Blackwell's Corner Capital Preventative Maintenance

State Route 33 in Kern County near McKittrick Avenue, from the end of Cymric Wash Bridge to 1.1 mile south of the State Route 33/46 junction

06-KER-33-40.4/59.0
Project ID 0619000010

Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Volume 1 of 2

Prepared by the
State of California Department of Transportation

January 2022

Caltrans

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 Kern 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 6 Office at 1352 West Olive Avenue, Fresno, CA 93728, the Taft Library at 27 Cougar Court, Taft, CA 93268, and the Buttonwillow Library at 101 North Main Street, Buttonwillow, CA 93206.

- Tell us what you think. If you have any comments regarding the proposed project, send your written comments to Caltrans by the deadline. Submit comments via U.S. mail to: Trais Norris, District 6 Environmental, California Department of Transportation, 2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726. Submit comments via email to: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov.

- Submit comments by the deadline: February 25, 2022.

What happens next:

After comments are received from the public and 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.

Printing this document: To save paper, this document has been set up for two-sided printing (to print the front and back of a page). Blank pages occur where needed throughout the document to maintain proper layout of the chapters and appendices.

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: Trais Norris, District 6 Environmental, 2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726; phone number 209-601-3521 (Voice), or use the California Relay Service 1-800-735-2929 (TTY to Voice), 1-800-735-2922 (Voice to TTY), 1-800-855-3000 (Spanish TTY to Voice and Voice to TTY), 1-800-854-7784 (Spanish and English Speech-to-Speech) or 711.

06-KER-33-40.4/59.0
Project ID 0619000010

Resurface the existing lanes of State Route 33 in Kern County near McKittrick Avenue, from the end of Cymric Wash Bridge to 1.1 mile south of the State Route 33/46 junction

INITIAL STUDY
with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

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

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

Responsible Agency: California Transportation Commission

Jennifer H. Taylor

Jennifer H. Taylor
Environmental Office Chief, District 6
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

12/09/2021
Date

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

Senior Environmental Planner Trais Norris; District 6 Environmental, 2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726, phone (209) 601-3521

DRAFT
Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

District-County-Route-Post Mile: 06-KER-33-PM 40.4/59.0

EA/Project Number: 06-0Y130/0619000010

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation proposes to cold-plane 0.25 foot of existing asphalt concrete pavement and replace it with Type A Hot Mix Asphalt after sealing cracks and repairing failed localized areas, overlay the entire roadway with 0.10 foot of Rubberized Hot Mix Asphalt Type Gap-Graded Bonded Wearing Course, and construct shoulder backing. The project also proposes to upgrade Transportation Management Strategy elements and culverts within the project limits. The project also proposes to construct centerline rumble strips and replace or upgrade roadside signs where needed.

Determination

An Initial Study has been prepared by the California Department of Transportation, District 6.

On the basis of this study, it is determined that the proposed action with the incorporation of the identified mitigation measures will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

An incidental take permit is anticipated for the San Joaquin (Nelson's) antelope squirrel. Mitigation measures proposed for impacts to the San Joaquin antelope squirrel may include:

- Compensation for loss of habitat through purchase of credits from a mitigation bank, preservation of habitat, or enhancement or restoration of habitat as identified through coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

_____

Jennifer H. Taylor
Environmental Office Chief, District 6
California Department of Transportation
CEQA Lead Agency

_____

Date

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Proposed Project

1.1 Introduction

The proposed project would preserve and resurface the existing lanes of State Route 33 in Kern County near McKittrick Avenue, from the end of Cymric Wash Bridge to 1.1 mile south of the junction of State Route 33 and State Route 46.

State Route 33 is functionally classified as a Minor Arterial in a rural area. It is considered a north-south alternative to Interstate 5 and State Route 99, and primarily serves motorists going to the nearby oil fields and agricultural land. It is a Goods Movement Route and Federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act Terminal Access Route. Within the project limits, State Route 33 is a designated Extra-Legal Load Network, which preserves travel corridors for 20-foot-high loads.

1.2 Purpose and Need

1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the project is to preserve, repair, and extend the life of the existing pavement, and to improve ride quality.

1.2.2 Need

The existing pavement is subject to considerable distress and cracking due to heavy truck traffic and needs to be restored to a state of good repair to: extend its service life, improve safety for the traveling public by minimizing frequent maintenance lane closures, and minimize the exposure of maintenance personnel to high speed traffic. There is a need to replace roadside signs that are non-standard or in poor condition, and to restore or extend existing drainage systems throughout the project limits.

1.3 Project Description

The project proposes to preserve and resurface the existing lanes of State Route 33 in Kern County near the town of McKittrick, from the end of Cymric Wash Bridge to 1.1 mile south of the State Route 33/46 junction. The project proposes to remove 0.25 foot of existing asphalt concrete pavement, repair failed localized areas, seal all cracks wider than 1/4 inch, replace the removed pavement with Type A Hot Mix Asphalt, overlay the entire section with 0.10 foot of Type G (gap-graded bonded wearing course rubberized

asphalt concrete), and construct a tapered edge on both sides. The project would also install three loop Vehicle Detection Systems and replace or install drainage culverts, construct centerline rumble strips, and replace or upgrade roadside signs where needed. Figure 1-1 shows the project vicinity map, and Figure 1-2 shows the project location map.

Figure 1-1 Project Vicinity Map

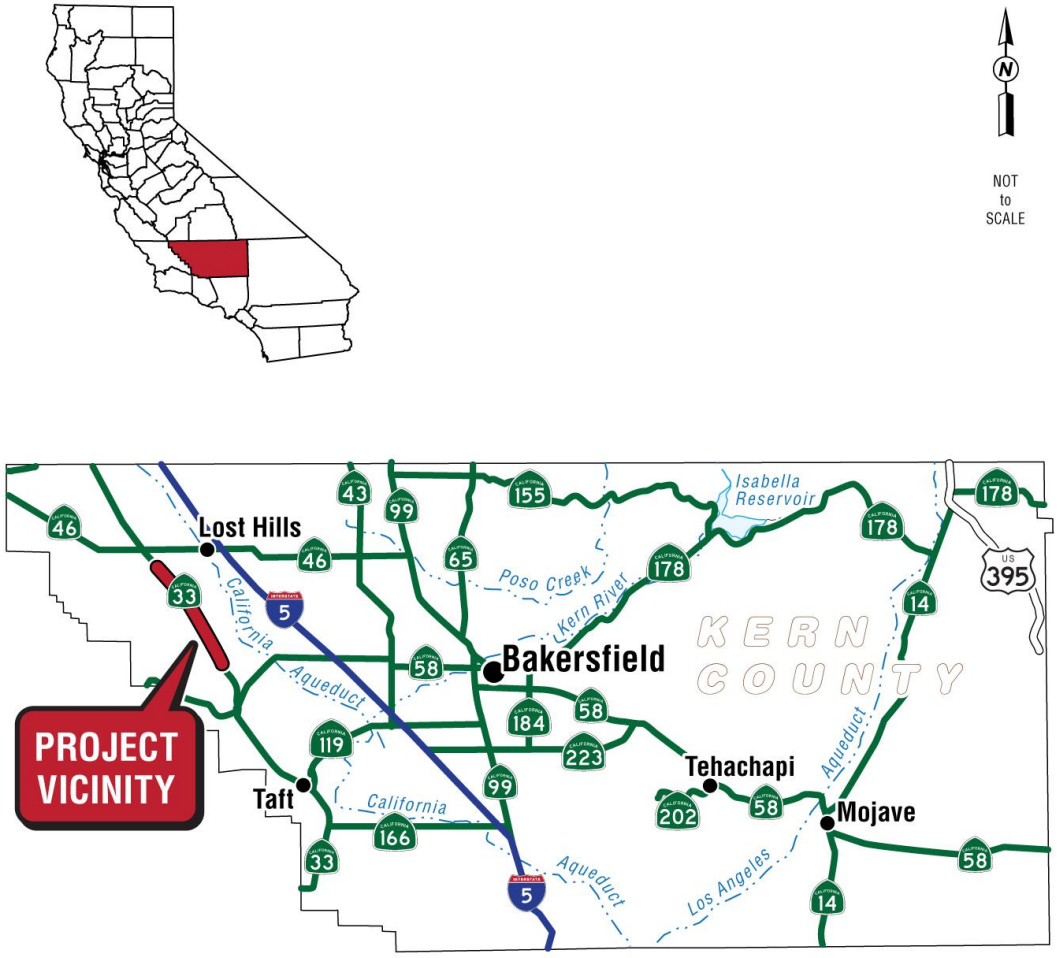
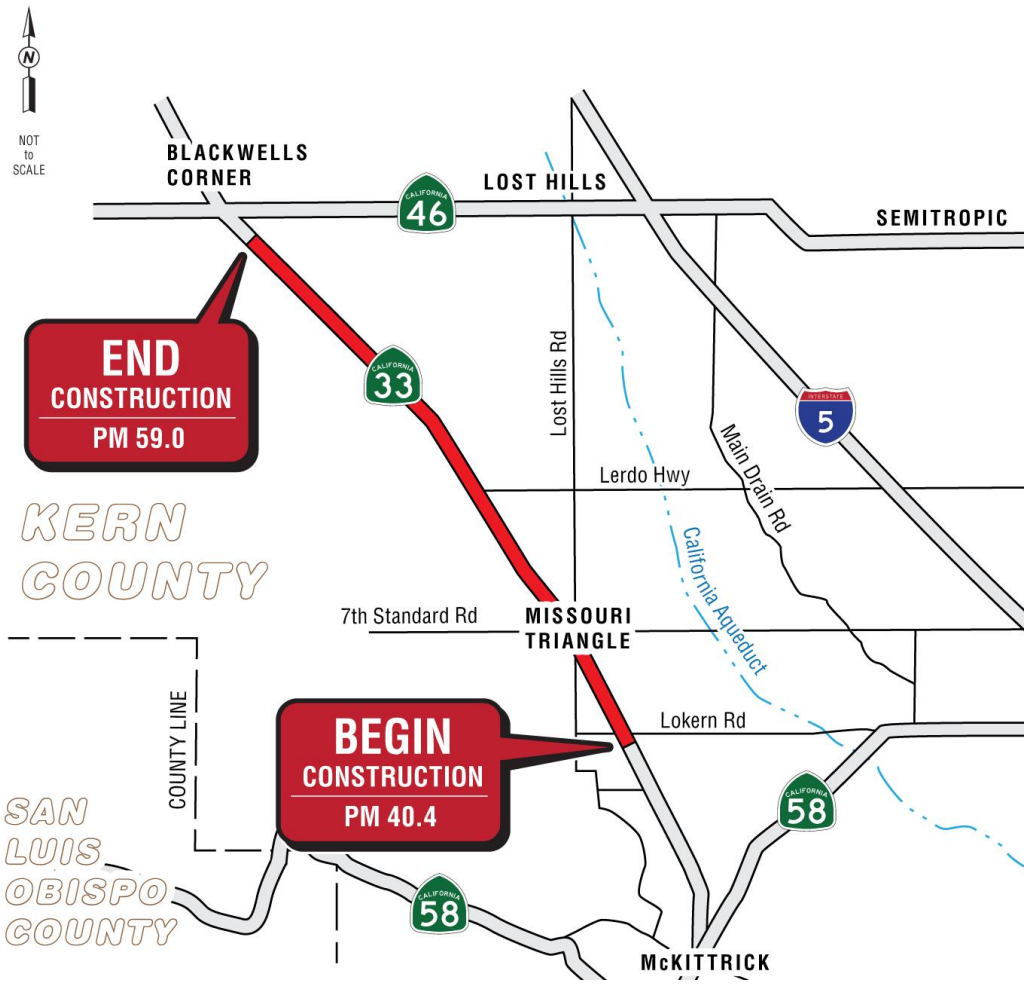


Figure 1-2 Project Location Map



1.4 Project Alternatives

Two alternatives are proposed for this project:

- Alternative 1: Build Alternative
- Alternative 2: No-Build Alternative

1.4.1 Build Alternative

Alternative 1

The project proposes to preserve and resurface the existing pavement by removing 0.25 foot of existing asphalt concrete pavement, repairing failed localized areas, sealing all cracks wider than 1/4 inch, replacing removed

pavement with 0.25 foot of Type A Hot Mix Asphalt and overlaying the entire pavement with a 0.10-foot sacrificial layer of Rubberized Hot Mix Asphalt, Type G (gap-graded bonded wearing course rubberized asphalt concrete). A tapered edge would be constructed on both sides of the roadway.

The project would address 16 existing corrugated steel culverts within the project limits. The project would abandon 5 culverts, replace 11 culverts with Reinforced Concrete Pipe and Reinforced Concrete Box culverts, and rehabilitate 1 culvert with culvert barrel lining. Concrete headwalls would be constructed for 3 of the culverts, and 2 culverts would receive Flared End Sections. Drainage easements or temporary construction easements may be required for culverts whose length exceeds the existing right-of-way width at their respective locations.

In addition, the project would replace or upgrade approximately 19 existing roadside signs that are non-standard or in poor condition, and construct 18.6 miles of centerline rumble strip.

Although individual Transportation System Management and Transportation Demand Management Alternatives are not proposed, the Build Alternative incorporates some such elements, including replacing existing hose traffic count stations with loop Vehicle Detection Systems stations in three locations: at post miles 40.94, 41.207, and 44.171.

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 Alternatives.”

1.4.2 Alternative 2: No-Build (No-Action) Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would leave State Route 33 as it is. The No-Build Alternative is not considered a viable alternative because it does not address the deficiencies of the roadway and does not meet the need or purpose of the project. The existing pavement would continue to deteriorate and not meet current standards.

1.5 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Discussion

A build alternative to rehabilitate the existing pavement was rejected prior to the Project Initiation Document phase of the project because the pavement has not deteriorated to a point that would warrant rehabilitation.

1.6 Standard Measures and Best Management Practices Included in All Alternatives

The project may include, but is not limited to, the following Standard Special Provisions.

14-1.02 Environmentally Sensitive Area: Pertains to environmentally sensitive areas marked on the ground. Do not enter an environmentally sensitive area unless authorized. If breached, notify the resident engineer.

14-6.03 Species Protection: Pertains to protecting regulated species and their habitat that occur within or near the job site. Upon discovery of a regulated species, notify the resident engineer.

14-6.03B Bird Protection: Pertains to protecting migratory and nongame birds, their occupied nests, and their eggs. Upon discovery of an injured or dead bird or migratory or nongame bird nests that may be adversely affected by construction activities, immediately stop all work and notify the resident engineer. Exclusion devices, nesting-prevention measures, and removing constructed and unoccupied nests may be used.

14-7.03 Discovery of Unanticipated Paleontological Resources: If paleontological resources are discovered at the job site, do not disturb the resources and immediately stop all work within a 60-foot radius of the discovery, secure the area, and notify the resident engineer. Do not move paleontological resources or take them from the job site.

14-8.02 Noise Control: Pertains to controlling and monitoring noise resulting from work activities. Noise levels are not to exceed 86 decibels at 50 feet from the job site from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

14-9.02 Air Pollution Control: Comply with air pollution control rules, regulations, ordinances, and statutes that apply to work performed under the construction contract.

14-11 Hazardous Waste and Contamination: Includes specifications relating to hazardous waste and contamination.

14-11.02 Discovery of Unanticipated Asbestos and Hazardous Substances: Upon discovery of unanticipated asbestos or a hazardous substance, immediately stop work and notify the resident engineer.

14-11.04 Dust Control: Excavation, transportation, and handling of material containing hazardous waste or contamination must result in no visible dust migration. When clearing, grubbing, and performing earthwork operations in areas containing hazardous waste or contamination, provide a water truck or tank on the job site.

14-11.13C Safety and Health Protection Measures: Applies to worker protective measures for potential lead exposure.

14-11.14 Treated Wood Waste: Includes specifications for handling, storing, transporting, and disposing of treated wood waste.

1.7 Discussion of the NEPA Categorical Exclusion

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

1.8 Permits and Approvals Needed

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

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement	The application for a 1602 permit is submitted during the Plans, Specifications and Estimates phase of the project.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Section 2081 Incidental Take Permit	The application for a 2081 incidental take permit is submitted during the Plans, Specifications and Estimates phase of the project.
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board	Section 401 Certification for a Water Discharge Permit	The application for a 401 permit is submitted during the Plans, Specifications and Estimates phase of the project.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Letter of Concurrence	The letter of concurrence would be issued prior to the completion of the final environmental document.

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 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 Draft Project Report dated June 24, 2019, the following significance determinations have been made:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Aesthetics
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	**No Impact**
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	**No Impact**

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

2.1.2 Agriculture and Forest Resources

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

Considering the information in the Draft Project Report dated June 24, 2019, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

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

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 Memo dated August 5, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	**No Impact**
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	**No Impact**
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Air Quality
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	**No Impact**

2.1.4 Biological Resources

Considering the information in the Natural Environment Study dated November 5, 2021, 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 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**
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
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?	**No Impact**

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Biological Resources
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The biological study area for this project is approximately 896.51 acres. Land cover in the biological study area consists of 804.25 acres of vegetation communities and 92.26 acres of road surfaces. The project is surrounded by annual grasslands, agriculture fields, bare ground, and saltbush scrub habitat with shoulders that contain habitat dominated by ruderal non-native grass and forb species, and scattered shrubs.

The project impact area for this project includes State Route 33 from post miles 40.4 to 59.0, with a 10-foot-wide buffer that extends out from the edge of pavement of both sides of State Route 33 to account for impacts due to pavement overlay work; the 16 culverts that are proposed for replacement, removal, or repair; and a 30-foot-wide buffer from the centerline of each culvert running along the entire length of the culvert, from inlet to outlet.

Habitat in the biological study area is subject to anthropogenic impacts such as those from vehicles driving or parking on roadway shoulders; mowing of vegetation in the right-of-way; Caltrans roadway maintenance of the shoulder areas, including grading and recontouring of slopes after rains; and impacts from noise and dust from vehicles that use State Route 33.

The biological study area consists of shrubland habitat dominated by allscale shrubs (*Atriplex polycarpa*). Allscale must have 2 percent absolute cover in the shrub canopy and greater than 50 percent relative cover in the shrub canopy. Mostly continuous allscale scrub is present in the southern quarter of the biological study area, and patchy allscale scrub is found in the middle of the biological study area between fallow fields and in the oil fields.

The biological study area includes 15 National Wetlands Inventory or National Hydrography Dataset water features: 2 creeks (Salt Creek and Chico Martinez Creek) and 13 flowlines/features. However, there are 16 culvert systems proposed for work.

Caltrans Field Surveys

Caltrans biologists and a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Liaison completed a field review on February 27, 2020 to evaluate potential habitat for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard and the potential need for surveys. As a result of this meeting, it was decided a protocol-level blunt-nosed leopard

lizard survey would be completed in sections of the biological study area that contained suitable habitat for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard.

A field review was completed from July 14 through July 16, 2021 to verify the presence and quality of vegetation communities within the biological study area.

Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard Surveys

Culverts 1 through 9 were in the blunt-nosed leopard lizard survey area. Culverts 10 through 16 did not have suitable habitat for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard and were not included in the survey area. The project impact area includes all areas that are within 30 feet of the centerline of each culvert. Parts of the project impact area extend past the Caltrans right-of-way at all nine culverts. Caltrans determined that field surveys for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard would include only areas within the Caltrans right-of-way that could potentially support the species, and those areas were predetermined by Caltrans. All suitable habitat in the Caltrans right-of-way was surveyed either on foot or with binoculars, resulting in 100 percent coverage of the right-of-way. Areas that are outside the Caltrans right-of-way but inside the 50-foot-wide project impact area buffers were not surveyed for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard due to restrictions accessing areas outside the Caltrans right-of-way.

Small Mammal Trapping Survey

As recommended by standard trapping protocol (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2013), trapping was largely conducted during the optimal trapping season (April 1 through October 31). Due to project time limitations, trapping was not completed by the end of the recommended survey season but was completed by November 2, 2020. There are no other obvious limitations that may have influenced the trapping results.

Aquatic Resources Delineation Survey

The survey area consisted of the inlets and outlets of the 16 culverts proposed for work in the project area, plus a 200-foot-wide buffer around the inlets and outlets.

Surveyors were to stay within the Caltrans right-of-way when performing the survey. Private property was within the 200-foot-wide buffer at several inlets and outlets. At these locations, the complete 200-foot-wide buffer could not be surveyed and, in some cases, prevented the surveyors from identifying the presence or absence of an ordinary high-water mark and/or bank indicators. The Culvert 10 inlet was very densely vegetated; however, no ordinary high-water mark or bank indicators were visible or accessible.

There are 10 flowlines in the biological study area that were not included in the aquatic resource delineation. All of these flowlines are hydrological

features that have been mapped on the National Wetlands Inventory map as potential riverine features; therefore, all have potential to be jurisdictional areas. These flowlines were not included in the aquatic resources delineation because they are all in parts of the biological study area that have no anticipated impacts: they either pass through culverts in the biological study area that are not proposed for culvert work or they enter and exit the biological study area without crossing State Route 33.

Ruderal (weedy) vegetation can be described as vegetation that grows in recently disturbed soils. Ruderal vegetation was found running along the edge of the paved State Route 33 along the entire length of the biological study area. Vegetation found in most of the biological study area was mostly bare ground, fallow fields, and annual grasslands. Only from post miles 40.4 to 42.4 was allscale scrub dominant in the biological study area.

Botanical Surveys

Focused botanical surveys to identify special-status plant species were completed in April and May 2021 on a Caltrans project that is adjacent to this project and shares a similar climate (State Route 33 Culvert Rehabilitation project—project ID 06-1800-0042; post miles 21.8 to 39.8). No special-status plant species were observed during this survey effort.

Environmental Consequences

Direct and indirect impacts on biological resources have been evaluated. Direct impacts are those that involve the initial loss of biological resources due to grading and construction. Indirect impacts are those that would be related to disturbance from construction or operation of the project.

Temporary indirect effects from all construction-related activities include dust, potential fuel spills from construction equipment, possible night lighting during construction, and activities of equipment or personnel outside designated construction areas and Environmentally Sensitive Areas, as well as operational effects such as effects on adjacent habitat caused by stormwater runoff, traffic, and litter. In addition, construction may indirectly affect native habitats by enhancing germination of invasive plant species. It is likely there would be disturbance resulting from noise, vibration, vehicle activity, and the presence of work crews, resulting in the potential displacement of animals from the work area.

Noise or vibration could affect burrowing animals or nesting birds. Runoff from the construction site or operational roadway could impact water quality next to the project site, which would degrade habitat quality. Night lighting during construction or operation of the project could interfere with typical foraging or predation of nocturnal species in adjacent open space areas, increasing the potential for some wildlife to avoid these areas. Indirect effects are difficult to quantify because they are a result of normal activities and can vary day to

day. Temporary project impacts include those necessary for grading, staging area, construction access, borrow and disposal sites, and utility relocations.

Permanent impacts result in either new loss of habitat or create new areas of ground disturbance. There is little potential for habitat to be salvaged or regrow in an area.

Total permanent impacts to vegetation due to this project are anticipated to be approximately 0.02 acre. Permanent impacts would result from culvert replacements at culvert systems 1, 3, and 16. Culverts at these systems will be replaced with larger culverts, thereby increasing the permanent footprint of the culvert. The habitat undergoing permanent impacts (allscale scrub, annual grassland, and ruderal vegetation) is not suitable for any species due to the proximity to the roadway with increased risk of collision and the highly disturbed nature of the habitat. These impacts are considered temporary because those areas would be recontoured and revegetated with a native seed mix after construction; therefore, they would be available to be used as habitat again by species after construction.

Special-Status Plant Species: Federally and/or State Listed Species

California Jewelflower

The California jewelflower *(Caulanthus californicus)* is federally and state listed as endangered. The California jewelflower is also in the California Native Plant Society inventory of rare and endangered plants with a 1B.1 rank.

The California jewelflower is an annual herb that is part of the mustard family (Brassicaceae). The jewelflower typically blooms from February through May (California Native Plant Society, 2021a).

Kern Mallow

The Kern mallow *(Eremalche parryi ssp. kernensis)* is federally listed as endangered. The Kern mallow is also in the California Native Plant Society inventory of rare and endangered plants with a 1B.2 rank.

A small part of the action area overlaps with a small part of a presumed extant Kern mallow California Natural Diversity Database occurrence. This occurrence (EONDX#2734) is from 2016 and states that multiple Kern mallow individuals and multiple colonies have been observed within allscale scrub habitat across an area that is thousands of acres wide. Less than 1 percent of the area where the Kern Mallow has been observed is within the limits of the action area.

The Kern mallow is an annual herb that is part of the mallow family (Malvaceae) and is endemic to California (California Native Plant Society, 2021a). The Kern mallow typically occurs in the valley saltbush scrub natural community, where it grows under and around spiny and common saltbushes

and in patches with other herbaceous plants, rather than in the intervening alkali scalds.

San Joaquin Woolly-Threads

The San Joaquin woolly-threads *(Monolopia congdonii)* is a federally listed endangered species. It is also included in the California Native Plant Society inventory of rare and endangered plants with a 1B.2 rank (California Native Plant Society, 2021a).

The San Joaquin woolly-threads is typically found in chenopod scrub and valley and foothill grasslands (sandy soils) with a February through May bloom period (may bloom in January).

The nearest California Natural Diversity Database occurrence of the California jewelflower is about 1 mile from the biological study area; however, this occurrence states the species is extirpated (gone) from this location. The nearest San Joaquin woolly-threads California Natural Diversity Database occurrence is about 2 miles from the biological study area.

Focused botanical surveys of the biological study area were not completed for this project; however, these species were not observed incidentally during other surveys that occurred during the blooming season.

A total of 0.46 acre of temporary impacts is anticipated for allscale scrub habitat. Although the project has potential to impact low-quality habitat for these species, no direct impacts to the California jewelflower, Kern mallow, or San Joaquin woolly-threads are anticipated. The habitat onsite is unlikely to support these species due to the existing level of disturbance of the habitat. However, botanical surveys would be conducted within the project footprint prior to construction to ensure the California jewelflower, Kern mallow, and San Joaquin woolly-threads are not present onsite. Avoidance and minimization measures would be implemented to ensure potential impacts are minimized.

Caltrans has determined that the project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the California jewelflower, Kern mallow, or San Joaquin woolly-threads. Informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. A Letter of Concurrence is anticipated to be issued.

Culvert Impacts

Five culvert systems (Culverts 1, 2, 4, 8, and 16) are aligned with National Wetlands Inventory or National Hydrography Dataset water features. Both Salt Creek and Chico Martinez Creek are National Wetlands Inventory or National Hydrography Dataset water features. Neither Salt Creek nor Chico Martinez Creek flows through any of the 16 culvert systems. There would be no work in Salt Creek or Chico Martinez Creek or in any of the other eight

National Wetlands Inventory or National Hydrography Dataset water features that do not align with one of the 16 culvert systems proposed for work within the biological study area.

Culverts that have ordinary high water marks and/or bank features are Culverts 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 (inlet only), 9 (inlet only), 11 (inlet only), 12 (outlet only), 13, 14, 15 (inlet only), and 16. Four culvert systems (Culverts 4, 5, 6, and 10) and 5 inlets or outlets were not delineated because no ordinary high water mark and bank indicators were present. There is a total of 1.53 acres of jurisdictional waters within the 16 culvert systems in the biological study area.

Impacts to waters at each culvert were estimated by combining the area of the culvert (length of the culvert by width or diameter of culvert) and the area delineated as the ordinary high water mark or bank area that was within a 30-foot buffer around each culvert. The new culvert area was used for culverts that are to be replaced, and the existing culvert area for culverts that are to be repaired or removed was used. The 30-foot buffer around each culvert was used because that is where any impacts are anticipated to occur. If the water feature at an inlet or outlet was not delineated because it did not have an ordinary high water mark or bank area, the potential impacts to this feature were estimated by extending the width of the culvert to the edge of the 30-foot buffer to account for the channel. The 30-foot-wide buffer is contained within the 200-foot-wide biological study area.

For the project, there would be a total of approximately 0.48 acre of impacts to waters of the State in the 16 culvert systems: 0.04 acre of permanent impacts and 0.44 acre of temporary impacts.

Work at culverts would be performed during no-flow conditions. Road paving activities would not impact waterways. Culvert work would result in temporary impacts to annual grassland, ruderal areas, and allscale scrub vegetation due to trenching required to remove the existing culverts. This vegetation is upland vegetation and is not considered a wetland indicator or riparian vegetation.

At Culverts 1, 3 and 16, culverts are being replaced with larger reinforced concrete boxes, and this work would result in minor permanent impacts and an increase in culvert flow capacity. Culvert repair work would have very minor, temporary impacts to channel features that would not involve fill or result in alterations to flow or carrying capacity. Culvert replacement work would result in impacts to waterways due to soil disturbance and excavation of the culvert trench. In no case are the proposed actions anticipated to result in diminished stream flow or altered flow patterns. Culvert removal and backfill would have minor temporary impacts to waterways.

A 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife would be required. In addition, a 401 Waste Water

Discharge permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board would also be required. A Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will not be required because there is no connection between the 16 culvert systems and a Waters of the United States, or traditional navigable water.

Wetland Impacts

One potential wetland was observed in the agriculture detention basin at post mile 55.1 within the biological study area. This detention basin is outside of the project impact area for the project, outside the Caltrans right-of-way, and isolated. There are no temporary construction easements planned in areas that contain the detention basin. No impacts to the detention basin are anticipated.

There would be no impacts to the flood basin that runs parallel to the east side of State Route 33 in the biological study area from approximately post mile 46.5 to post mile 46.9. There is a large metal oil pipe between the Caltrans right-of-way and the flood basin, so physically accessing the flood basin by vehicle is impossible. The flood basin is outside the project impact area for the project and outside the Caltrans right-of-way. There are no temporary construction easements planned for the area that contains the flood basin.

There are no anticipated impacts to any wetlands or riparian habitat. There would be no tree removal at any of the 16 culvert systems.

Special-Status Animal Species: Federally and/or State Listed Species

Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard Impacts

The blunt-nosed leopard lizard is federally and state listed as endangered, in addition to having state fully protected status. This is a relatively large lizard, ranging from 3.4 to 4.7 inches, snout to vent (length). Its color varies from yellowish or light grey-brown to dark brown, depending on the surrounding soils and vegetation.

The blunt-nosed leopard lizard is a scarce resident of sparsely vegetated alkali and desert scrub habitats. Blunt-nosed leopard lizards can be found at elevations of 100 to 2,400 feet above sea level, on alkali flats, desert washes, arroyos, canyons, and low foothills. Suitable habitat for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard contains sparsely vegetated shrubs and grassland habitats in areas of low topographic relief. No designated critical habitat exists within the project area.

Temporary impacts to potential blunt-nosed leopard habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to the blunt-nosed leopard lizard or its habitat are expected.

Giant Kangaroo Rat Impacts

The giant kangaroo rat is federally and state listed as endangered. This species is found on slopes in grasslands and shrub communities. Typical habitat includes stretches of easily excavated sandy loam covered with annual grasses and herbs.

The giant kangaroo rat was not detected within the right-of-way during protocol surveys done in 2020. No giant kangaroo rat burrows were found during the trapping effort within the State Route 33 right-of-way, but potential habitat occurs in the biological study area. The right-of-way is mostly degraded from the south end of the project at post mile 40.4 to post mile 42.5, but there is suitable allscale scrub habitat outside the right-of-way that could support the giant kangaroo rat. Also, potential giant kangaroo rat burrows were seen near Trap Line 6, outside the right-of-way and east of State Route 33. Giant kangaroo rats could forage within the right-of-way between post miles 40.4 and 42.5, resulting in potential project impacts to the species. Habitat within the oil fields between post miles 42.5 and 46.9 is fragmented, but giant kangaroo rats are known to occur in isolated patches throughout the oil fields.

Temporary impacts to potential giant kangaroo rat habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to the giant kangaroo rat or its habitat are expected. While the potential exists that giant kangaroo rats taking refuge in burrows or haystacks may be entombed or crushed by vehicles and heavy equipment if present onsite, giant kangaroo rats can relocate and potentially avoid danger. Avoidance and minimization measures would be in place to minimize any potential impacts to the species, with practicable efforts made to minimize impacts to the species' habitat.

San Joaquin (Nelson's) Antelope Squirrel

The San Joaquin antelope squirrel, also known as the Nelson's antelope squirrel, is state listed as threatened. This squirrel has tiny, rounded ears and a streamlined, spindle-shaped body with short legs. Suitable habitat contains scattered shrubs, annual forbs, and grasses, and it is distributed over broken terrain with small gullies and washes. San Joaquin antelope squirrels are typically active during the day, but they avoid hot temperatures during midday. San Joaquin antelope squirrels live in family groups. Breeding occurs from February into May, with a peak in April, producing 1 litter of 10 on average.

Protocol-level small mammal trapping was performed within the project impact area in October and November of 2020. No San Joaquin antelope squirrels were captured, but two were seen in the biological study area during the survey. Incidental observations of the species were also made during field

surveys for other species. Thirty-one observations of the San Joaquin antelope squirrel were made within the biological study area between April and September of 2020 during blunt-nosed leopard lizard surveys. One individual was seen in the biological study area during general botanical surveys in July 2021; one individual was seen in the biological study area during a field review in July 2021. Most incidental observations of the San Joaquin antelope squirrel were made in the southern end of the project area within allscale habitat between post miles 40.4 and 42.4. One observation was made at the north end of the biological study area where a San Joaquin antelope squirrel was seen running away from State Route 33 in annual grassland habitat with dense patches of Russian thistle.

Critical habitat for this species is not present in the biological study area.

Temporary impacts to potential San Joaquin antelope squirrel habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to the San Joaquin antelope squirrel or its habitat are expected. However, a 2081 Incidental Take Permit is anticipated for potential impacts to this species. Preconstruction surveys and biological monitoring will ensure individuals are not within the project work zone. Mitigation for this species will be determined during the consultation process.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

The San Joaquin kit fox is federally listed as endangered and state listed as threatened. The San Joaquin kit fox is the smallest canid species in North America. Kit foxes have a small, slim body, relatively long ears set close together, a narrow nose, and a long bushy tail tapering slightly toward the black-tipped tail. They typically carry their tail low and straight.

The San Joaquin kit fox is found in the southern half of California in annual grassland or grassy open stages of vegetation with scattered shrubs and brush. San Joaquin kit foxes dig their own dens in open, level areas with loose-textured soils supporting scattered, shrubby vegetation. They are active all year, mostly nocturnal, but occasionally they can be seen during the daytime in cool weather.

Most San Joaquin kit fox habitat has been converted to urban and agricultural development, especially within the San Joaquin Valley. Remaining habitat parcels are isolated and scattered, including ruderal areas. In some areas, such as Bakersfield, San Joaquin kit foxes have adapted to urban environments and use human-made structures, including culverts, as burrows.

Suitable, but suboptimal, habitat for the San Joaquin kit fox is found in the project impact area and biological study area. This habitat includes allscale

scrub, annual grasslands, fallow agriculture fields, habitat in disturbed oil fields, and ruderal vegetation. Sign (scat) was found at one trap during a small mammal trapping survey in October 2020. A roadkill San Joaquin kit fox was seen by a Caltrans biologist in the biological study area during blunt-nosed leopard lizard surveys in September 2020.

There is no San Joaquin kit fox critical habitat in the biological study area. During 2021 field surveys, rodent burrows were seen throughout the biological study area at various distances from State Route 33. Most of the culverts were plugged with soil and vegetation, so they were not currently used by a kit fox as a means to cross State Route 33. Although this species is known to occur in the general area, San Joaquin kit foxes are not expected to occur in the project impact area during construction of this project.

Temporary impacts to potential San Joaquin kit fox habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to the San Joaquin kit fox or its habitat are expected. Construction activity has the potential to disturb individual kit foxes due to the destruction of burrows and associated noise, vibration, dust, and the presence of workers and active equipment. This potential for disturbance would be greater during any work performed at night because the species is mostly nocturnal.

Swainson's Hawk

The Swainson's hawk (*Buteo Swainsoni*) was listed as a threatened species in 1983 by the California Fish and Game Commission. This medium-sized hawk has relatively long, pointed wings that curve up somewhat while the bird is in flight. The most distinctive identifying features of adults are the dark head and breast band distinctive from the lighter-colored belly, and the underside of the wing with the linings lighter than the dark gray flight feathers.

Breeding occurs late March to late August, with peak activity late May through July. Swainson's hawks often nest near riparian systems. Foraging habitat includes dry land and irrigated pasture, alfalfa, fallow fields, low-growing row or field crops, new orchards, and cereal grain crops.

This species was not seen in the biological study area during surveys. The nearest California Natural Diversity Database occurrence is approximately 7 miles outside of the biological study area. There is no suitable nesting habitat in the biological study area because there are no riparian systems and no trees in grasslands or fallow fields. Suitable foraging habitat in the biological study area and in areas adjacent to the biological study area includes annual grasslands, fallow fields, and allscale scrub.

No impacts to nesting habitat would occur. Temporary impacts to potential Swainson's hawk foraging habitat would occur during soil disturbance

associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to the Swainson's hawk or its habitat are expected. The availability of suitable foraging habitat would not change because of the project. No tree removal is anticipated, so there would be no removal of nesting habitat. No take of this species is anticipated with implementation of avoidance and minimization measures.

Tricolored Blackbird

The tricolored blackbird *(Agelaius* tricolor*)* was listed as state threatened in 2018. Tricolored blackbirds are gregarious birds, often seen in large compact groups year-round.

Tricolored blackbirds breed near fresh water, preferably in emergent wetland with tall, dense cattails or tules, but also in thickets of willow, blackberry, wild rose, tall herbs. This bird feeds in grassland and cropland habitats. The species' basic requirements for selecting breeding sites are open accessible water; a protected nesting substrate, including either flooded or thorny or spiny vegetation; and a suitable foraging space providing adequate insect prey within a few miles of the nesting colony. Tricolored blackbirds forage on ground in croplands, grassy fields, flooded land, and along edges of ponds.

This species was not observed in the biological study area during surveys. The nearest California Natural Diversity Database occurrence is approximately 2 miles outside of the biological study area. There is one agriculture detention basin at post mile 55.1 that is filled with cattails. This basin is approximately 1.7 acres, and there are no sources of open water in the basin. It is unlikely this basin will be used for nesting habitat due to its small size and lack of open water.

There is suitable foraging habitat in the biological study area and in areas adjacent to the biological study area within the annual grasslands. The agriculture detention basin is outside the project impact area, and there would be no impacts to the detention basin. Therefore, no impacts to potential nesting habitat for tricolored blackbirds would occur.

Temporary impacts to potential tricolored blackbird foraging habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to tricolored blackbirds or their habitat are expected. The availability of foraging habitat would not change due to the proposed project. No take of this species is anticipated with implementation of avoidance and minimization measures.

Special-Status Animal Species: Special-Status Non-Listed Species

San Joaquin Coachwhip

The San Joaquin coachwhip is a California species of special concern. The San Joaquin coachwhip is a snake that ranges from 3 to 8 feet long. Coloration is highly variable: light yellow, olive brown, or occasionally reddish above, with a few pale or no neck bands, and may be light below. These snakes inhabit a variety of habitats, including desert, prairie, scrubland, juniper-grassland, woodland, thorn forest, and farmland.

Marginally suitable habitat in the form of allscale scrub is present in the biological study area. Fallow fields and ruderal vegetation provide habitat that is anywhere from poor quality to not suitable depending on the presence or absence of annual grasses as food source for prey.

Temporary impacts to potential habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to San Joaquin coachwhips or their habitat are expected.

Burrowing Owls

The burrowing owl is a California species of special concern. The burrowing owl is the only owl in North America that nests in underground burrows. This small owl (about 9 inches long, with a 15-inch wingspan, and weighing 5 to 8 ounces) is brown with white spots on the wings and back, with an off-white breast with brown bars. The eyes are yellow, and the face is highlighted by a white eyebrow.

Burrowing owls can be active during the day or night. Their habitat consists of open, dry annual or perennial grasslands, deserts, or open scrublands with low vegetation, soils suitable for digging, and a suitable prey base of burrowing rodents, small reptiles, and insects. Suitable habitat is identified by the presence of potential burrows, perch sites, and/or burrowing owl sign such as scat, tracks, or feathers associated with burrowing owl survey guidelines.

No burrowing owls were incidentally observed during surveys. A focused burrowing owl survey was not completed. The nearest California Natural Diversity Database occurrence is from 2017, less than half a mile from the biological study area. This record indicated that an active burrow was seen 500 feet west of State Route 33 in 2017. The burrow was in cattle-grazed grassland.

General habitat associations were determined during field surveys. This included habitat requirements of grasslands, fallow fields, and sparsely vegetated scrub seen during surveys. Allscale scrub provides potential habitat

for this species in the biological study area. Some of the annual grasslands are fenced in, and fencing may provide perch sites for burrowing owls. Fallow agriculture fields provide habitat that is anywhere from poor quality to not suitable for the species depending on the presence or absence of annual grasses as a food source for prey.

Temporary impacts to potential habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to burrowing owls or their habitat are expected. While there is potential that burrowing owls taking refuge in their burrows may be entombed or crushed by vehicles and heavy equipment if present onsite, owls can relocate to avoid danger. Avoidance and minimization measures would be in place to minimize any potential impacts to the species.

Le Conte's Thrasher

Le Conte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei)* is a California species of special concern and is often a permanent resident, though this bird has been recorded in some parts of its range only in the breeding season. It typically nests and forages in sparsely vegetated desert flats, dunes, alluvial fans, or gently rolling hills with saltbush and/or cholla *(Cylindropuntia sp.).* The bird generally does not inhabit steep-sided canyons, preferring small arroyos, open flats, or dunes. Nesting may begin in February or even January and last until June in some areas.

Le Conte's thrasher was not seen in the biological study area during surveys. Marginally suitable habitat for foraging and nesting is present in the biological study area in the form of allscale scrub. Le Conte's thrasher could nest in allscale shrubs found in the biological study area or adjacent to the biological study area.

Temporary impacts to potential habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to Le Conte's thrashers or their habitat are expected. No take of this species is anticipated with implementation of avoidance and minimization measures.

Loggerhead Shrike

The loggerhead shrike is a California species of special concern only when nesting (according to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife special-status species list). Loggerhead shrikes require an open habitat with an area to forage, elevated perches, and nesting sites. These birds are often found in open pastures or grasslands and appear to prefer red-cedar and hawthorn trees for nesting. Nesting activities for this species generally occur March through early August.

Poor quality nesting habitat in the form of allscale scrub is present in the biological study area. The allscale habitat in the biological study area is disturbed by traffic noise and vibrations daily. There are no fences in the allscale habitat from which a loggerhead shrike may perch for foraging. This species was seen during protocol-level small mammal and blunt-nosed leopard lizard surveys completed in the biological study area in 2020.

Temporary impacts to potential habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to loggerhead shrikes or their habitat are expected. No take of this species is anticipated with implementation of avoidance and minimization measures.

American Badger

The American badger is a California species of special concern and is found mostly in grasslands and other open habitats with friable, uncultivated soils. American badgers are solitary animals who are mainly active at night. They construct underground burrows for protection and sleeping. A typical den may be as far as 10 feet below the surface and contain approximately 33 feet of tunnels and an enlarged sleeping chamber.

Allscale scrub provides marginal habitat for this species in the biological study area. Annual grasslands and fallow agricultural fields provide habitat that is anywhere from poor quality to not suitable for the species depending on the presence or absence of annual grasses as a food source for prey. Two roadkill individuals were found during a field review.

Temporary impacts to potential habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to American badgers or their habitat are expected. No take of this species is anticipated with implementation of avoidance and minimization measures.

Short-Nosed Kangaroo Rat

The short-nosed kangaroo rat is a California species of special concern and is found mostly in arid grasslands with scattered shrubs and shrublands, and friable soils. This species is nocturnal and active year-round. Allscale scrub provides habitat for this species in the biological study area. Annual grasslands, fallow agricultural fields, and ruderal vegetation provide habitat that is anywhere from poor quality to not suitable for the species depending on the presence or absence of annual grasses as a food source.

This species was present during small mammal trapping surveys of the biological study area of the Caltrans right-of-way in 2020. All animals captured were in excellent overall health. There were 20 total captures of the

short-nosed kangaroo rat: 12 new captures and 8 recaptures. Short-nosed kangaroo rats were captured in ruderal vegetation adjacent to either allscale scrub or annual grassland.

Temporary impacts to potential habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to short-nosed kangaroo rats or their habitat are expected. No take of this species is anticipated with implementation of avoidance and minimization measures.

Tulare Grasshopper Mouse

The Tulare grasshopper mouse is a California species of special concern. This mouse is found mostly in arid shrubland communities along the western margin of the Tulare Basin, including western Kern County, Carrizo Plain Natural Area, and the Cuyama Valley side of the Caliente Mountains, San Luis Obispo County, and the Ciervo-Panoche Region, in Fresno and San Benito counties. Tulare grasshopper mice are nocturnal and active year-round.

Allscale scrub and ruderal vegetation provide habitat for this species in the biological study area. This species was present during small mammal trapping surveys of the biological study area of the Caltrans right-of-way in 2020. There were two total captures of the Tulare grasshopper mouse: two new captures and no recaptures. Tulare grasshopper mice were captured in ruderal vegetation adjacent to allscale scrub.

Temporary impacts to potential habitat would occur during soil disturbance associated with culvert replacements. Temporary impacts associated with culvert re-linings would be less invasive with minor soil disturbance at the culvert inlets. No permanent impacts to Tulare grasshopper mice or their habitat are expected. While the potential exists for this species to be crushed by vehicles and heavy equipment, it can move and potentially may avoid danger. Avoidance and minimization measures would be in place to minimize any potential impacts to the species.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Special-Status Plant Species: Federally and/or State Listed Species and Non-Listed Species

Potential avoidance and minimization efforts for this project consist of the following:

- Preconstruction Worker Environmental Awareness Training will be held for all project personnel, and special-status species that are present and have potential to be present and protection requirements for each species will be discussed.

- Preconstruction botanical surveys will be conducted during the blooming season prior to construction using the California Department of Fish and Wildlife *Protocols for Surveying and Evaluation Impacts to Special-Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities*, dated March 20, 2018. The project impact area and all areas within temporary construction easements will be walked by Caltrans biologists, and all plant species that are observed will be documented during the preconstruction survey. Plants that are not immediately identifiable will be collected and identified using The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California (Hickman and Jepson, 1993).

- If any special-status plant species including, but not limited to, the California jewelflower, Kern mallow, or San Joaquin woolly-threads are discovered during preconstruction botanical surveys or construction, Caltrans will coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife as needed to determine the best plan of action to avoid impacts to sensitive plant species.

Blunt-Nosed Leopard Lizard

Although blunt-nosed leopard lizards are not expected to be in the project impact area, this is a fully protected species, and there is potential habitat in the biological study area. Potential avoidance and minimization efforts for this species may include the following:

- Preconstruction surveys for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard will be conducted using the California Department of Fish and Wildlife-approved survey methodology for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard. The project impact area for each culvert that supports suitable blunt-nosed leopard lizard habitat, with a 50-foot-wide buffer where feasible, will be surveyed by Caltrans biologists.

- If blunt-nosed leopard lizards are found within the biological study area, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be contacted to discuss ways to proceed with the project and avoid take to the maximum extent possible.

- A biological monitor will be onsite during initial ground-disturbing activities in areas of suitable blunt-nosed leopard lizard habitat.

- Project-related vehicles should observe a daytime speed limit of 20 miles per hour throughout the site in all project areas, except on county roads and state and federal highways. Requiring low speed limits within the construction site will lessen the probability that blunt-nosed leopard lizards can be run over by vehicles and equipment.

Giant Kangaroo Rat

The following are avoidance and minimization measures for the giant kangaroo rat:

- A qualified biologist will be present at the construction site during initial ground-disturbing activities and for activities in habitat that may contain the species.

- A preconstruction survey will occur for the giant kangaroo rat. All habitat within the project impact area that could support this species will be included in the preconstruction survey area. If this species is present within the project impact area, work will cease, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be contacted. To the greatest extent practicable, efforts will be made to avoid the species' habitat.

- Project-related vehicles should observe a daytime speed limit of 20 miles per hour throughout the site in all project areas, except on county roads and state and federal highways. Requiring low speed limits within the construction site will lessen the probability that kangaroo rats can be run over by vehicles and equipment.

San Joaquin Antelope Squirrel

Potential avoidance and minimization measures for this species may include the following based on coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife:

- Preconstruction visual surveys will be performed within 30 days prior to construction.

- Surveys will be conducted within the project footprint and a 50-foot area outside the project impact area to identify habitat features.

- Active San Joaquin antelope squirrel burrows will be marked with a pin flag and avoided with a 50-foot buffer area, where possible.

- If avoidance is not possible, then the burrow will be hand excavated by a biological monitor with a current San Joaquin antelope squirrel handling permit.

- The biological monitor will be present at the construction site during ground-disturbing activities at each culvert.

- Prior to initiating construction of the project, a biological monitor will provide a Worker Environmental Awareness Training for all project personnel. Training will cover special-status species that are present or

have potential to be present in the biological study area and protection requirements for each species.

- Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing will be installed at the limit of the project impact area at all culverts that contain suitable San Joaquin antelope squirrel habitat prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities. Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing installation and removal will be monitored by a Caltrans/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/California Department of Fish and Wildlife-approved biological monitor or biologist.

- Project-related vehicles should observe a daytime speed limit of 20 miles per hour throughout the site in all project areas, except on county roads and state and federal highways. Requiring low speed limits within the construction site will lessen the probability that San Joaquin (Nelson's) antelope squirrels can be run over by vehicles and equipment.

- All steep-walled trenches or excavations deeper than 12 inches will include escape ramps. At least one escape ramp will be provided in any onsite trenches or excavations at no more than a 2 to 1 slope. Such trenches or excavations will be inspected for wildlife immediately prior to backfilling.

- Any holes, trenches, or excavations without escape ramps that will not be filled within the working day must be covered overnight and inspected prior to beginning work on the following day.

An incidental take permit is anticipated for the San Joaquin (Nelson's) antelope squirrel. Mitigation measures proposed for impacts to the San Joaquin antelope squirrel may include:

- Compensation for loss of habitat through purchase of credits from a mitigation bank, preservation of habitat, or enhancement or restoration of habitat as identified through coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

San Joaquin Kit Fox

Based on the potential for kit foxes to occur, Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is anticipated. Avoidance and minimization efforts are anticipated to be similar to the following:

- Project-related vehicles should observe a 20 miles per hour speed limit in all project areas, except on county roads and state and federal highways; this is particularly important at night when kit foxes are most active. To the extent possible, night-time construction should be minimized. Off-road traffic outside of designated project areas should be prohibited.

- To prevent inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes or other animals during the construction phase of a project, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than 2 feet deep should be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they should be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals.

- Preconstruction/pre-activity surveys will be conducted no less than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities or any project activity likely to impact San Joaquin kit foxes.

- Surveys will be conducted within the proposed project boundary and a 200-foot-wide buffer where feasible outside the project impact area to identify habitat features.

- Food trash and other garbage that may attract wildlife to the work area will be disposed of in closed containers and removed at the end of each workday. Feeding of any wildlife will be prohibited.

- All construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of 4 inches or greater that are stored at a construction site for one or more overnight periods should be thoroughly inspected for kit foxes before the pipe is used or moved in any way.

- Use of rodenticides and herbicides in project areas should be restricted.

- Firearms, except by qualified and permitted public safety agents, and pets will not be permitted on the work site.

- A Worker Environmental Awareness Training for the San Joaquin kit fox will be provided to all construction workers before the start of construction.

- If natal/pupping dens are discovered within the project area or within 200 feet of the project impact area, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be immediately notified.

- A 250-foot-wide no-disturbance buffer will be established around natal dens, with a 150-foot-wide no-disturbance buffer around known dens, and a 50-foot-wide no-disturbance around potential or atypical dens. Disturbance to all San Joaquin kit fox dens will be avoided to the maximum extent possible.

- A qualified biologist will be present at the construction site during initial ground-disturbing activities at each culvert where there has been evidence of San Joaquin kit fox presence.

- To the extent possible, a biologist will be available on-call during all construction periods when not present onsite.

- Section 7 Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is anticipated for the San Joaquin kit fox. Mitigation, if required, will be determined in coordination with the resource agencies during the consultation process. It is anticipated that a Letter of Concurrence would be issued before construction is started for the project.

Swainson's Hawk and Tricolored Blackbird

- In accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, to avoid effects to nesting birds, any native or exotic vegetation removal or tree-trimming activities should occur outside of the nesting bird season.

- If construction occurs during the nesting season, February 1 to September 30, a biological monitor will conduct a preconstruction nesting survey to ensure no Swainson's hawks or tricolored blackbirds are nesting in the biological study area or adjacent to the project area.

- If nesting Swainson's hawks or tricolored blackbirds are found onsite, a 500-foot no-disturbance buffer will be established around the nesting birds.

Special-Status Animal Species: Special-Status Non-Listed Species

San Joaquin Coachwhip

Potential avoidance and minimization efforts for this species may include the following:

- Preconstruction surveys of the project impact area will be conducted to avoid potential impacts to this species.

- A qualified biologist will be present at the construction site during initial ground-disturbing activities and for activities in habitat that may contain the species.

- Project-related vehicles should observe a 20 miles per hour speed limit in all project areas, except on county roads and state and federal highways. Requiring low speed limits within the construction site will lessen the probability that snakes can be run over by vehicles and equipment.

- Areas of disturbance will be recontoured and revegetated with a native seed mix.

Burrowing Owl

Avoidance and minimization efforts for the burrowing owl include the following:

- To ensure that any burrowing owls that may occupy the biological study area in the future are not affected by the project, preconstruction surveys will be completed 30 days prior to construction following the California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2012 surveys guidelines outlined in the 2012 Staff Report for Burrowing Owl Mitigation.

- If nesting burrowing owls are found onsite, a no-disturbance buffer will be established around the nesting owls, with reference to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2012 Staff Report.

Le Conte's Trasher

The following are proposed avoidance and minimization measures for Le Conte's thrasher:

- In accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, to avoid effects to nesting birds, any native or exotic vegetation removal or tree-trimming activities should occur outside of the nesting bird season.

- If construction occurs during the nesting season, February 1 to September 30, a biological monitor will conduct a preconstruction nesting survey to ensure no Le Conte's thrashers are nesting in the project area.

- If nesting Le Conte's thrashers are found onsite, a 100-foot no-disturbance buffer will be established around the nesting birds.

- During the nesting season, a qualified biologist will be present at the construction site during initial ground-disturbing activities and for activities in habitat that may contain the species.

Loggerhead Shrike

The following are proposed avoidance and minimization measures for the loggerhead shrike:

- In accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, to avoid effects to nesting birds, any native or exotic vegetation removal or tree-trimming activities should occur outside of the nesting bird season.

- If construction occurs during the nesting season, February 1 to September 30, a biological monitor will conduct a preconstruction nesting survey to ensure no loggerhead shrikes are nesting in the project area.

- If nesting loggerhead shrike are found onsite, a 100-foot no-disturbance buffer will be established around the nesting birds.

- During the nesting season, a qualified biologist will be present at the construction site during initial ground-disturbing activities and for activities in habitat that may contain the species.

American Badger

The following are proposed avoidance and minimization measures for the American badger:

- Preconstruction surveys of the project impact area and Caltrans right-of-way will be conducted to avoid potential impacts to this species.
- A qualified biologist will be present at the construction site during initial ground-disturbing activities and for activities in habitat that may contain the species.
- Preconstruction Worker Environmental Awareness Training will be held for all project personnel discussing special-status species that are present and have potential to be present and protection requirements for each species.

Short-Nosed Kangaroo Rat

The following are avoidance and minimization measures for the short-nosed kangaroo rat:

- A preconstruction survey of the project impact area will occur for the short-nosed kangaroo rat. If this species is observed onsite, the animal will be allowed to leave on its own volition. To the greatest extent practicable, efforts will be made to avoid the species' habitat.
- A biological monitor will be present during initial ground-disturbing activities.

Tulare Grasshopper Mouse

Potential avoidance and minimization efforts for this species may include the following:

- Preconstruction surveys of the project impact area will be conducted to avoid potential impacts to this species.
- A qualified biologist will be present at the construction site during initial ground-disturbing activities.
- Project-related vehicles should observe a 20 miles per hour speed limit in all project areas, except on county roads and state and federal highways. Requiring low speed limits within the construction site will lessen the probability that mice can be run over by vehicles and equipment.

2.1.5 Cultural Resources

Considering the information in the Section 106 Compliance Screened Project/ Activity Memo dated May 26, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.6 Energy

Considering the information in the Draft Project Report dated June 24, 2019, 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 Paleontological Identification Report dated September 25, 2020, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Geology and Soils
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	**No Impact**
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	**No Impact**
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	**No Impact**
iv) Landslides?	**No Impact**
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	**No Impact**
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in onsite or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	**No Impact**
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	**No Impact**
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	**No Impact**
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	**No Impact**

2.1.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Considering the information in the Climate Change Study dated September 10, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Greenhouse Gas Emissions
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	**Less Than Significant Impact**
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The project is included in the 2018 Kern Council of Government's Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. The Air Resources Board's greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for the Kern Council of Governments at the time the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy was adopted were 5 percent by 2020 and 10 percent by 2035.

The Sustainable Communities Strategy strives to reduce air emissions from passenger vehicle and light duty truck travel by better coordinating transportation expenditures with forecasted development patterns to help meet the California Air Resources Board greenhouse gas targets for the region. These strategies include well-maintained local streets, roads, and highways, and transportation system management to maximize network efficiency (Kern Council of Governments 2018).

Environmental Consequences

Construction greenhouse gas emissions would result from material processing, onsite construction equipment, and traffic delays due to construction. These emissions will 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.

In addition, with innovations such as longer pavement lives, improved traffic management plans, and changes in materials, the greenhouse gas emissions produced during construction can be offset to some degree by longer intervals between maintenance and rehabilitation activities.

A greenhouse gas emissions study using the Federal Highway Administration's Infrastructure Carbon Estimator Tool has been prepared for this project.

This project will generate the following construction and maintenance greenhouse gas emissions:

1. 3,737 metric tons of carbon dioxide (C02) are the proposed construction greenhouse gas emissions for this project.

2. 3,647 metric tons of carbon dioxide (C02) are the proposed maintenance greenhouse gas emissions for this project. There would be a 2.41 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions due to alternative construction and maintenance techniques.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

All construction contracts include Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 7-1.02A and 7-1.02C, Emissions Reduction, which require contractors to comply with all laws applicable to the project and to certify they are aware of and will comply with all Air Resources Board emission reduction regulations; and Section 14-9.02, Air Pollution Control, which 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.

2.1.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Considering the information in the Initial Site Assessment dated November 5, 2018, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

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

2.1.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Considering the information in the Water Compliance Memo dated June 18, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Hydrology and Water Quality
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface water or groundwater quality?	**No Impact**
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	**No Impact**

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

2.1.11 Land Use and Planning

Considering the information in the Draft Project Report and Project Initiation Report dated June 24, 2019, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.12 Mineral Resources

Considering the information in the Mineral Resource Deposit Database from the U.S. Geological Survey, dated September 28, 2016, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.13 Noise

Considering the information in the Noise Compliance Study dated August 30, 2021, the following significance determinations have been made:

Question—Would the project result in:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Noise
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	**No Impact**
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	**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 two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	**No Impact**

Affected Environment

The area within the project limits and adjacent to the project is rural. Land uses designated for this area are composed of empty fields and open space.

Environmental Consequences

During construction of the project, noise from construction activities may intermittently dominate the noise environment in the immediate area of construction. Construction noise is regulated by Caltrans Standard Specifications Section 14-8, “Noise Control.”

Construction equipment is expected to generate noise levels ranging from 80 to 88 A-weighted decibels from a distance of 50 feet, and noise produced by construction equipment would be reduced over distance at a rate of about 6 decibels per doubling of distance. No adverse noise impacts from construction are anticipated because construction would be conducted in a rural setting and in accordance with Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 14-8.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measures would minimize the temporary noise impacts from construction:

- Do not exceed a maximum sound level of 86 A-weighted decibels at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.
- Equip an internal combustion engine with the manufacturer-recommended muffler. Do not operate an internal combustion engine on the job site without the appropriate muffler.

2.1.14 Population and Housing

Considering the information in the Draft Project Report dated June 24, 2019, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.15 Public Services

Considering the information in the Draft Project Report dated June 24, 2019, 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

Considering the information in the Draft Project Report dated June 24, 2019, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

2.1.17 Transportation

Considering the information in the Draft Project Report dated June 24, 2019, 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**
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 Section 106 Screen Project/Activity Compliance Memo dated May 26, 2021, 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	**No Impact**

Question:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Tribal Cultural Resources
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.	**No Impact**

2.1.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Considering the information in the Draft Project Report dated June 24, 2019, the following significance determinations have been made:

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

Question—Would the project:	CEQA Significance Determinations for Utilities and Service Systems
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	**No Impact**

2.1.20 Wildfire

Considering the information in the U.S. Operational Fire Danger Forecast Database from the U.S. Geological Survey, dated December 21, 2018, the following significance determinations have been made:

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?	**No Impact**
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	**No Impact**
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	**No Impact**

Appendix A Title VI Policy Statement

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY Gavin Newsom, Governor

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August 2020

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensures *"No person in the United States shall, on the ground 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."*

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. In addition, Caltrans will facilitate meaningful participation in the transportation planning process in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Related federal statutes, remedies, and state law further those protections to include sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and age.

For information or guidance on how to file a complaint, or obtain more information regarding Title VI, please contact the Title VI Branch Manager at (916) 324-8379 or visit the following web page: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/civil-rights/title-vi.

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille or in a language other than English, please contact the California Department of Transportation, Office of Civil Rights, at 1823 14th Street, MS-79, Sacramento, CA 95811; (916) 324-8379 (TTY 711); or at <Title.VI@dot.ca.gov>.

Original signed by
Toks Omishakin
Director

"Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability"

List of Technical Studies Bound Separately (Volume 2)

Air Quality Report

Noise Study Report

Water Quality Report

Natural Environment Study

Historical Property Survey Report

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

Hazardous Waste Reports

- Initial Site Assessment

Initial Paleontology Study

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

Trais Norris
District 6 Environmental, California Department of Transportation
2015 East Shields Avenue, Suite 100, Fresno, CA 93726

Or send your request via email to: trais.norris@dot.ca.gov
Or call: 209-601-3521

Please provide the following information in your request:

Project title: Blackwell's Corner Capital Preventative Maintenance

General location information: State Route 33 in Kern County near McKittrick Avenue, from the end of Cymric Wash Bridge to 1.1 mile south of the State Route 33/46 junction

District number-county code-route-post mile: 06-KER-33-40.4/59.0

Project ID number: 06-1900-0010