, night roost, day roost, or maternity roost) and determine if passive bat exclusion would be necessary and feasible. If an active day roost is found, a qualified Caltrans biologist shall determine an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area shall be avoided until a qualified biologist has determined that roosting activity has stopped or exclusionary methods have successfully evicted roosting bats.

BIO-31: If bats are found by a qualified biologist to be maternity roosting, active bat maternity roosts shall not be disturbed or destroyed until pups are capable of flight.

Cooper's Hawk, Purple Martin, and Other Nesting Birds

BIO-32: During the non-nesting season (October 1 to January 31), methods to deter new nests would be implemented to prevent new nests from forming during project activities. Exact methods of deterrence would be determined during the design phase. Removal of nests as they are beginning to form may be conducted as a last resort to further prevent nesting during project activities. There would be no removal of fully formed active nests. Partially built nests may only be removed if they have been monitored by a qualified biologist and determined to be inactive. If an active nest is found, the qualified biologist would determine an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area would be avoided until a qualified biologist has determined that juveniles have fledged and are no longer dependent on the nest.

BIO-33: Active bird nests must not be disturbed, and eggs or young of birds covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code must not be killed, destroyed, injured, or harassed at any time.

Invasive Species

During construction, Caltrans would ensure that the spread or introduction of invasive exotic plant species would be avoided to the maximum extent possible as follows:

BIO-34: Only clean fill shall be imported. When practicable, invasive exotic plants on the project site shall be removed and properly disposed of. All invasive vegetation removed from the construction site shall be taken to a landfill to prevent the spread of invasive species. If soil from weedy areas must be removed off-site, the top 6 inches containing the seed layer in areas with weedy species shall be disposed of at a landfill. Species that occur on the California Invasive Plant Council's Invasive Plant Inventory shall not be used in the Caltrans erosion control seed mix or landscaping plans for the project.

BIO-35: To minimize the introduction of invasive plant species, all vehicles, machinery, and equipment shall be in a clean and soil-free condition before entering the project limits. Construction equipment shall be certified as "weed-free" by Caltrans before entering the construction site.

BIO-36 Selected use of herbicides may be used to target highly invasive species already present within the project area that are difficult to control with mechanical techniques alone. Herbicide application would be limited to spot spraying target species and would only be applied during periods of dry weather when winds are less than 3 miles per hour. Herbicide application would be conducted to improve conditions over baseline by reducing the cover of highly invasive species.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Historical Property Survey Report, Archaeological Survey Report, and Historic Resource Evaluation Report, all dated March 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Cultural Resources
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

The term “cultural resources,” as used in this document, refers to the “built environment” (for example, structures, bridges, railroads, and water conveyance systems), places of traditional or cultural importance, and archaeological sites (both prehistoric and historic), regardless of significance. Under federal and state laws, cultural resources that meet certain criteria of significance are referred to by various terms, including “historic properties,” “historic sites,” “historical resources,” and “tribal cultural resources.”

In accordance with the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement between Caltrans, the Federal Highway Administration, and the California State Historic Preservation Officer, the Area of Potential Effect was established to include all areas of potential impacts and the extent of the horizontal and vertical limits of disturbance from construction, as determined by Caltrans District 5 Design Engineers. The Area of Potential Effect for purposes of Section 106 is the area within which a project may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, should any be present. The Area of Potential Effect encompasses all ground disturbance, staging and storage areas, Caltrans right-of-way within the project limits, and any privately owned lands where a Temporary Construction Easement, property acquisition, or Rights of Entry have been (or will need to be) obtained.

The Area of Direct Impact is defined as any known areas of planned direct impact, such as those shown on engineering plans. The Area of Direct Impact includes all areas subject to project-related ground-disturbing activities. The project’s Area of Direct Impact includes the location of the bridge replacement, sidewalks to be upgraded, rock slope protection installation areas, areas of vegetation removal, the private driveway to be realigned, access roads, and equipment storage areas.

Native American Heritage Commission, Native American Tribes, Groups, and Individuals

In October 2023, Caltrans sent letters to the Native American Heritage Commission, requesting a search of the Sacred Lands Files as well as a list of Native American individuals who are familiar with the project area and may have information pertinent to cultural resource studies. In November 2023,

the Native American Heritage Commission responded to inform Caltrans that the Sacred Lands File search was positive for cultural resources. They also provided a list of Native American tribes and individuals who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the proposed project area. However, due to project changes, a second request was sent to the Native American Heritage Commission in April 2024, and a response was received shortly thereafter with updated Sacred Lands Files positive search results and a contact list.

Native American consultation is required under state law, Assembly Bill 52 (Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1). In April 2024, Caltrans sent letters to the list of individuals provided by the Native American Heritage Commission to initiate consultation under Assembly Bill 52 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The letter included a project description and mapping indicating where the project proposes work and a list of known cultural resources found within the project limits. The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians responded to the outreach to request formal tribal consultation. The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians expressed an interest in assisting with the development of aesthetic treatments and the incorporation of tribal motifs or similar and requested to have a tribal monitor present during the construction phase of the project. Caltrans would continue to consult with interested tribal parties throughout the project.

In April 2024, Caltrans held an introductory partner stakeholder outreach meeting to discuss the project, and tribal representatives who were listed on the Native American Heritage Commission contact list were invited and attended the meeting.

Local Historical Society and Historic Preservation Groups

In February 2023, Caltrans contacted the Elverhøj Museum of History and Art, a museum in Solvang whose mission is to preserve and exhibit the history and Danish culture of the city of Solvang, for any additional information about historic resources in the vicinity of the project. The museum provided further information on various nearby historical resources, such as grist and fulling mills associated with the mission era.

In March 2023, Caltrans coordinated with the County of Santa Barbara Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission to discuss historic resources related to Mission Santa Inés within the proximity of the project. In May 2023, Caltrans also coordinated with the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Trust provided additional information about nearby resources related to Mission Santa Inés.

Architectural History

Architectural history studies conducted for the project found that there are three historic-period built-environment resources, including the Alamo Pintado Creek Bridge, which was constructed in 1954 and widened in 1972. The other

two resources are located on two nearby commercial properties at the following addresses in the city of Solvang: 2021 Mission Drive and 2025 Mission Drive. A Historic Resources Evaluation Report was prepared, documenting the evaluation and findings.

The Alamo Pintado Bridge was evaluated and determined to be ineligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources (Category 5 Bridges), with concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Officer on this finding. In addition, the two commercial properties within the Area of Potential Effect were evaluated and also determined to be ineligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources, and therefore are not historical resources for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Archaeology

Several methods were implemented as part of archaeological studies for this project: a records search at the Central Coast Information Center and the Caltrans Cultural Resources Database; a review of historical mapping, aerials, and assessor's records; Native American consultation; a buried site sensitivity study; an archaeological survey; and an Archaeological Survey Report.

Three resources were identified within the project area. One of these resources is the Alamo Pintado Bridge, which, as previously mentioned, was determined to be ineligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources (Category 5 Bridge). The other two resources include Historic State Route 246 and the Old Mission Road Bridge Abutment. Both of these resources were determined to meet the criteria of being exempt from evaluation (Property Type 1: Minor, ubiquitous, or fragmentary infrastructure elements) in accordance with the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement between the Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans.

The methodology previously described also found that a previous Extended Phase 1 geoarchaeological investigation was conducted within the proposed Area of Potential Effect in 2010. This study found that the Alamo Pintado Creek floodplain contains at least one extensive soil deposit that could contain buried prehistoric archaeological remains. This study also conducted continuous core boring excavations at nine locations within the Area of Potential Effect and Area of Direct Impact for the Alamo Pintado Bridge Replacement Project. These borings had negative findings, and no resources were identified in the nearby creek banks or within the deposits of the continuous cores that were placed within the floodplain. Caltrans determined this report to be sufficient and consistent with the findings of the current survey for this project.

Environmental Consequences

Pursuant to the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement between Caltrans, the Federal Highway Administration, and the California State Historic Preservation Officer, Caltrans has determined that a Finding of No Historic Properties Affected is appropriate for this undertaking because there are no historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect. Therefore, no impacts on historical resources are anticipated as a result of this project.

The Archaeological Survey Report prepared in support of this project determined negative findings, and no previously unidentified resources were located within the Area of Potential Effect.

Caltrans applies standard specifications to all projects in the event of the discovery of unanticipated cultural materials. If previously identified cultural materials are unearthed during project construction, it is Caltrans policy that work be stopped in that area until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find. An additional archaeological survey would be needed if project limits are extended beyond the present survey limits.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measure would help reduce the potential for any impacts on archaeological resources.

CUL-1: A preconstruction Worker Environmental Awareness Program training for construction personnel and construction phase tribal monitoring of project excavation and initial ground disturbance shall occur.

2.1.6 Energy

Caltrans incorporates energy efficiency, conservation, and climate change measures into transportation planning, project development, design, operations, and maintenance of transportation facilities, fleets, buildings, and equipment to minimize the use of fuel supplies and energy sources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The project is not capacity increasing, and, therefore, the operation would not increase energy use.

Energy usage would be required during construction but would be minimized whenever possible through the recycling of materials and the implementation of greenhouse gas reduction strategies. Replacing or repairing the existing highway facilities is needed to prevent the undermining of the roadway and maintain the safety and reliability of the State Route 246 corridor.

Considering this information, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.7 Geology and Soils

Considering the information in the Geologic Hazards Report dated April 2025, the Structure Preliminary Geotechnical Report dated August 2023, and the Paleontological Identification Report dated April 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	**No Impact**
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	**No Impact**
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
iv) Landslides?	**No Impact**
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on-site or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	**No Impact**
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The project site is located approximately 8.7 miles southeast of the central portion of the Los Alamos Fault, which may be potentially active according to archived documentation on the California Geological Survey's Alquist-Priolo Site Investigation Reports Online Database and the U.S. Geological Survey's online Quaternary Fault and Fold Database of the U.S. The most active fault zone, the San Andreas Fault, is approximately 42 miles northeast of the project site.

The California Geological Survey record and the U.S. Geological Survey Quaternary Fault and Fold database indicate the proposed improvements are not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within 1,000 feet of any mapped fault that is Holocene (up to 11,000 years old) or younger. Therefore, the proposed improvements are not considered susceptible to surface fault rupture hazards per Caltrans standards.

The Structure Preliminary Geotechnical Report for the project identified the site as potentially susceptible to liquefaction or related seismic hazards, including total or differential ground settlement, seismic downdrag, and lateral spreading. Upon review of published geologic maps, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's soil survey report and the site-specific report's proposed improvements in the project limits were found to be situated on primarily embankment fill and valley and floodplain deposits. These geologic units are relatively stable but have the potential for liquefaction.

A U.S. Department of Agriculture soil survey report generated for the project site found soils with soil erodibility factors ranging from 0.10 to 0.32, which corresponds to low to moderate erodibility. The moderately erodible soil is found within approximately 200 feet of the Alamo Pintado intersection. The remainder of the project site consists of low-erodible soil. Unified Soil Classification data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's soil survey report also shows the project limits have no high plasticity surficial clay or silt and would not pose substantial risks to life or property, considering the proposed improvements.

There are no known aspects related to septic systems for the proposed improvements; however, based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's soil survey report, the soil for the project area is very limited for the use of septic tanks and other alternative wastewater disposal systems.

Site topography is mostly on gently sloping terrain with steeper slopes within the stream channel. The project objectives do not include significant changes to slopes, and steepened slopes would be supported with walls. Landslide risk would be minimal.

While excavation would be required for the replacement of the bridge, installation of rock slope protection, driveway realignment, and curb ramp improvements, the depth required for these elements likely would not disturb native sediments with high paleontological potential. The bridge piers would be located in Holocene-aged alluvial deposits, which have low paleontological potential. Excavation for other project elements, including the bridge abutments and approaches, would not extend beyond deposits that were previously disturbed during the initial construction of the bridge and the existing ongoing maintenance of the highway.

Environmental Consequences

While the project includes areas considered susceptible to liquefaction, as well as areas rated as moderate risk for soil erosion potential, this project is not expected to further exacerbate these risks and would be designed to account for soil conditions. Subsequent geotechnical drilling would inform the project design to ensure the bridge complies with all building requirements.

The project is unlikely to affect paleontological resources because no sediments with a high paleontological potential ranking would be disturbed by project construction.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are proposed.

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Climate Change Technical Report dated April 2025 and the Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Noise Technical Memorandum dated February 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

The applicable Metropolitan Planning Organization for the proposed project is the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments. The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments' Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy for the project area is "Connected 2050," which was adopted in August 2021. This proposed project is included in the plan and strategy, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent in the region by 2035. Santa Barbara County has prepared several planning documents that contain air quality goals and policies that would help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled. These documents include the Santa Barbara County 2030 Climate Action Plan, adopted August 2024, and the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element, Circulation Element, and Energy Element. For more information on the notable goals and policies from these items relevant to transportation projects, please refer to the Climate Change Report prepared for this project in Volume 2.

Environmental Consequences

Operational Emissions

The purpose of this project is to address the stability issues associated with the existing Alamo Pintado Creek Bridge (Bridge Number 51-0130), maintain improved traffic flow on State Route 246, and upgrade existing outdated Americans with Disabilities Act curb ramps. The project would not increase the vehicle capacity of the roadway. This type of project generally causes minimal or no increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions. Because the project would not increase the number of travel lanes on State Route 246, no increase in vehicle miles traveled would occur. While some greenhouse gas emissions during the construction period would be unavoidable, no increase in operational greenhouse gas emissions is expected.

Construction Emissions

Construction greenhouse gas emissions would result from material processing and transportation, on-site construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions would be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases. While construction greenhouse gas emissions are only produced for a short time,

they have long-term effects in the atmosphere, so they cannot be considered "temporary" in the same way as criteria pollutants that subside after construction is completed.

The use of long-life pavement, improved traffic management plans, and changes in materials can also help offset emissions produced during construction by allowing longer intervals between maintenance and rehabilitation activities.

Construction is expected to last for approximately 305 working days. Construction-generated greenhouse gas emissions were quantified based on project-specific construction data using the Caltrans Construction Emissions Tool, which largely models the emissions from construction equipment. Greenhouse gas emissions would total about 640 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent during the estimated 305-day construction period. Carbon dioxide equivalent is a measure used to compare emissions from various greenhouse gases based on their global warming potential. Calculating the carbon dioxide equivalent includes converting the emissions of other gases to the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide with the same global warming potential and then totaling the emissions together. For this project, the carbon dioxide equivalent calculation considers carbon dioxide and the converted equivalent amounts of methane, nitrous oxide, and hydrofluorocarbons. Note that this estimate is based on assumptions made during the environmental planning phase of the project and is considered a "ballpark" estimate of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions, relying on limited data inputs and default modeling. In addition to construction emissions, it should be noted that traffic delays during construction may result in increased greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles, and that the production and processing of construction materials, such as concrete, would also produce emissions.

All construction contracts include Caltrans Standard Specifications related to air quality. Sections 7-1.02A and 7-1.02C, Emissions Reduction, require contractors to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and would comply with all California Air Resources Board emission reduction regulations. Section 14-9.02, Air Pollution Control, requires contractors to comply with all air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes. Certain common regulations, such as equipment idling restrictions, that reduce construction vehicle emissions also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. An additional standard specification that shall be complied with during project construction and would reduce greenhouse gas emissions during construction is Section 14-10, Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling. Recycling greater quantities of construction waste would help to offset greenhouse gas emissions from construction activities. Furthermore, Standard Specifications Section 12, Temporary Traffic Control, outlines the standards for properly implementing traffic controls during construction. Standard Specifications Section 21-2.02K, Compost, would guide the inclusion of compost or mulch in the landscape plan where it is appropriate.

Landscaping components, such as mulch and compost, improve carbon sequestration rates in soils and reduce organic waste.

Caltrans is firmly committed to implementing measures to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These measures are outlined in the following section.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measures would be implemented in the project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project related to construction activities:

GHG-1: Limit idling to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment not in active operations.

GHG-2: Schedule delivery truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.

GHG-3: Schedule longer-duration lane closures to reduce the number of equipment mobilization efforts (combine with public information efforts for congested areas).

GHG-4: For improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment:

- Maintain equipment in proper tune and working condition.
- Use the right-sized equipment for the job.

GHG-5: Use alternative fuels such as renewable diesel for construction equipment.

GHG-6: Earthwork Balance: Reduce the need for transport of earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.

GHG-7: Supplement existing construction environmental training with information on methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to construction.

GHG-8: Use Caltrans “Accelerated Bridge Construction” method. This method would reduce construction windows and use more precast elements that, in turn, reduce the need for additional falsework, forms, bracing, etc.

GHG-9: Salvage disposed materials on-site, such as rebar from demolished concrete, and process waste to create usable fill.

GHG-10: Maximize the use of recycled materials (tire rubber, for example).

GHG-11: Salvage large trees removed for lumber or similar on-site beneficial uses other than standard woodchipping (for example, use in roadside landscape projects or green infrastructure components).

GHG-12: Recycle existing project features on-site (for example, metal beam guardrail, light standards, sub-base granular material, or native material that meets Caltrans specifications for incorporation into new work).

Reduce construction waste. For example, reuse or recycle construction and demolition waste (reduces consumption of raw materials, which reduces waste and transportation to landfills; saves costs).

GHG-13: Use recycled water or reduce consumption of potable water for construction.

GHG-14: Use cold in-place recycling.

GHG-15: Replace lighting with ultra-reflective sign materials that are illuminated by headlights to reduce energy used by electric lighting.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment dated April 2024, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hazards and Hazardous Materials
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?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	**No Impact**
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The project is along a rural highway with few public services aside from recreational opportunities. There are no schools or airports within 0.25 mile and 2 miles, respectively, of the project. State Route 246 is listed as a primary evacuation route in the City of Solvang General Plan.

According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CalFire's) Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer, the project limits fall within a "Moderate" Fire Hazard Severity Zone under a State Responsibility Area. There are areas in the city of Solvang, in both State Responsibility and Local Responsibility Areas, that are designated as "High" to "Very High" Fire Hazard Severity Zones, but these areas are located outside the project's Area of Potential Impact boundary.

Several sources were used during the records search for this project's hazardous waste review. These sources include the Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (or the Cortese List, pursuant to California Government Code Section 65962.5), the California State Water Resources Control Board's "GeoTracker" database, the Department of Toxic Substances Control's "EnviroStor" database, and Caltrans internal files. There are hazardous waste sites and businesses commonly associated with hazardous waste generation in the project vicinity, but none are likely to have an impact due to project

activities. The following is a discussion regarding typical hazardous materials and wastes that are routinely encountered during highway construction projects.

Hazardous Sites

Record searches identified one closed leaking underground storage tank case within 1,000 feet of the project limits, near the Jim's Service Center in the city of Solvang. However, several remediation efforts since 1989 have been conducted at the site, such as the removal of leaking tank infrastructure, the excavation of affected soil, and the installation of a biosparge treatment system. This case was considered closed by the California State Water Resources Control Board in June 2022, under its "Low Threat Underground Storage Tank Closure Policy: Groundwater Specific Criteria (5)." This policy states that the regulatory agency has determined that, based on an analysis of site-specific conditions, under current and reasonably anticipated near-term future scenarios, the contaminant plume poses a low threat to human health and safety and to the environment, and water quality objectives would be achieved within a reasonable time frame. Because Alamo Pintado Creek is considered a "losing stream" in which the groundwater table is below the level of the creek and surface water infiltrates from the stream channel into the groundwater table, residual impacts are pushed away from the creek. Further, contaminant concentrations have been decreasing as a result of corrective actions and natural attenuation.

Testing of soil and groundwater, intended to monitor the long-term impacts of the leaking underground storage tank, also revealed the presence of dry-cleaning-related solvents and associated breakdown products in soils near the case location. A dry cleaner located 300 feet north of Jim's Service Center was identified as a possible source of the contamination in case files posted to the site's GeoTracker webpage.

The contamination associated with the gas station and dry-cleaning operation is 15 to 20 feet below grade and encroaches into the right-of-way, where Americans with Disabilities Act curb ramp work is planned. However, with the current scope of work, it is not anticipated that project construction would encounter these residual plumes, and no right-of-way acquisitions are expected within the contaminated areas. Therefore, Caltrans has determined that the contamination poses a low risk to the project. During the project's next phase, these conclusions would be reevaluated, and additional sampling would be completed if required.

Aerially Deposited Lead

The historic use of leaded gasoline in automobiles has resulted in soils along roadways throughout California containing elevated concentrations of lead. Soil with lead concentrations exceeding stipulated thresholds must be managed under the July 1, 2016, Aerially Deposited Lead Agreement

between Caltrans and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control. This agreement outlines which soils can be safely reused within the project limits and which soils must be exported and disposed of as hazardous waste.

Previously completed aerially deposited lead studies performed at post mile 30.0 in 2011 indicate that aerially deposited lead is present within the project limits at concentrations that exceed regulatory limits. During the project design phase, the project's hazardous waste specialist would work with the project design team to design a task order to have a consultant perform aerially deposited lead testing at project locations where ground disturbance for this project would be occurring. The purpose of this study is to document site-specific lead concentrations so that disturbed soils can be properly handled, reused, or disposed of. The appropriate Caltrans Standard Specifications for aerially deposited lead soil management would be determined in the project's next phase, based on the results of the studies.

Yellow Thermoplastic or Traffic Stripe

Yellow traffic paint purchased by Caltrans before 1997 contained high concentrations of lead. Application of yellow thermoplastic material containing high concentrations of lead continued until at least 2004 to 2006. The lead concentrations in the older yellow paint and yellow thermoplastic are high enough to make these materials hazardous waste when they are removed.

A review of as-builts indicates that the yellow stripe in the vicinity of the project was removed most recently as part of a different Caltrans project in 2014. The existing yellow stripe within the project limits is therefore assumed to be nonhazardous. The appropriate standard specifications for removal of traffic stripes and pavement markings, if required, would be determined during the project design phase once the removal method is known (for example, separate removal of the nonhazardous paint/stripe and/or cold planing or grinding).

In addition, a Lead Compliance Plan that addresses traffic stripe removal must be developed and implemented by the construction contractor.

Naturally Occurring Asbestos

Naturally occurring asbestos refers to silicate minerals that occur as asbestiform fibers and are found as a natural component of soils or rocks. Disturbance of rocks containing naturally occurring asbestos can release asbestos fibers into the air, which pose a human health risk when inhaled. In Caltrans District 5, naturally occurring asbestos can be found within serpentine and ultramafic rocks of the coast ranges and within fault zones.

A review of geologic mapping and mineral hazard maps indicates that no naturally occurring asbestos is present within the project's Area of Potential Impact. Project activities are therefore unlikely to encounter naturally occurring asbestos.

Lead-Containing Paint and Asbestos-Containing Materials

Bridges and structures may have materials with lead-containing paint and asbestos. Removal and replacement of the Alamo Pintado Bridge would cause disturbances that would require testing for lead-containing paint and asbestos-containing materials.

A site-specific lead-containing paint and asbestos-containing materials survey and assessment would be completed during the project's design phase to determine the proper handling and disposal methods of any materials.

Treated Wood Waste

Caltrans guardrail supports and signposts often consist of wood that has been treated with chemical preservatives to prevent rot or insect attack. Treated wood waste is considered to be a California hazardous waste but is subject to alternative management standards under Health and Safety Code Section 25230 that allow for simplified management and transport of treated wood waste and disposal at nonhazardous waste landfills that meet certain requirements.

Treated wood waste may be generated by the project via guardrail and signpost removal. If treated wood waste would be disposed of as part of the project, then Caltrans Standard Special Provisions Section 14-11.14 should be included in the construction contract for proper management and disposal of treated wood waste.

Electrical Equipment

Removal and disposal of electrical equipment may generate hazardous waste or require special handling. Electrical equipment could include mercury-containing switches, sensors, or timers; ballasts with polychlorinated biphenyl; and other electrical waste components that require special handling. Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-11.15 contains the requirements for management and disposal of electrical equipment, including instructions for packaging and transporting to an appropriately permitted disposal facility.

No electrical equipment is anticipated to be removed as part of the project scope.

Environmental Consequences

The completed project would improve highway reliability and would not interfere with emergency response or emergency evacuation plans. While State Route 246 is listed as the primary evacuation route for the city of Solvang, the traffic management plan prepared for this project would account for emergency evacuations, and, therefore, the evacuation plan would not be impaired. The project would also not change the fire risk in the area.

Routine hazardous waste issues may be encountered during construction, but would be appropriately handled, treated, and disposed of (if required) with the implementation of Caltrans Standard Specifications. During the project design phase, an aerially deposited lead study may be completed, and the hazardous waste specialist would work with the project design team to determine the appropriate Standard Special Provisions to include in the construction contract. With the implementation of appropriate Standard Special Provisions, adverse effects on human health or the environment are not anticipated.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No further avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are proposed.

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information in the Water Quality Assessment Report dated April 2025, the Structures Preliminary Geotechnical Report dated August 2023, and the Location Hydraulic Study dated April 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	**No Impact**
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-site or off-site;	**Less Than Significant Impact**
(ii) substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-site or off-site;	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
(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	**Less Than Significant Impact**
(iv) impede or redirect flood flows?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

The project is in the Santa Ynez Hydrologic Unit, the Los Olivos Hydrologic Area, and undefined Hydrologic Sub-Area 314.40. The project site is located along the Alamo Pintado Creek, which drains southwards through the Santa Ynez Valley to meet the Santa Ynez River. The project is within the Alamo Pintado Creek watershed.

Beneficial uses are critical to water quality management in California. Beneficial uses for surface water and groundwater are divided into the 20 standard categories, with definitions listed in the Water Quality Control Plan for the Central Coast Basin, prepared by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Protection and enhancement of existing and potential beneficial uses are the primary goals of water quality planning. The beneficial uses of Alamo Pintado Creek have been identified as the following: Municipal and Domestic Supply, Agricultural Supply, Industrial Service Supply, Groundwater Recharge, Water Contact Recreation, Non-Contact Water Recreation, Commercial and Sport Fishing, Warm Fresh Water Habitat, and Wildlife Habitat.

Alamo Pintado Creek is not on the 2010 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list of impaired waters, but the Santa Ynez River (the downstream receiving water) is listed for several pollutants such as sedimentation, sodium, temperature, total dissolved solids, and toxicity; however, the source for these pollutants is unknown. The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, which develops and enforces water quality objectives and plans for the area, has not adopted Total Maximum Daily Loads for any pollutants in the Alamo Pintado Creek or the Santa Ynez River.

Per the project's Structure Preliminary Geotechnical Report, recent borings determined that groundwater in the vicinity of the bridge site is at an estimated 7.5 to 16 feet below the ground surface.

In addition, as per the project's Location Hydraulic Study, the proposed work would be within a Federal Emergency Management Agency-regulated floodplain. As per the project's Natural Environment Study, the following stream/riparian habitats are present in the Biological Study Area: Red Willow Riparian Woodland and Forest, Other Waters and Streambed, Willow Riparian Habitat (armored and unarmored), and streambank (armored and unarmored). The proposed project would require a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and a Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. See Section 2.1.4 Biological Resources for details on impacts to jurisdictional areas.

Environmental Consequences

Stormwater

Generally, as the Disturbed Soil Area increases, the potential for temporary water quality impacts also increases. Currently, the total proposed Disturbed Soil Area across the project area is approximately 0.67 acre (of the total project area of 4.79 acres), which would be used for the Construction General Permit compliance; this permit regulates stormwater discharges from construction sites that result in a Disturbed Soil Area of 1 acre or greater and/or are smaller sites that are part of a larger common plan of development. This approximate area accounts for all disturbed soil associated with the removal, modification, and replacement of structures and associated contractor staging and stockpile locations. The temporary effects that disturbing 0.67 acre of soil would have on the receiving waters can be minimized by implementing temporary Best Management Practices proposed in the Water Quality Assessment Report and listed in the Avoidance and Minimization Measures section below. As mentioned above, Alamo Pintado Creek is not identified as an impaired water body on the Section 303(d) list.

A preliminary project risk level assessment has determined this project to be a risk level two out of three. The risk level was determined using the combined project sediment risk and receiving water risk. The project sediment risk was calculated to be medium (52.65 tons/acre). The receiving water risk is classified as low due to Alamo Pintado Creek not having beneficial uses for Cold Fresh Water Habitat, Fish Spawning, and/or Fish Migration.

The project would produce approximately 4,617 square feet of net impervious surface. Since it is less than 10,000 square feet, no permanent Best Management Practices are required to be implemented. However, increases in impervious surface would increase the amount of stormwater runoff, which,

in turn, has the potential to affect receiving water quality. The nature of these impacts depends on the uses and flow rate or volume of the receiving water, rainfall characteristics, and highway characteristics. Heavy metals associated with vehicle tire and brake wear, oil and grease, and exhaust emissions are the primary pollutants associated with transportation corridors. There are no existing treatment Best Management Practices along State Route 246 within the project limits to treat roadway runoff; therefore, the water quality of the receiving water bodies would still be affected by highway runoff as a result of this project. Typically, highway projects increase impervious areas, potentially increasing the volume and velocity of stormwater flow to downstream receiving water bodies. However, in the presence of effective combinations of temporary and permanent erosion and sediment controls, these impacts are anticipated to be minimal.

Water Resources

Temporary impacts to aquatic resources and jurisdictional features would occur due to temporary access, staging areas, replacement of concrete slope paving with new rock slope protection, and temporary stream diversion if implemented in this project. Permanent impacts to aquatic resources would occur from portions of the new abutment and retaining wall along the new multiuse path and the placement of new rock slope protection that would extend farther downstream from the bridge than existing hardscaping.

Further information on temporary and permanent impacts on water resources, as well as the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures proposed for these impacts, can be found in Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources.

Groundwater

Proposed earthwork, excavation, and pile driving operations are not anticipated to encounter groundwater during construction activities. Hence, no permanent or temporary groundwater impacts are anticipated with the current project scope.

Floodplains

As previously mentioned, the proposed work would be within a Federal Emergency Management Agency-regulated floodplain. However, the project would not raise the base flood elevation or alter the 100-year floodplain or any other floodplains and therefore would not have any significant floodplain encroachment.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

See Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources, for more information on the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures proposed for jurisdictional areas.

During construction, effective combinations of temporary and permanent erosion and sediment controls would be used. Stormwater management for the site would be coordinated through the contractor with Caltrans construction personnel to effectively manage erosion from the Disturbed Soil Areas by implementing a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. Selected Best Management Practices that would be included but not limited to the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan for the project are defined as follows:

Temporary Soil Stabilization

HYDRO-1: Minimize active disturbed soil areas during the rainy season by using scheduling techniques.

HYDRO-2: Preserve existing vegetation to the maximum extent feasible.

HYDRO-3: Implement temporary protective cover/erosion control on all non-active disturbed soil areas and soil stockpiles.

HYDRO-4: Control erosive forces of stormwater runoff with effective storm flow management, such as temporary concentrated flow conveyance devices, earthen dikes, drainage swales, lined ditches, outlet protection/velocity dissipation devices, and slope drains. These practices would be determined as feasible during the project's next phase.

Temporary Sediment Controls

HYDRO-5: Implement linear sediment controls such as fiber rolls, check dams, or gravel bag berms on all active and non-active disturbed soil areas during the rainy season.

HYDRO-6: To further help prevent sediment discharge, stabilize construction site entrances, implement temporary drainage inlet protection, and implement street sweeping and vacuuming.

HYDRO-7: Implement appropriate wind erosion controls year-round.

Non-Stormwater Management

The appropriate non-stormwater Best Management Practices would be implemented year-round as follows:

HYDRO-8: Water conservation practices shall be implemented on all construction sites and wherever water is used.

HYDRO-9: Paving and grinding procedures shall be implemented where paving, surfacing, resurfacing, grinding, or saw cutting may pollute stormwater runoff or discharge to the storm drain system or watercourses.

HYDRO-10: Follow appropriate procedures and practices designed for construction contractors to recognize illicit connections or illegally dumped or

discharged materials on a construction site and report incidents to the resident engineer.

HYDRO-11: Stockpiling materials, storing equipment and liquid waste containers, washing vehicles or equipment, and fueling and maintaining vehicles and equipment must be performed at least 100 feet from concentrated flows of stormwater, drainage courses, and inlets if within the floodplain. The activities must be performed at least 50 feet from the aforementioned areas if outside of the floodplain.

HYDRO-12: Pile driving operations would be considered part of the construction activities.

HYDRO-13: Concrete curing would be used in the construction of structures such as bridges and abutments. Concrete curing includes the use of both chemical and water methods. Proper procedures would minimize the pollution of runoff during concrete curing.

HYDRO-14: Since the project involves structure demolition/removal over the Alamo Pintado Creek, proper procedures would be implemented to minimize pollution during these activities.

HYDRO-15: The following construction site Best Management Practices shall be bid items for this project to ensure they are implemented during construction:

- Job Site Management
- Prepare Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program
- Stormwater Sampling and Analysis Day
- Stormwater Annual Report
- Move In/Move Out (Temporary Erosion Control)
- Temporary Hydraulic Mulch (Bonded Fiber Matrix)
- Temporary Check Dam
- Temporary Drainage Inlet Protection
- Temporary Fiber Roll
- Temporary Large Sediment Barrier
- Temporary Construction Entrance
- Street Sweeping

- Temporary Concrete Washout
- Temporary Fence (Environmentally Sensitive Area type fence)

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

The project would not change the location, function, or capacity of State Route 246 and would not physically divide an established community. The project would not conflict with the City of Solvang General Plan, the Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments' Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, or any other policy or regulation meant to avoid or mitigate an environmental effect.

Considering this information, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

The project would not involve the removal or extraction of mineral resources, and, therefore, there is no potential for the loss of valuable mineral resources.

Considering this information, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Noise Technical Memorandum dated February 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 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**

Affected Environment

The project location is mainly surrounded by commercial and residential land uses. The nearest noise-sensitive receptor is a residence that is located approximately 122 feet away from the project vicinity.

Environmental Consequences

Since no capacity would be added to the highway and because the highway would not be realigned, this project would be considered a Type 3 project. Local noise levels would be the same after project completion as they were before. Long-term abatement measures would not be recommended for this project.

Local noise levels in the vicinity of construction would inevitably experience a short-term increase due to construction activities. The amount of construction noise would vary with the particular activities and associated models and types of equipment used by the contractor. Caltrans policy states that normal construction equipment should not emit noise levels greater than 86 A-weighted decibels at 50 feet from the source during the period of 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Due to daytime traffic conditions, it is possible that some nighttime work would be required for this project. Nighttime work can adversely impact local residents' normal sleep activities. Exceeding the interior threshold for school facilities can negatively impact learning outcomes. With the implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures described below, potential impacts at any given sensitive receptor location are not expected to last very long.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Noise Abatement Measures

The following avoidance and minimization measures would further reduce the potential for impacts on local noise levels.

NOISE-1: The public within 500 feet of construction activities shall be notified at least two weeks before the start of construction noise and upcoming construction activities that are likely to produce an adverse noise environment. The Caltrans District 5 Public Information Office shall publish notice of the proposed dates and duration of proposed construction activities and potential community impacts in local news media after receiving notice from the resident engineer.

NOISE-2: The contractor shall develop a Noise Control Plan and submit it to district noise staff for review. District noise staff would be responsible for obtaining a non-standard special provision addressing the requirements of the Noise Control Plan.

NOISE-3: The contractor must provide a list of affected residents to a Caltrans Public Information Officer and resident engineer.

NOISE-4: The state shall consider the following measures to minimize any negative noise impact on residents' sleep:

- The contractor shall purchase noise-canceling headphones before the start of construction, and they should be provided as the first line of preventative measures for affected residents.
- For temporary accommodation, the state would need to approve the number of nights and verify that the resident is on the list of those affected contained in the Noise Control Plan.
- Affected residents would be reimbursed by the contractor at the state rate. A change order would have to be developed to reimburse the contractor.

NOISE-5: Whenever possible, construction work shall be done during the day.

NOISE-6: When nighttime construction is necessary, the construction activities that generate the greatest amount of noise shall be done as early in the evening as possible.

NOISE-7: The contractor shall shield loud pieces of stationary construction equipment with sound barriers if complaints are received from the public.

NOISE-8: The contractor shall locate portable generators, air compressors, etc., away from sensitive noise receptors as feasible.

NOISE-9: The contractor shall limit grouping major pieces of equipment operating in one area to the greatest extent feasible.

NOISE-10: The contractor shall use newer equipment that is quieter and ensure that all equipment items have the manufacturers' recommended noise abatement measures, such as mufflers, engine covers, and engine vibration isolators, intact and operational. Internal combustion engines used for any purpose on or related to the job shall be equipped with a muffler or baffle of a type recommended by the manufacturer.

NOISE-11: The contractor shall consult District 5 noise staff to determine appropriate steps to alleviate noise-related concerns if noise complaints are received from the public during the construction process.

The following Caltrans Standard Specification for Noise Control would also be implemented to reduce impacts related to nighttime work.

NOISE-12: If nighttime construction is necessary, the noisiest construction activities should be done as early in the evening as possible. Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-8.02 requires the contractor to control and monitor noise resulting from work activities and not to exceed 86 A-weighted decibels maximum sound level at 50 feet from the job site from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

2.1.14 Population and Housing

The project would not change the capacity or function of State Route 246 and would, therefore, not influence population growth. Considering this information, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Population and Housing
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	**No Impact**

2.1.15 Public Services

Considering that the project would not trigger the need for new or modified public services, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.16 Recreation

The purpose of this project is to address the stability issues associated with the existing Alamo Pintado Creek Bridge (Bridge Number 51-0130), maintain improved traffic flow on State Route 246, and upgrade existing outdated Americans with Disabilities Act curb ramps. The project would not change the capacity or function of the highway within the project limits. The project would, therefore, not influence the use of local recreational facilities.

Considering this information, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.17 Transportation

The purpose of this project is to address the stability issues associated with the existing Alamo Pintado Creek Bridge (Bridge Number 51-0130), maintain improved traffic flow on State Route 246, and upgrade existing outdated Americans with Disabilities Act curb ramps. Therefore, the project would not change the function of the highway. Because the project would not increase the capacity of the highway, it would not influence vehicle miles traveled. The project, therefore, would not conflict with relevant transportation programs, plans, ordinances, or policies.

A Traffic Management Plan would be prepared during the project's next phase to address any potential traffic delays on State Route 246 that may occur during project construction due to temporary closures on either side of the highway. This would ensure that access via State Route 246 would be maintained at all times throughout the construction period and would account for emergency access and limit delays to the maximum extent feasible.

Considering this information, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Transportation
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	**No Impact**
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	**No Impact**

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

2.1.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Archaeological Survey Report dated March 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k), or	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

In October 2023, Caltrans sent letters to the Native American Heritage Commission, requesting a search of the Sacred Lands Files as well as a list of Native American individuals who are familiar with the project area and may have information pertinent to cultural resource studies. In November 2023, the Native American Heritage Commission responded to inform Caltrans that the Sacred Lands File search was positive for cultural resources. They also provided a list of Native American tribes and individuals who may have

knowledge of cultural resources in the proposed project area. However, due to changes in the project's scope, a second request was sent to the Native American Heritage Commission in April 2024, and a response was received shortly thereafter with updated Sacred Lands Files positive search results and a contact list.

Native American consultation is required under state law, Assembly Bill 52 (Public Resources Code Section 21080.3.1). In April 2024, Caltrans sent letters to the list of individuals provided by the Native American Heritage Commission to initiate consultation under Assembly Bill 52 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The letters included a project description and mapping indicating where the project proposes work and a list of known cultural resources found within the project limits.

In April 2024, an introductory partner stakeholder outreach meeting was held by Caltrans to discuss the project, and tribal representatives who were listed on the Native American Heritage Commission contact list were invited and attended the meeting.

Environmental Consequences

Pursuant to the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement between Caltrans, the Federal Highway Administration, and the California State Historic Preservation Officer, Caltrans has determined that a Finding of No Historic Properties Affected is appropriate for this undertaking because there are no historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect. The project is also not anticipated to impact tribal cultural resources, given this finding. Further, the implementation of Caltrans Standard Specifications for cultural resources would help to further reduce the potential for any impacts on tribal cultural resources. Please refer to Section 2.1.5, Cultural Resources, for more information on this proposed measure.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No further avoidance and minimization measures are proposed at this time.

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Based on preliminary evaluation of utilities and service systems within the project area, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	**No Impact**
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	**No Impact**
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

Based on the preliminary permit search information and field review observation, there are existing utility joint poles with electric and telecom overhead lines and underground pipes within the project limits. Gas and sewer lines run along the northeast side of State Route 246. Additionally, a 3-inch gas line is located on the bridge.

Environmental Consequences

The existing utilities within the work area would require Positive Location Determination potholing by the Caltrans Utility Engineering Workgroup during the project's subsequent design phase. Once completed, workarounds and utility encroachment exceptions would be considered before relocation of any utility is proposed. If a conflict is discovered, Caltrans Environmental would review the proposed relocation, and the project development team would

work with the utility owner to ensure the utility is moved before the start of project construction.

Neither project construction nor operation would significantly increase demand for water or wastewater supply or demand. The project also would not alter the functions or demand for electrical, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities in the region.

The project is not anticipated to generate excessive amounts of solid waste that would overwhelm the capacities of existing waste management facilities. Any recyclable waste materials generated from project construction would be recycled. Waste materials generated by project construction would be collected and disposed of properly to meet all state and federal requirements.

Impacts on utilities and service systems would be less than significant.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are proposed.

2.1.20 Wildfire

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection provides a fire hazard severity zone mapping tool that helps assess the project location's vulnerability to future wildfire events. The fire hazard severity zones are developed using a science-based and field-tested model that assigns a hazard score based on the factors that influence fire likelihood and fire behavior. Many factors are considered, such as vegetation, topography, climate, crown fire potential, ember production and movement, and the fire history of the area. Three levels of hazards are used in this mapping tool: moderate, high, and very high. These areas can fall under three different responsibility areas: Local Responsibility, State Responsibility, and Federal Responsibility. Most of the project area is located within a State Responsibility Area, with some nearby areas left uncategorized. The project limits fall within a "Moderate" Fire Hazard Severity Zone. There are areas in the city of Solvang, in both State Responsibility and Local Responsibility Areas, that are designated as "High" to "Very High" Fire Hazard Severity Zones, but these areas are located outside the project's Area of Potential Impact boundary.

Wildfires directly affect highways by burning infrastructure such as wooden posts for signs and guardrails. Wildfires indirectly affect highways because they can contribute to landslides and flooding exposure by burning off soil-stabilizing vegetation and reducing the capacity of soils to absorb rainfall. Wildfire smoke can also affect visibility and the health of the public and Caltrans staff.

The project is not anticipated to increase wildfire risk. Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 7-1.02M(2) for Fire Protection would be implemented

during project construction. To avoid impeding fire evacuation or response traffic, any necessary traffic control measures would be implemented. Emergency responders would be notified of any traffic disruptions, delays, or detours in advance. The completed project should improve highway reliability and not interfere with emergency response or emergency evacuation plans. The project would not place new structures or other facilities that would be vulnerable to wildfires within the project limits. The project is therefore not anticipated to exacerbate the impacts of wildfires intensified by climate change.

Considering this information, along with the information in the Climate Change Technical Report dated April 2025, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

Question—Would the project:	**CEQA Significance Determinations for Wildfire**
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	**No Impact**
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	**No Impact**
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	**No Impact**
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	**No Impact**

2.1.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Mandatory Findings of Significance
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	**Less Than Significant Impact With Mitigation Incorporated**
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.)	**Less Than Significant Impact**
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	**Less Than Significant Impact**

Affected Environment

Project work would occur from post mile 30.23 to post mile 30.49 along State Route 246 in Santa Barbara County. Throughout the project limits, State Route 246 is a two-lane highway and is not classified as an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway. State Route 246 traverses several communities, including Solvang, Buellton, and the Santa Ynez Valley. Throughout the project limits, the overall topography is generally flat to gently rolling with scattered oak trees and riparian corridors, including the Alamo Pintado Creek, with land uses, including low-density residential, light service commercial, recreational, open space, and agricultural.

Environmental Consequences

Natural and Historic Resources

Biological Resources

The project is anticipated to have temporary and permanent impacts on the Red Willow Riparian Woodland and Forest Natural Community. The project is also anticipated to have degradation, temporary, and permanent impacts on jurisdictional and riparian areas. The Section 7 effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, the California red-legged frog. Further, the Section 7 effects determination is that the project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, southwestern pond turtles. These impacts are also summarized in Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources, under Tables 2.2 and 2.3, respectively. However, with the implementation of the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures proposed under Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources, these impacts are anticipated to be lessened to a level that would be considered less than significant. Additionally, the general minimization recommendations outlined below in this section would further help to reduce the cumulative impact of the resources within the general project location.

Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Pursuant to the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement between Caltrans, the Federal Highway Administration, and the California State Historic Preservation Officer, Caltrans has determined that a Finding of No Historic Properties Affected is appropriate for this undertaking because there are no historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect. The project is also unlikely to affect paleontological resources because no sediments with a high paleontological potential ranking would be disturbed by project construction. Therefore, the project would not eliminate important examples of the major periods of California's history or prehistory. See Sections 2.1.5, Cultural Resources, 2.1.18, Tribal Cultural Resources, and 2.1.7, Geology and Soils, for more information on these resources.

Cumulative Impacts

A Cumulative Impact Report has been completed for the project. The Cumulative Impact Report follows the 2005 *Caltrans Cumulative Impact Analysis and Growth Related, Indirect Impact Guidance*. The guidance outlines an eight-step process for evaluating cumulative impacts.

Step one is to identify resources that must be evaluated for cumulative impacts. The project was evaluated for potential cumulative impacts on the following biological resources: California red-legged frog, southwestern pond turtle, and jurisdictional aquatic features.

Step two is to identify appropriate Resource Study Areas for each of the resources identified in the Cumulative Impact Report. A Resource Study Area is the geographic area within which impacts on a resource are analyzed. The

boundaries of a Resource Study Area are often broader than the boundaries used for project-specific analysis, such as a Biological Study Area. To completely capture all project activities and their impacts on the resources identified above, two different Resource Study Areas were defined:

- The Resource Study Area for the California red-legged frog and southwestern pond turtle was defined as a 2-mile buffer of the project's Area of Potential Impact to encompass the known maximum dispersal range of these species.

- The Resource Study Area for jurisdictional other waters and riparian habitat was defined using the nearby watershed Hydrologic Unit Code 12, which is the Alamo Pintado Creek Watershed.

Step 3 is an evaluation of the resource's health and the historical context of the resource, as explained below.

California Red-Legged Frog

The Resource Study Area for this project is approximately 9,700 acres. The Resource Study Area falls within the Northern Transverse Ranges and Tehachapi Mountains Recovery Unit for the California red-legged frog, which includes the Santa Maria-Santa Ynez River Core Area identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This core area is currently occupied by California red-legged frogs and is believed to harbor a source population and provide necessary connectivity between known populations. Threats to California red-legged frogs include habitat loss, fragmentation, predation, and climate change. Water diversions, groundwater pumping, and agricultural diversions have likely reduced available aquatic and upland California red-legged frog habitat within the watersheds of this project.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

Threats to southwestern pond turtles are similar to those of California red-legged frogs, including habitat loss, fragmentation from urbanization and land conversion, predation, invasive species, water diversions, dams, and climate change (for example, prolonged periods of drought).

Jurisdictional Aquatic Features

Historically, agricultural activity and more recently residential development have each facilitated a decline in the health of riparian habitats along Alamo Pintado Creek in the lower watershed downstream of Figueroa Mountain Road. The expansion of these activities has mostly slowed or stabilized during recent years. Santa Barbara County Flood Control also conducts periodic maintenance in this section of Alamo Pintado Creek, which is also a source of ongoing disturbance to riparian habitats within the Resource Study Area. Dependence on groundwater has likely affected the frequency and quantity of surface water conditions in Alamo Pintado Creek. In addition,

oversight and regulations have been implemented with the advent of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board and new water restrictions resulting from the recent drought. The trend for shaded habitat along Alamo Pintado Creek is considered to be stable or slightly improving. However, within the watershed, invasive species, such as the tree of heaven, privet, poison hemlock, and giant reed, continue to degrade the habitat value for wildlife.

Step 4 is to identify the direct and indirect impacts of the project on those resources identified in Step 1. See Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources, for a detailed description of project-level impacts.

Step 5 requires identifying current and reasonably foreseeable actions that could affect each of the three biological resources included in the analysis. A total of 12 past, present, or future projects with available environmental documents were identified, which were found to have had, or would have, permanent and/or temporary impacts on one of the identified resources in their respective Resource Study Areas. Of these projects identified, five may affect the California red-legged frog, four may affect the southwestern pond turtle, and six may affect jurisdictional aquatic features. Furthermore, one reasonably foreseeable project was identified that did not have a readily available environmental or scoping document but had a high probability of impacting the identified resources. Several projects from the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy and Regional Transportation Plans for Santa Barbara County also have the potential to affect these resources. However, it is anticipated that avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures would be implemented to the extent determined necessary and feasible.

Step 6 is the process of assessing potential cumulative impacts. See Table 2.4 for the determination of each resource.

Table 2.4 Summary of Overall Cumulative Impacts

Resource	Would the Proposed Project Contribute to an Existing Adverse Cumulative Impact?	Would the Proposed Project's Contribution Be Considerable?	Considerations for Identifying Adverse Cumulative Impacts and the Proposed Project's Contribution
California Red-Legged Frog	Yes	No	Estimates of permanent and temporary impacts on California red-legged frogs and their respective habitat are presented in Table 2.3 of this document. 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 presence has been inferred, and there would be a low but possible potential for take of the species due to project activities. Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures related to the California red-legged frog are presented in Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources, of the draft environmental document. With the implementation of these proposed measures, the project would not considerably contribute to impacts on California red-legged frogs within their Resource Study Area.

Resource	Would the Proposed Project Contribute to an Existing Adverse Cumulative Impact?	Would the Proposed Project's Contribution Be Considerable?	Considerations for Identifying Adverse Cumulative Impacts and the Proposed Project's Contribution
Southwestern Pond Turtle	Yes	No	Estimates of permanent and temporary impacts on southwestern pond turtles and their respective habitat are presented in Table 2.3 of this document. The Federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 effects determination is that this project may affect, and is likely to adversely affect, southwestern pond turtles. The basis for this determination is that southwestern pond turtle presence is inferred, and there would be a low but possible potential for take of the species because of project activities. Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures related to the southwestern pond turtle are presented in Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources, of the draft environmental document. With the implementation of these proposed measures, the project would not considerably contribute to impacts on southwestern pond turtles within their Resource Study Area.
Jurisdictional Waters and Riparian Habitat	Yes	No	Estimates of permanent, temporary, and degradation impacts on jurisdictional waters and riparian habitat as a result of the project are presented in Table 2.2 of this document. Information on the causes of temporary, permanent, and degradation impacts on jurisdictional features can be found in Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources, of the draft environmental document. Avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures related to this resource can also be found in this section. With the implementation of these measures, the project's impact on jurisdictional features would be considered less than significant, and the project would not considerably contribute to cumulative impacts within the Resource Study Area.

Step 7 is to document the results of the cumulative impact analysis process performed in steps one through seven. The Cumulative Impact Report documents and summarizes these seven steps.

In accordance with *Caltrans Cumulative Impact Analysis and Growth Related, Indirect Impact Guidance*, the final step—step 8—in the cumulative impact analysis is to recommend actions to sustain these resources. These are

actions that the identified agencies could take to influence the sustainability of the resource. These measures are presented in the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures section below.

Human Environment

Aesthetics

The project includes avoidance and minimization measures to reduce its impact on the aesthetic environment. Although visual changes would occur, the same type of elements proposed with this project are seen elsewhere along State Route 246 and are not, by themselves, inconsistent with the rural roadway character of the region. As a result, the proposed widening and new bridge rails would be subordinate to the overall experience of traveling along State Route 246. With the implementation of the measures proposed in Section 2.1.1, Aesthetics, along with the restoration and replanting efforts detailed in Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources, the project would be consistent with the aesthetic and visual resource protection goals along State Route 246. Therefore, these visual changes would cause only a minor reduction in visual quality in the immediate project area.

Air Quality

The project would cause a temporary increase in air emissions and fugitive dust during the construction period. Ultimately, however, there would be no difference in long-term air emissions with or without the project. Impacts due to fugitive dust generation from heavy equipment use and earthwork during construction would be considered less than significant with the implementation of standard construction dust and emission minimization practices and procedures.

Geology and Soils

The project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects due to geologic or soil conditions. A less than significant overall impact would occur. No avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are necessary. See Section 2.1.7 for more information and for the discussion of paleontological resources.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This type of project is not expected to alter operational greenhouse gas emissions. Because the project would not increase the number of travel lanes on State Route 246, no increase in vehicle miles traveled would occur as a result of project implementation. However, some greenhouse gas emissions would be generated during the construction period. With the implementation of Caltrans Standard Specifications and avoidance and minimization measures, a less than significant impact would result. See Section 2.1.8 for more information.

Hazardous Waste

The project would include Caltrans standard measures for hazardous waste testing and monitoring to protect the public from hazards that could arise from project construction activities. The project would not generate hazards or expose the public to hazards that could result in substantial adverse effects. Therefore, the project would not result in considerable impacts on the public due to hazardous waste.

Noise

The project would inevitably generate noise during the construction process. The increase in noise levels because of construction activities would not be substantial because construction activities would be temporary and intermittent. Avoidance and minimization measures to reduce disturbance due to construction noise are listed in Section 2.1.13, Noise. In addition, the project includes Caltrans Standard Specifications for noise control to minimize potential noise-related disturbances caused by construction activities.

Water Quality

The total proposed Disturbed Soil Area across the project area is approximately 0.67 acre (of the total project area of 4.79 acres), which would be used for the Construction General Permit compliance; this permit regulates stormwater discharges from construction sites that result in a Disturbed Soil Area of 1 acre or greater and/or are smaller sites that are part of a larger common plan of development. The temporary effects that disturbing 0.67 acre of soil would have on the receiving waters can be minimized by implementing temporary Best Management Practices proposed in the Water Quality Assessment Report and listed in the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures section of this document. A preliminary project risk level assessment has determined this project to be a risk level two out of three in regard to stormwater.

Temporary impacts to aquatic resources and jurisdictional features would occur due to temporary access, staging areas, replacement of concrete slope paving with new rock slope protection, and temporary stream diversion if implemented in this project. Permanent impacts to aquatic resources would occur from portions of the new abutment and retaining wall along the new multiuse path and the placement of new rock slope protection that would extend farther downstream from the bridge than existing hardscaping.

The project's earthwork, excavation, and pile-driving operations are not anticipated to encounter groundwater during construction activities. Hence, no temporary or permanent groundwater impacts are anticipated at the time of this document.

The project would produce 4,617 square feet of net impervious surface. Increases in impervious surface would increase the amount of stormwater

runoff, which, in turn, could affect receiving water quality. The nature of these impacts depends on the uses and flow rate or volume of the receiving water, rainfall characteristics, and highway characteristics. Heavy metals associated with vehicle tire and brake wear, oil and grease, and exhaust emissions are the primary pollutants associated with transportation corridors. There are no existing treatment Best Management Practices along State Route 246 within the project limits to treat roadway runoff; therefore, the water quality of the receiving water bodies would still be affected by highway runoff due to this project. Typically, highway projects increase impervious areas and, therefore, potentially increase the volume and velocity of stormwater flow to downstream receiving water bodies. However, in the presence of effective combinations of temporary and permanent erosion and sediment controls, these impacts are anticipated to be minimal.

The project would occur within Federal Emergency Management Agency-regulated floodplains. However, no significant floodplain encroachments have been identified with the project. The project would not significantly impact the 100-year floodplains.

See Section 2.1.4 and Section 2.1.10 for more information and for a list of avoidance and minimization measures related to water quality and aquatic resources.

Transportation

The project would not change the function of the highway. Because the project would not increase the capacity of the highway, it would not influence vehicle miles traveled. There would be traffic delays during construction due to temporary closures, ramp closures, and/or one-way traffic control. However, a Traffic Management Plan would be prepared during the project's next phase to address any potential traffic delays on State Route 246 that may occur during project construction due to temporary closures on either side of the highway. This would ensure that access via State Route 246 would be maintained at all times throughout the construction period and would account for emergency access and limit delays to the maximum extent feasible.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following general minimization recommendations were made to reduce the overall decline in the health of the identified resources:

California Red-Legged Frog

CUMULATIVE-1: Agencies with regulatory authority over California red-legged frogs include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Efforts should continue to be made by these agencies to support projects that improve habitat acreage and function for these species through enhancement and creation. Providing suitable

contiguous habitat would make this resource more resilient and resistant to decline.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

CUMULATIVE-2: Agencies with regulatory authority over southwestern pond turtles include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Efforts should continue to be made by these agencies to support projects that improve habitat acreage and function for these species through enhancement and creation. Providing suitable contiguous habitat would make this resource more resilient and resistant to decline.

Jurisdictional Waters and Riparian Habitat

CUMULATIVE-3: Agencies with regulatory authority over jurisdictional areas include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Agencies should continue to implement existing policies requiring restoration of temporary impacts and mitigation to achieve no net loss of ecological function and value to offset permanent impacts. Agencies should also promote policies that encourage development setbacks from stream corridors and assist in programs that preserve and restore existing stream and riparian habitats.

Chapter 3 Coordination

Agency consultation for this project has been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including project development team meetings, phone calls, emails, etc. Public participation was sought before and through the release of the Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and would continue throughout the circulation, review, and release of the final environmental document. This chapter summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to date to identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

Biological Resources Coordination

- On November 6, 2024, Caltrans biologists, aquatic resource specialists, and hydraulic engineers met with Rick Macala, a hydraulic engineer with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, on-site to discuss fish passage.

- On December 18, 2024, Caltrans Project Biologist Annmarie Blackburn obtained an unofficial species list from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through its Information for Planning and Consultation website and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Tribal Consultation

- In October 2023, Caltrans sent letters to the Native American Heritage Commission, requesting a Sacred Lands File search and a list of Native American individuals familiar with the project area and may have information pertinent to cultural resource studies. In November 2023, the Native American Heritage Commission responded to inform Caltrans that the Sacred Lands File search was positive for cultural resources. They also provided a list of Native American tribes and individuals who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the proposed project area.

- In April 2024, a second request was sent to the Native American Heritage Commission due to project changes, and a response was received shortly thereafter with an updated Sacred Lands File positive search result and contact list.

- In April 2024, Caltrans sent letters to the list of individuals provided by the Native American Heritage Commission to initiate consultation under Assembly Bill 52 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The letters included a project description and mapping indicating where the project proposes work and a list of known cultural resources found within the project limits.

- In April 2024, an introductory partner stakeholder outreach meeting was held by Caltrans to discuss the project, and tribal representatives who were listed on the Native American Heritage Commission contact list were invited and attended the meeting.

Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR

California Department of Transportation

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September 2024

TITLE VI/NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the assurances set forth in the Caltrans' Title VI Program Plan, to ensure that no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Related non-discrimination authorities, remedies, and state law further those protections, including sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age, low income, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Caltrans is committed to complying with 23 C.F.R. Part 200, 49 C.F.R. Part 21, 49 C.F.R. Part 303, and the Federal Transit Administration Circular 4702.1B. Caltrans will make every effort to ensure nondiscrimination in all of its services, programs, and activities, whether they are federally funded or not, and that services and benefits are fairly distributed to all people, regardless of race, color, or national origin (including LEP). In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a non-discriminatory manner.

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

TONY TAVARES
Director

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

Appendix B Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Summary

Visual Resources

Implementation of the following minimization measures would ensure that the project's visual effects are consistent with local scenic values along State Route 246.

VIS-1: Following construction, regrade and recontour any new construction access roads, staging and storage areas, and other temporary uses as necessary to match the surrounding natural topography along State Route 246; avoid unnatural-appearing remnant landforms where possible.

VIS-2: Preserve existing vegetation to the maximum extent feasible.

VIS-3: Bridge rails shall be an open style to preserve views and be approved by Caltrans District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-4: Bridge rail shall be aesthetically treated to visually recede or appear consistent with the architectural character and community setting. The aesthetic treatment shall be developed and approved by Caltrans District 5 Structure Design in conjunction with District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-5: Bicycle and pedestrian railing shall be selected or treated to reduce glare and minimize contrast and noticeability. Style and color should be consistent with local character and aesthetic goals, as well as be compatible with the vehicular railing. Railing type and treatment would be developed and approved by District 5 Structure Design in conjunction with District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-6: Depending on the final design, some metal elements, such as bridge railing, pedestrian railing, guardrail, posts, transitions, and end treatments attached to the proposed bridge, may require staining or darkening. The color or treatment, if any, shall be determined and approved by District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-7: The retaining wall shall be textured or treated to reduce potential graffiti and the urbanizing effect. Proposed tie-back wall aesthetics should blend with the area's architectural character in style and color. Wall aesthetics shall be selected by District 5 Landscape Architecture staff to complement community architecture guidelines in harmony with the natural environment.

VIS-8: Rock slope protection shall be backfilled with soil and revegetated. If this is not feasible, rock slope protection shall be stained to reduce glare and be more visually compatible with the landscape.

VIS-9: If feasible, all existing overhead utilities next to the new bridge shall be placed in the bridge structure. If it is not technically possible to locate conduit within the structure, surface-mounted conduits shall be painted to match the bridge structure as determined by District 5 Landscape Architecture.

VIS-10: Replacement planting shall include aesthetic considerations and inherent biological goals. Revegetation shall include native trees and plants as determined by a Caltrans District 5 biologist and landscape architect. Revegetation shall occur to the maximum extent horticulturally feasible. Planting should be maintained until established.

Air Quality

The following measure would avoid or minimize impacts on air quality:

AIR-1: To minimize dust emissions from the project, Section 14-9.02 (Air Pollution Control) of the 2023 Standard Specifications states that the contractor is responsible for complying with all local air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes that apply to work performed under the contract, including those provided in Government Code Section 11017 (Public Contract Code Section 10231). Additionally, the project-level Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would address water pollution control measures that cross-correlate with standard dust emission minimization measures such as covering soil stockpiles, watering haul roads, watering excavation and grading areas, and so on. By incorporating appropriate engineering design and stormwater Best Management Practices during construction, minimal short-term air quality impacts are anticipated.

Biological Resources

The measures listed below would reduce potential impacts on biological resources. The measures have been organized by the primary resource or species they are designed to protect, but they may apply to several biological resources. Also, note that the Water Pollution Control Program and many of the Best Management Practices and standard specifications outlined in Section 1.6 would avoid and minimize impacts on biological resources.

The following general measures would apply for biological resources:

BIO-1: Before construction, a qualified biologist would conduct a Worker Environmental Awareness Training course for all personnel regarding all the identified biological resources in the project area. The contractor shall submit a written request to the resident engineer to schedule the training 14 calendar days before performing any work on the project.

BIO-2: Observations of any special-status plant and animal species would be documented on California Natural Diversity Database forms and submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife upon project completion.

BIO-3: Before the start of excavation or construction activities, a qualified biologist would conduct a preconstruction survey for all identified special-status animal species discussed in this document. If any of these species are found within the Area of Potential Impact, they would be relocated to a suitable location outside the Area of Potential Impact. If Southern California steelheads are found, then all project activities would immediately stop, and the appropriate regulatory agencies would be contacted to pursue take coverage. The qualified biologist would use the most current survey protocols available for the species to ensure the highest level of species detection, including visual encounter surveys and nesting survey techniques.

Natural Communities and Habitats of Concern

The avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation measures proposed for jurisdictional aquatic resources described above have been assessed as sufficient to minimize impacts to red willow riparian woodland and forest.

Wetlands, Other Waters, and Riparian Areas

Before construction, Caltrans shall 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 for activities that impact their respective jurisdictions. Permit conditions would be implemented during construction.

BIO-4: Before the start of any ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing, flagging, or another boundary marking system shall be used to demarcate (distinguish) jurisdictional features and the dripline of trees to be protected within the project limits. Caltrans-defined environmentally sensitive areas shall be noted on design plans and delineated in the field before the start of construction activities.

BIO-5: No work shall occur in areas of standing or flowing surface water. If dewatering or diversion operations are necessary, a detailed dewatering and diversion plan, inclusive of water quality monitoring requirements, would be prepared and implemented.

BIO-6: Construction activities in jurisdictional areas and temporary stream diversion, if needed, shall be timed to occur during the dry season, when the surface water is likely to be dry or at a seasonal minimum, typically between June 1 and October 31 in any given year, or as otherwise directed by the regulatory agencies. Deviations from this work window would only be made with permission from the relevant regulatory agencies. Activities that may be approved outside the typical construction window include tree removal and trimming that does not require grubbing or ground disturbance; restoration seeding, planting, and maintenance of plantings; and stormwater measures

that require the use of equipment, subject to prior agency approval. Maintenance of Stormwater Best Management Practices using hand tools is permitted year-round.

BIO-7: During construction, sediment and erosion control measures shall be implemented and maintained. Fiber rolls, barriers, and other Best Management Practices shall be installed as needed to stabilize the project site. Jurisdictional areas shall be stabilized for winter before November 1, either by completing construction in these areas, including installation of permanent erosion control measures, or by implementing winterization stabilization measures that ensure disturbed soils in jurisdictional areas are stabilized to withstand the 10-year, 24-hour storm event. At a minimum, erosion controls shall be maintained by the contractor on a daily basis throughout the construction period.

BIO-8: Other than the implementation of stormwater measures and water quality sampling, work would not occur in jurisdictional areas when rain is falling or when the National Weather Service forecast predicts a 25 percent chance or greater of at least 0.1 inch of rain within a 24-hour period. Work can resume if rain does not occur, or after rain has stopped, the forecast predicts at least 72 hours of clear weather, and site conditions are dry enough to avoid discharges of sediment into jurisdictional areas.

BIO-9: No concrete shall be poured if the National Weather Service forecast predicts a 10 percent or greater chance of rain for the city of Solvang within the next 72 hours. All poured concrete must be protected from contact with rainwater or surface waters for 30 days or until testing levels for pH with tap water measure below 9.5.

BIO-10: To the extent feasible, staging, parking, and refueling of equipment and vehicles must occur at least 100 feet from jurisdictional areas. If staging of equipment and materials must occur closer than 100 feet from jurisdictional areas, the staging areas must have adequate Best Management Practices to prevent discharges from leaving the staging area and entering jurisdictional areas. If fueling must occur in areas less than 100 feet from streams, a refueling plan outlining secondary containment and spill prevention measures must be prepared and approved by Caltrans and agency staff.

BIO-11: At a minimum, all equipment and vehicles shall be checked and maintained by the contractor on a daily basis to ensure proper operation and avoid potential leaks or spills. Drip pans must be placed under equipment that is stationary for more than 12 hours. Stationary equipment used in jurisdictional areas, such as generators, must be placed in secondary containment. Equipment must be removed from the channel if the National Weather Service predicts a chance of at least 0.1 inch of rain within a 24-hour period for the city of Solvang.

BIO-12: Limited night work is permitted within jurisdictional areas. Lighting must be angled down and pointed toward work areas to minimize illumination of nearby jurisdictional areas outside project limits.

BIO-13: All litter, construction debris, equipment, loose materials, and soil spoils shall be removed from jurisdictional areas at the end of every work shift. Stockpiles of materials, including temporarily stockpiled soils, may not be stored within jurisdictional areas. Stockpiles not actively being used for construction must be covered and surrounded with a linear sediment barrier.

BIO-14: Stream contours shall be restored as close as possible to their original condition.

BIO-15: The temporary stream diversion and temporary fills would be removed during the wet seasons to allow flow and to minimize the temporal loss of jurisdictional features.

Mitigation Measure BIO-16: Caltrans shall restore all temporarily impacted areas to pre-project conditions, functions, and values and install replacement plantings, vegetate newly installed rock slope protection along the streambank, implement invasive species control along the Alamo Pintado Creek corridor, and implement other potential means of mitigation. Caltrans would restore all areas temporarily impacted for access needs on-site at a 1-to-1 ratio. Additionally, for areas that are treated with buried/backfilled rock slope protection (degradation impacts), Caltrans would restore vegetation over the buried/backfilled rock slope protection and would also restore an additional 0.5 acre of riparian vegetation for each acre of vegetated backfilled rock slope protection, resulting in a 1.5-to-1 ratio of restoration for degraded areas.

Trees that are removed within jurisdictional areas shall be replanted as follows: trees with a diameter at standard height between 6 and 12 inches shall be replanted at a 3-to-1 ratio, trees with a diameter at standard height between 12 and 24 inches shall be replanted at a 5-to-1 ratio, and trees with a diameter at standard height greater than 24 inches shall be replanted at a 10-to-1 ratio.

Late-Flowered Mariposa Lily, Sonoran Maiden Fern, and Other Special-Status Plant Species

BIO-17: To avoid impacts to special-status plant species, all staging and equipment storage areas shall occur in existing pullouts or at paved locations that have been cleared by Caltrans Environmental.

California Red-Legged Frog

All temporary impacts to native vegetation would be offset by replacement plantings within the project limits. In addition to the measures detailed below,

the mitigation proposed for jurisdictional aquatic resources described above would also mitigate impacts to California red-legged frog habitat.

BIO-18: Caltrans anticipates the proposed project would qualify for Federal Endangered Species Act incidental take coverage under the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Projects Funded or Approved under the Federal Highway Administration's Federal Aid Program, which contains an extensive list of measures for each phase of the construction period. Some of the notable measures are summarized below:

- Only U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologists shall participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California red-legged frogs.

- Ground disturbance shall not begin until written approval is received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the biologist is qualified to conduct the work.

- Preconstruction surveys must be completed 48 hours before any construction work starts. If any life stage of the California red-legged frog is detected, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be notified prior to the start of construction.

- Biologists would conduct Worker Environmental Awareness Training for construction personnel.

- A biological monitor shall be on-site until all California red-legged frogs have been removed, workers have been instructed, and all disturbances to the habitat area are completed.

- During project activities, all trash that may attract predators or scavengers shall be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, all trash and debris shall be removed from work areas.

- All refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles shall occur at least 60 feet from riparian habitat or water bodies and not in a location from which a spill would drain directly toward aquatic habitat, unless otherwise preapproved by the necessary agencies.

- Habitat contours shall be returned to a natural configuration at the end of project activities. This measure shall 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.

- The number of access routes, the size of staging areas, and the total area of activity shall be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project.

- Caltrans shall 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.

- If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes would be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.2 inch to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water would 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 would be removed in a manner that would allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate.

- Unless approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, water would not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.

- A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist shall permanently remove any individuals of exotic species, such as bullfrogs.

- The fieldwork code of practice developed by the Declining Amphibian Task Force shall be followed at all times to prevent the introduction of diseases.

- Restore the site to natural contours and revegetate it with native plants suitable for the habitats within the project area.

Southern California Steelhead

In addition to the measures detailed below, the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures, including the work windows, proposed for jurisdictional aquatic resources described above, would also mitigate impacts to Southern California steelhead.

BIO-19: During in-stream work, a qualified biologist would be retained with experience in steelhead biology and ecology, aquatic habitats, biological monitoring (including diversion/dewatering), and capturing, handling, and relocating fish species. During in-stream work, a biological monitor would continuously monitor placement and removal of any required stream diversions and would capture stranded fish species and relocate them to suitable habitat, as appropriate.

BIO-20: If any steelhead are found during construction monitoring, all work activities would stop, and the appropriate regulatory agencies would be contacted to pursue take coverage.

BIO-21: Caltrans would design replacement bridge structures without scuppers, deck drains, or other facilities that drain stormwater directly into the stream to prevent pollutants such as 6PPD-quinone (an oxidation product of 6PPD, which is an additive intended to prevent damage to tire rubber from ozone) from directly entering waterways.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

In addition to the measures detailed below, the compensatory mitigation proposed for jurisdictional aquatic resources described above would also mitigate impacts to the southwestern pond turtle. Further, implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures outlined for jurisdictional aquatic resources and the California red-legged frog would avoid and minimize impacts to individuals of the southwestern pond turtle as well. Lastly, Caltrans Best Management Practices implemented to avoid impacts on water quality would avoid impacts on aquatic habitat for the southwestern pond turtle.

BIO-22: The project includes environmentally sensitive areas to minimize impacts to sensitive areas and species. The project plans would delineate environmentally sensitive areas that restrict access to the minimum required for construction, minimizing impacts to southwestern pond turtles and their habitat. No vehicle access within these environmentally sensitive areas would be permitted. During construction, the resident engineer and biological monitor would determine and agree upon the exact placement of environmentally sensitive area markers, based on the project plans, and would determine and agree upon the appropriate material for marking environmentally sensitive areas.

Least Bell's Vireo and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

In addition to the measures described below, the compensatory mitigation measures proposed for riparian habitat in the jurisdictional aquatic features section would also mitigate the impacts to least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher habitat. Further, the implementation of avoidance and minimization measures used to protect all nesting bird species would also minimize any potential impacts to the least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher. Lastly, impacts to vegetation would be offset by replacement plantings within the project limits, which would also replace in-kind nesting habitat.

BIO-23: Focused surveys following U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey guidelines for the least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher shall be completed to determine the presence/absence of the least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher wherever suitable habitat is present within 500

feet of the limits of construction. Surveys shall be conducted within one year before the start of construction activities. If the least Bell's vireo or southwestern willow flycatcher is detected during these surveys, formal Section 7 consultation would be initiated. Caltrans would provide the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with a report detailing least Bell's vireo and southwestern willow flycatcher survey efforts for the breeding season preceding construction.

BIO-24: Before construction starts, vegetation removal shall be scheduled to occur from October 1 to January 31, outside the typical nesting bird season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds. If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the nesting season (February 1 to September 30), a nesting bird survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than five calendar days before the start of construction.

BIO-25: If the least Bell's vireo or southwestern willow flycatcher is observed within 100 feet of the project area during construction or the preconstruction surveys, all project activities shall stop immediately, and the relevant resource agencies shall be consulted. Development of additional avoidance and minimization measures would occur as necessary in coordination with the pertinent agencies.

Crotch's Bumblebee and Obscure Bumblebee

BIO-26: During the design phase, a Crotch's bumblebee habitat assessment would be conducted following the California Department of Fish and Wildlife "Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species," dated June 6, 2023. If Crotch's bumblebee habitat is determined to be present within the project site:

- A focused non-invasive survey would be conducted before ground disturbance for the Crotch's bumblebee and its nests, following California Department of Fish and Wildlife guidance.

- A Worker Environmental Awareness Training course would be provided for all construction personnel before the start of any ground disturbance or vegetation removal to discuss Crotch's bumblebee identification, ecology, habitat, and avoidance and minimization measures.

- Before starting any ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area fencing shall be installed, as appropriate, around Crotch's bumblebee feeding and nesting habitat to be avoided. Environmentally sensitive areas shall be noted on design plans and delineated in the field before the start of construction activities.

BIO-27: If a Crotch's bumblebee is identified in the project area, Caltrans would coordinate with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and, if

necessary, a Section 2081 Incidental Take Permit would be acquired, on-site mitigation may be required, and the following would be implemented:

Any blooming flowering plants that are scoped for removal would be inspected immediately before work to ensure that no bumblebees are on or near the plant. If a Crotch's bumblebee is identified on or next to vegetation that is to be removed, work in that area would not proceed until the bumblebee leaves the area of its own accord (voluntarily).

- No work would occur within 50 feet of an active Crotch's bumblebee nest unless approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

American Badger

BIO-28: No rodent control pesticides shall be used, including anticoagulant rodenticides such as brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difethialone, and difenacoum. This is necessary to minimize the possibility of primary or secondary poisoning of American badgers or other special-status species.

Townsend's Big-Eared Bat, Pallid Bat, and Other Roosting Bats

BIO-29: Tree removal shall be scheduled to occur from September 1 to February 14, outside the typical bat maternity roosting season, if possible, to avoid potential impacts to roosting bats.

BIO-30: If tree removal or other construction activities are proposed to occur within 100 feet of potential habitat during the bat maternity roosting season (February 1 to September 1), a bat roost survey shall be conducted by a biologist determined qualified by Caltrans within 14 days before construction. The biologist conducting the preconstruction survey would also identify the nature of the bat utilization (in essence, no roosting, night roost, day roost, or maternity roost) and determine if passive bat exclusion would be necessary and feasible. If an active day roost is found, a qualified Caltrans biologist shall determine an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area shall be avoided until a qualified biologist has determined that roosting activity has stopped or exclusionary methods have successfully evicted roosting bats.

BIO-31: If bats are found by a qualified biologist to be maternity roosting, active bat maternity roosts shall not be disturbed or destroyed until pups are capable of flight.

Cooper's Hawk, Purple Martin, and Other Nesting Birds

BIO-32: During the non-nesting season (October 1 to January 31), methods to deter new nests would be implemented to prevent new nests from forming during project activities. Exact methods of deterrence would be determined during the design phase. Removal of nests as they are beginning to form may be conducted as a last resort to further prevent nesting during project

activities. There would be no removal of fully formed active nests. Partially built nests may only be removed if they have been monitored by a qualified biologist and determined to be inactive. If an active nest is found, the qualified biologist would determine an appropriate buffer based on the habits and needs of the species. The buffer area would be avoided until a qualified biologist has determined that juveniles have fledged and are no longer dependent on the nest.

BIO-33: Active bird nests must not be disturbed, and eggs or young of birds covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code must not be killed, destroyed, injured, or harassed at any time.

Invasive Species

During construction, Caltrans would ensure that the spread or introduction of invasive exotic plant species would be avoided to the maximum extent possible as follows:

BIO-34: Only clean fill shall be imported. When practicable, invasive exotic plants on the project site shall be removed and properly disposed of. All invasive vegetation removed from the construction site shall be taken to a landfill to prevent the spread of invasive species. If soil from weedy areas must be removed off-site, the top 6 inches containing the seed layer in areas with weedy species shall be disposed of at a landfill. Species that occur on the California Invasive Plant Council's Invasive Plant Inventory shall not be used in the Caltrans erosion control seed mix or landscaping plans for the project.

BIO-35: To minimize the introduction of invasive plant species, all vehicles, machinery, and equipment shall be in a clean and soil-free condition before entering the project limits. Construction equipment shall be certified as "weed-free" by Caltrans before entering the construction site.

BIO-36 Selected use of herbicides may be used to target highly invasive species already present within the project area that are difficult to control with mechanical techniques alone. Herbicide application would be limited to spot spraying target species and would only be applied during periods of dry weather when winds are less than 3 miles per hour. Herbicide application would be conducted to improve conditions over baseline by reducing the cover of highly invasive species.

Cultural Resources

The following measure would help reduce the potential for any impacts on archaeological resources.

CUL-1: A preconstruction Worker Environmental Awareness Program training for construction personnel and construction phase tribal monitoring of project excavation and initial ground disturbance shall occur.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The following measures would be implemented in the project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project related to construction activities:

GHG-1: Limit idling to 5 minutes for delivery and dump trucks and other diesel-powered equipment not in active operations.

GHG-2: Schedule delivery truck trips outside of peak morning and evening commute hours.

GHG-3: Schedule longer-duration lane closures to reduce the number of equipment mobilization efforts (combine with public information efforts for congested areas).

GHG-4: For improved fuel efficiency from construction equipment:

- Maintain equipment in proper tune and working condition.
- Use the right-sized equipment for the job.

GHG-5: Use alternative fuels such as renewable diesel for construction equipment.

GHG-6: Earthwork Balance: Reduce the need for transport of earthen materials by balancing cut and fill quantities.

GHG-7: Supplement existing construction environmental training with information on methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to construction.

GHG-8: Use Caltrans “Accelerated Bridge Construction” method. This method would reduce construction windows and use more precast elements that, in turn, reduce the need for additional falsework, forms, bracing, etc.

GHG-9: Salvage disposed materials on-site, such as rebar from demolished concrete, and process waste to create usable fill.

GHG-10: Maximize the use of recycled materials (tire rubber, for example).

GHG-11: Salvage large trees removed for lumber or similar on-site beneficial uses other than standard woodchipping (for example, use in roadside landscape projects or green infrastructure components).

GHG-12: Recycle existing project features on-site (for example, metal beam guardrail, light standards, sub-base granular material, or native material that meets Caltrans specifications for incorporation into new work).

Reduce construction waste. For example, reuse or recycle construction and demolition waste (reduces consumption of raw materials, which reduces waste and transportation to landfills; saves costs).

GHG-13: Use recycled water or reduce consumption of potable water for construction.

GHG-14: Use cold in-place recycling.

GHG-15: Replace lighting with ultra-reflective sign materials that are illuminated by headlights to reduce energy used by electric lighting.

Hydrology and Water Quality

See Section 2.1.4, Biological Resources, for more information on the avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures proposed for jurisdictional areas.

During construction, effective combinations of temporary and permanent erosion and sediment controls would be used. Stormwater management for the site would be coordinated through the contractor with Caltrans construction personnel to effectively manage erosion from the Disturbed Soil Areas by implementing a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. Selected Best Management Practices that would be included but not limited to the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan for the project are defined as follows:

Temporary Soil Stabilization

HYDRO-1: Minimize active disturbed soil areas during the rainy season by using scheduling techniques.

HYDRO-2: Preserve existing vegetation to the maximum extent feasible.

HYDRO-3: Implement temporary protective cover/erosion control on all non-active disturbed soil areas and soil stockpiles.

HYDRO-4: Control erosive forces of stormwater runoff with effective storm flow management, such as temporary concentrated flow conveyance devices, earthen dikes, drainage swales, lined ditches, outlet protection/velocity dissipation devices, and slope drains. These practices would be determined as feasible during the project's next phase.

Temporary Sediment Controls

HYDRO-5: Implement linear sediment controls such as fiber rolls, check dams, or gravel bag berms on all active and non-active disturbed soil areas during the rainy season.

HYDRO-6: To further help prevent sediment discharge, stabilize construction site entrances, implement temporary drainage inlet protection, and implement street sweeping and vacuuming.

HYDRO-7: Implement appropriate wind erosion controls year-round.

Non-Stormwater Management

The appropriate non-stormwater Best Management Practices would be implemented year-round as follows:

HYDRO-8: Water conservation practices shall be implemented on all construction sites and wherever water is used.

HYDRO-9: Paving and grinding procedures shall be implemented where paving, surfacing, resurfacing, grinding, or saw cutting may pollute stormwater runoff or discharge to the storm drain system or watercourses.

HYDRO-10: Follow appropriate procedures and practices designed for construction contractors to recognize illicit connections or illegally dumped or discharged materials on a construction site and report incidents to the resident engineer.

HYDRO-11: Stockpiling materials, storing equipment and liquid waste containers, washing vehicles or equipment, and fueling and maintaining vehicles and equipment must be performed at least 100 feet from concentrated flows of stormwater, drainage courses, and inlets if within the floodplain. The activities must be performed at least 50 feet from the aforementioned areas if outside of the floodplain.

HYDRO-12: Pile driving operations would be considered part of the construction activities.

HYDRO-13: Concrete curing would be used in the construction of structures such as bridges and abutments. Concrete curing includes the use of both chemical and water methods. Proper procedures would minimize the pollution of runoff during concrete curing.

HYDRO-14: Since the project involves structure demolition/removal over the Alamo Pintado Creek, proper procedures would be implemented to minimize pollution during these activities.

HYDRO-15: The following construction site Best Management Practices shall be bid items for this project to ensure they are implemented during construction:

- Job Site Management
- Prepare Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program

- Stormwater Sampling and Analysis Day
- Stormwater Annual Report
- Move In/Move Out (Temporary Erosion Control)
- Temporary Hydraulic Mulch (Bonded Fiber Matrix)
- Temporary Check Dam
- Temporary Drainage Inlet Protection
- Temporary Fiber Roll
- Temporary Large Sediment Barrier
- Temporary Construction Entrance
- Street Sweeping
- Temporary Concrete Washout
- Temporary Fence (Environmentally Sensitive Area type fence)

Noise

The following avoidance and minimization measures would further reduce the potential for impacts on local noise levels.

NOISE-1: The public within 500 feet of construction activities shall be notified at least two weeks before the start of construction noise and upcoming construction activities that are likely to produce an adverse noise environment. The Caltrans District 5 Public Information Office shall publish notice of the proposed dates and duration of proposed construction activities and potential community impacts in local news media after receiving notice from the resident engineer.

NOISE-2: The contractor shall develop a Noise Control Plan and submit it to district noise staff for review. District noise staff would be responsible for obtaining a non-standard special provision addressing the requirements of the Noise Control Plan.

NOISE-3: The contractor must provide a list of affected residents to a Caltrans Public Information Officer and resident engineer.

NOISE-4: The state shall consider the following measures to minimize any negative noise impact on residents' sleep:

- The contractor shall purchase noise-canceling headphones before the start of construction, and they should be provided as the first line of preventative measures for affected residents.

- For temporary accommodation, the state would need to approve the number of nights and verify that the resident is on the list of those affected contained in the Noise Control Plan.

- Affected residents would be reimbursed by the contractor at the state rate. A change order would have to be developed to reimburse the contractor.

NOISE-5: Whenever possible, construction work shall be done during the day.

NOISE-6: When nighttime construction is necessary, the construction activities that generate the greatest amount of noise shall be done as early in the evening as possible.

NOISE-7: The contractor shall shield loud pieces of stationary construction equipment with sound barriers if complaints are received from the public.

NOISE-8: The contractor shall locate portable generators, air compressors, etc., away from sensitive noise receptors as feasible.

NOISE-9: The contractor shall limit grouping major pieces of equipment operating in one area to the greatest extent feasible.

NOISE-10: The contractor shall use newer equipment that is quieter and ensure that all equipment items have the manufacturers' recommended noise abatement measures, such as mufflers, engine covers, and engine vibration isolators, intact and operational. Internal combustion engines used for any purpose on or related to the job shall be equipped with a muffler or baffle of a type recommended by the manufacturer.

NOISE-11: The contractor shall consult District 5 noise staff to determine appropriate steps to alleviate noise-related concerns if noise complaints are received from the public during the construction process.

The following Caltrans Standard Specification for Noise Control would also be implemented to reduce impacts related to nighttime work.

NOISE-12: If nighttime construction is necessary, the noisiest construction activities should be done as early in the evening as possible. Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-8.02 requires the contractor to control and monitor noise resulting from work activities and not to exceed 86 A-weighted decibels maximum sound level at 50 feet from the job site from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Cumulative Impacts

The following general minimization recommendations were made to reduce the overall decline in the health of the identified resources:

California Red-Legged Frog

CUMULATIVE-1: Agencies with regulatory authority over California red-legged frogs include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Efforts should continue to be made by these agencies to support projects that improve habitat acreage and function for these species through enhancement and creation. Providing suitable contiguous habitat would make this resource more resilient and resistant to decline.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

CUMULATIVE-2: Agencies with regulatory authority over southwestern pond turtles include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Efforts should continue to be made by these agencies to support projects that improve habitat acreage and function for these species through enhancement and creation. Providing suitable contiguous habitat would make this resource more resilient and resistant to decline.

Jurisdictional Waters and Riparian Habitat

CUMULATIVE-3: Agencies with regulatory authority over jurisdictional areas include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Agencies should continue to implement existing policies requiring restoration of temporary impacts and mitigation to achieve no net loss of ecological function and value to offset permanent impacts. Agencies should also promote policies that encourage development setbacks from stream corridors and assist in programs that preserve and restore existing stream and riparian habitats.

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)

Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas, and Noise Technical Memorandum

Climate Change Report

Cumulative Impact Analysis

Geologic Hazards Report

Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment

Historical Property Survey Report

- Historic Resource Evaluation Report
- Archaeological Survey Report (confidential, not publicly available)

Location Hydraulic Study

Natural Environment Study

Paleontological Identification Report

Stormwater Data Report

Structure Preliminary Geotechnical Report

Visual Impact Assessment

Water Quality Assessment Report

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

Dianna Beck
District 5 Environmental Division
California Department of Transportation
50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Or send your request via email to: dianna.beck@dot.ca.gov

Or call: 805-459-9406

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title: Alamo Pintado Creek Bridge Replacement

General location information: On State Route 246, near the city of Solvang

District number-county code-route-post mile: 05-SB-246-PM 30.173-30.435

Project ID number: 0519000148