

Chapter 4: Cultural Resources Identification

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4.1	Introduction.....	1
4.2	Establish Undertaking.....	2
4.2.1	Screened Undertakings	3
4.2.2	Undertakings Requiring Studies	5
4.3	Define APE or Study Area.....	5
4.3.1	Direct APE	7
4.3.2	Indirect APE.....	8
4.4	Begin Identification	9
4.4.1	Properties Exempt from Evaluation.....	10
4.4.2	Properties Requiring Study.....	13
4.5	Background Research	18
4.6	Initial Surveys	19
4.6.1	Reconnaissance Surveys.....	19
4.6.2	Native American Consultation.....	19
4.6.3	Field Surveys	20
4.6.4	Recordation.....	23
4.6.5	Reporting.....	24
4.6.6	Report Review and Distribution	25
4.7	Cultural Resources Evaluations	26
4.7.1	Requesting Evaluations.....	26
4.7.2	Conducting Evaluations	27
4.8	Cultural Resources Study Documents	29
4.8.1	Using Existing Documents	29
4.8.2	Combining Documents	29

Chapter 4:

Cultural Resources Identification

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the general process of identifying cultural resources, those processes that pertain to properties requiring consideration under [Section 106](#) of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). It discusses establishing an undertaking and defining an Area of Potential Effects (APE), then describes the types of properties requiring study, the appropriate cultural resources staff to conduct those studies, and the process for beginning background research and conducting initial surveys. It also includes a brief general discussion of conducting evaluations and preparing documents, referring to [Chapters 5, 6, and 7](#) for specific direction on evaluation by discipline and resource type. The same general process is also used for compliance with CEQA and, when state-owned resources are involved, California Public Resources Code [\(PRC\) 5024](#). [Exhibit 4.1](#), the Cultural Resources Process Checklist provides guidance for the initial steps in checklist form. While it is not necessary to complete the checklist for record-keeping purposes, some staff might find it helpful to do so.

This chapter also provides guidance on compliance with the terms of the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement ([Section 106 PA](#))¹, which went into effect on January 1, 2014, and the PRC 5024 Memorandum of Understanding ([5024MOU](#))². The Section 106 PA governs all undertakings under the Federal-Aid Highway Program in California, which means that all Caltrans projects with Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) involvement now follow the Section 106 PA instead of 36 CFR 800, except where the Section 106 PA itself directs otherwise. The attachments to the Section 106 PA also provide general guidance that Caltrans follows on non-federal projects. When state-owned historical resources are located within the Project Area Limits of a project or activity that is not a

¹ *First Amended Programmatic Agreement Among the Federal Highway Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the California Department of Transportation Regarding Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as it Pertains to the Administration of the Federal-Aid Highway Program in California*, effective January 1, 2014.

² *Memorandum of Understanding Between the California Department of Transportation and the California Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Compliance with Public Resources Code 5024 and Governor's Executive Order W-26-92*, effective January 1, 2015.

federal undertaking, the 5024 MOU and its attachments performs essentially the same functions as the Section 106 PA.

Under the Section 106 PA and the 5024 MOU, Caltrans cultural resources staff who have been trained in implementation of the Section 106 PA, meet the professional qualifications standards described in [Section 106 PA/5024 MOU](#) Attachment 1, and have been certified by the Cultural Studies Office (CSO) are deemed to be Professionally Qualified Staff (Caltrans PQS) who may conduct specified activities under the Section 106 PA.

The Caltrans PQS designation applies to Caltrans staff *only*.

Appropriately qualified consultants, while not certified by Caltrans as PQS, may conduct cultural resources surveys, exempt properties in accordance with [Section 106 PA/5024 MOU](#) Attachment 4, and prepare documents, as long as Caltrans PQS oversee their activities. All work under the Section 106 PA, whether by Caltrans PQS or by consultants, must be reviewed and approved by Caltrans PQS, in addition to any other approvals, before it is considered final.

4.2 Establish Undertaking

The Project Development Team (PDT, defined in the [Project Development Procedures Manual](#)) identifies any federal involvement on a project and determines the existence of an undertaking subject to Section 106.

Undertaking, as defined by the 1992 amendments to NHPA, means any project, program, or activity with federal funding or under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a federal agency, including federal license, permit, or approval, or administered pursuant to federal agency delegation or approval.

Undertakings that may result in changes in the character or use of historic properties, regardless of whether any such properties are known to exist, are subject to Section 106. The federal *action* defines the undertaking, not the anticipated presence or absence of historic properties.

When the PDT has determined that a project is an undertaking subject to Section 106, it is the responsibility of Caltrans PQS to determine whether the undertaking can be screened in accordance with Section 106 PA [Attachment 2 \(Exhibit 1.1\)](#) and Section [4.2.1](#), below, or if it is an undertaking requiring studies, Section [4.2.2](#), below. Under

CEQA and for state-only projects, the term undertaking is not used, but the process is the same.

Other federal agencies may have involvement that would constitute an undertaking with or without FHWA participation. For example, a federal agency's permit requirement, such as a Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management use permit, would also trigger Section 106. When CSO, as assigned by FHWA, is the lead agency, other agencies may fulfill their Section 106 responsibilities for the undertaking by using applicable provisions of the Section 106 PA, at CSO's discretion.

4.2.1 Screened Undertakings

Not all undertakings have equal potential to affect historic properties. The Section 106 PA allows Caltrans PQS to screen certain specific types of individual undertakings with low potential for effect, and if appropriate, to determine them exempt from further review or consultation under Section 106. Section 106 PA [Attachment 2](#) lists 30 classes of undertakings that appropriately qualified Caltrans staff may screen; for historic bridges and tunnels, see [Exhibit 7.3](#) for a list of undertakings that can be screened.

Caltrans uses the same process for screened undertakings for state-only projects. For projects and activities with state-owned cultural resources there are similar classes of projects and activities that are found in the [5024 MOU Attachment 2](#).

There are restrictions on the screening process:

- It must be done in accordance with the terms of Attachment 2, and only Caltrans PQS may conduct it.
- Only the listed undertakings, or a combination of those listed undertakings, may be screened.
- If a project includes any elements other than those listed, it will not qualify for screening.
- All features of the undertaking must be identified prior to screening, and any subsequent changes or addition of features to the project may require that the undertaking be re-screened.
- If conditions must be imposed on an undertaking to ensure that potential historic properties would not be affected (e.g., fencing to protect an archaeological site), an undertaking will not qualify as exempt from further review.

Caltrans PQS conduct the screening by first examining the undertaking to determine if it meets the classes of screened undertakings. They then follow one or more of the screening procedures described in [Section 106 PA/5024 MOU Attachment 2](#), as appropriate to the undertaking, the area, and the potential for historic properties to be present. The Caltrans PQS may conduct a field review, examine project plans, consult with knowledgeable people, or review relevant documents, such as previous studies, maps, or photographs of the project area. The extent of the screening effort should be in proportion to the complexity, scale, and location of the undertaking and the potential for historic properties to be present and to be affected.

If the undertaking meets the requirements of [Section 106 PA/5024 MOU Attachment 2](#), and the screening process reveals there is *no* potential for historic properties to be affected, the Caltrans PQS may determine that an undertaking is exempt from further review.

If the project fails to meet the requirements of Section 106 PA/5024 MOU Attachment 2, if conditions must be imposed on the project to ensure that properties would not be affected, or if the Caltrans PQS determines that there is some potential for historic properties to be affected, the undertaking is subject to further review and consultation, and it may require cultural resources studies, as described in Section [4.2.2](#), below.

Caltrans PQS at any level of certification may conduct screening; however, other Caltrans PQS of different levels or qualifications are to be consulted as needed to ensure that the screening process is conducted and concluded appropriately.

Caltrans PQS exercise their professional judgment in conducting the screening process, and they must not allow either external or internal pressures to influence their decisions. The outcome of the screening process must be objective and defensible, as conclusions will be included in the Section 106 PA's or the 5024 MOU's Annual Report and are subject to audit. Failure to comply with the standards set in Attachment 2 could jeopardize Caltrans' continuing use of the Section 106 PA and the use of the 5024 MOU.

The Screened Undertaking memo for the project manager and files, which the Caltrans PQS has signed, constitutes the only documentation necessary for screened undertakings that have been determined exempt from further review. By signing this documentation, the Caltrans PQS commits Caltrans to the finding that the undertaking qualifies as exempt in accordance with Section 106 PA/PRC 5024 Attachment 2. This documentation

completes the Section 106 process for the undertaking; however, any subsequent changes to the project may require re-screening to determine if the undertaking as modified still meets the requirements of Attachment 2. See [Exhibit 2.5](#) for guidance on preparing the memo.

4.2.2 Undertakings Requiring Studies

When Caltrans PQS determine that an undertaking may require cultural resources studies, the Caltrans PQS forwards project to the District Environmental Branch Chief (DEBC) and the District Heritage Resource Coordinator (HRC), who are jointly responsible for determining which cultural resources studies are required for a given project and for coordinating any required work with the appropriate cultural resources specialists. Caltrans PQS then proceed in accordance with the direction below, beginning with defining an APE or Study Area in conjunction with the Project Manager.

4.3 Define APE or Study Area

The Area of Potential Effects (APE) is the area within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, should any be present. Setting an APE is a prospective activity, and the known or suspected presence or absence of actual historic properties is irrelevant at this stage. Establishing the APE is the first step in determining the scope of identification efforts, and it is a prelude to initiating cultural resources surveys (see Chapter 2 [Section 2.3.3](#) and Section 106 PA [Attachment 3](#) for additional guidance). Similarly, Caltrans follows the same process for CEQA and PRC 5024 compliance, except that the area is called the Project Area Limits (PAL); see [Chapter 2 Section 2.7.3](#) for CEQA; [Chapter 2 Section 2.8.2](#) and [5024 MOU Attachment 3](#).

Under the Section 106 PA, Caltrans has been delegated the authority to set APEs, and when the guidelines set forth in Attachment 3 are followed, project-specific consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) regarding APE and level of effort will typically not be necessary. Similarly under CEQA and the terms of the 5024 MOU for state-owned cultural resources, Caltrans has the authority to set PALs.

The Caltrans Project Manager and Caltrans PQS are jointly responsible for establishing the APE and for signing the APE map for any undertakings.

In practice, it is often useful for the DEBC and HRC, in consultation with the PDT, to designate a Study Area early in the process when detailed project information is not yet

available or project limits may be subject to change. This preliminary Study Area should encompass all properties that could potentially end up within the APE, and it should be revised as project details are developed. The final APE will include only those properties that are found to be subject to potential effects as a result of the undertaking's final design.

An APE may encompass the right of way or an area either more or less than the right of way, depending on the undertaking's potential for effects. Effects to be considered can be both *direct* and *indirect*. They may include direct effects such as physical damage to or destruction of a property, alterations, or moving or realigning a historic property; or they may include indirect effects such as isolating a property from its setting; visual, audible, or atmospheric intrusions; shadow effects; vibrations; or change in access or use.

The guiding principle on delineating an APE is that it should be commensurate with, and provide for, an appropriate level of effort to take into account an undertaking's potential for effects on historic properties.

The final APE map should be drawn to encompass the whole, or the reasonably anticipated boundaries, of historic properties that are subject to effect. APE maps must be of a scale suitable to depict the boundaries of major project features (e.g., right of way and edge of pavement) relative to the boundaries of any identified cultural resources.

If there is a large potential resource such as a historic district or long linear property extending into or through the APE, the entire resource must be considered as a whole, and the property within the APE must be considered in the context of the whole property. However, very large properties need not be recorded beyond the area reasonably subject to effect, nor does the APE need to be extended to include entire large or complex resources where potential effects on the whole would clearly be negligible. For example, the APE would not encompass boundaries of archaeological sites that extend for a considerable distance beyond the area to be affected, such as may be the case with lithic scatters in the California desert.

The final APE map must be formally designated by the time the Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) is complete, and the map will appear as an exhibit in the HPSR. The same procedures are followed for state-only projects, but the limits are called Project Area Limits instead of APE.

For particularly complex projects, consultation with SHPO early in the scoping process is recommended to ensure that the APE is adequate for consideration of the project's potential effects. SHPO consultation may be initiated through the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement and Coordination Branch (Section 106 Branch) Chief in CSO. Coordination with CSO is also encouraged when setting APEs that address issues of logical termini or independent utility. In both instances, contact the CSO Section 106 Branch Chief to arrange for the consultation.

4.3.1 Direct APE

The Direct APE is the area that potentially would be directly and physically impacted by the project. It is the APE most commonly used for archaeological studies; on occasion, architectural and historical studies may be also limited to a Direct APE. Typically, this is the right of way that will be used for the project, plus any ancillary areas subject to project-related ground-disturbing activities, such as slope and drainage easements, storm water detention basins, off-site biological mitigation sites requiring ground disturbance, mandatory borrow and disposal sites, construction easements, utility relocations, access roads, and equipment storage areas.

If any portion of an archaeological site extends into the project area and is subject to effect, the APE will generally be extended to encompass the entire site. However, testing of such sites must be focused on areas subject to reasonably foreseeable effects of the undertaking and should be guided by a project- or site-specific research design. Areas unlikely to be affected should not be tested unless compelling reasons to conduct such testing are provided in the research design.

The Area of Direct Impact, or ADI, is sometimes used to describe known areas of planned direct impact, such as those depicted on engineering plans. It does not, however, have any regulatory standing nor is it necessarily synonymous with the Direct APE, which encompasses all areas with the potential for direct impact. The Direct APE, for example, may include not only the ADI, the areas of planned disturbance as shown on project maps, but also the right of way reasonably subject to construction activities, such as areas where construction vehicles may operate or cause ground disturbance. When delineating an ADI, ensure that it is entirely within the project's overall APE.

The full extent of potential direct effects must be considered in establishing the APE, including the depth of any proposed ground disturbance as well as the horizontal extent of project activities.

4.3.2 Indirect APE

The Indirect APE is usually larger than the Direct APE and may extend beyond it to encompass additional properties that could be affected indirectly by the project. Indirect effects may extend beyond the project's footprint to encompass visual, audible, or atmospheric intrusions; shadow effects; vibrations from construction activities; or change in access or use.

Not all projects have potential for indirect effects, and in such cases, built environment and archaeological properties will have the same APE.

Indirect effects are more likely for projects that involve acquiring new right of way, constructing new facilities, expanding capacity, or changing land use. The first row of properties that would be adjacent to the right of way when the project is *completed* should be considered for potential for indirect effects and included in the Indirect APE if warranted. Construction on new alignment, new interchanges, or elevated sections of roadway may have additional potential for indirect effects that could extend well beyond that first row of adjacent parcels.

Built environment properties are more likely than archaeological sites to be subject to indirect as well as direct effects. However, if an archaeological site has other values beyond information potential, or if a proposed project has a potential to cause indirect effects to an archaeological site, such as by creating new public access to the site, an archaeological site may be included within the Indirect APE. Traditional Cultural Properties, and under CEQA tribal cultural resources, may also have values subject to indirect effects, and consultation with tribes or other potentially interested parties must then be conducted to ensure that the APE encompasses such resources.

The Indirect APE must be set to take into account potential audible and visual effects, the proximity and use of adjoining properties, surrounding topography, and aspects of a property's setting.

No single rule of thumb can be followed in establishing APE limits.

The current assessor's parcel is normally used to define the boundaries of each property, but when a property that had a different configuration historically has been identified, the historic boundaries should be used to define inclusion within the APE, regardless of the current legal parcel boundaries. Large rural parcels, historic districts or landscapes, or

extensive linear systems need not be included in their entirety if project effects on the property as a whole would clearly be negligible.

4.4 Begin Identification

Resources identification should begin as early as possible in the planning process, once a Study Area has been defined or an APE established. The goal of this initial phase is to:

- Identify cultural resources that may require consideration.
- Eliminate properties that are exempt under Section 106 PA [Attachment 4](#) or 5024 MOU [Attachment 4](#), as applicable.
- Determine whether technical studies are needed.
- Determine what kinds and levels of expertise will be required to conduct any needed technical studies.

Identification at this stage means determining whether any properties requiring cultural resources studies are present and potentially could be affected by a project.

The first step is to examine the APE for the types of properties that could possibly meet National Register of Historic Places ([NRHP criteria](#)) without guessing or assuming in advance which properties are significant.

The initial identification phase, therefore, needs to be broad and prospective in nature. When the DEBC and HRC have determined that the project is an undertaking requiring cultural studies, Caltrans PQS or appropriately qualified consultants begin the identification process for properties within the project APE or Study Area, in accordance with the direction below.

Identification efforts need to take into account all types of cultural resources that have potential to be considered historic properties, but not all cultural resources have that potential or require study.

The term “cultural resources” is broad, not evaluative or implying significance. It means any tangible or observable evidence of past human activity, *regardless of significance*, found in direct association with a geographic location, including tangible properties that possess intangible values. A critical part of this early identification phase requires distinguishing between properties needing studies and those that do not.

Only those properties that are of a type with potential for significance require such studies. Properties listed under Section 106 PA/5024 MOU Attachment 4 as typically exempt from evaluation may be reviewed, investigated to the extent necessary, and dismissed by appropriately qualified Caltrans PQS, or by consultants meeting the same qualifications, without further review or consideration, as outlined below.

4.4.1 Properties Exempt from Evaluation

4.4.1.1 Section 106 Programmatic Agreement Exemptions

Section 106 PA [Attachment 4](#) identifies certain specific classes of properties as typically not requiring recordation, evaluation, or further review. These are properties that categorically possess little potential to meet NRHP criteria. Cultural resources laws and regulations do not require expending time and money recording and evaluating such properties, nor is there demonstrable public benefit in doing so. It is reasonable and prudent to concentrate, instead, on the identification of resources that do have potential for eligibility.

Section 106 PA [Attachment 4](#) lists the properties that may be determined exempt from review and gives the professional qualifications necessary for exempting the various property types. These include properties that are

- Type 1: Minor or ubiquitous.
- Type 2: Less than 30 years old.
- Type 3: So altered as to appear less than 30 years old.
- Type 4: 30 to 50 years old.
- Type 5: Moved within the past 50 years.
- Type 6: Substantially altered properties that are over 30 years old.
- Type 7: Post-World War II builders' houses and housing tracts

Only appropriately qualified Caltrans PQS (see Section 106 PA [Attachment 1](#)), and consultants who meet the same standards at the appropriate level, are authorized to exempt properties under Attachment 4. Consult the attachment for the full definition and listing of exempt properties, but in summary, properties that may be determined exempt.

Caltrans PQS at the Co-Principal Investigator level and above, and at the architectural historian level and above, and qualified consultants meeting the same standards, are

authorized to exempt architectural and historical properties under types 1, 2, and 3. Only Caltrans PQS at the architectural historian level and above, and qualified consultants meeting the same standards, can exempt properties under types 4, 5, and 6.

The process for determining that properties qualify as exempt usually will require minimal effort, often just a quick review of existing documentation such as assessor's records or maps, a walkover, or a windshield survey. Other times, it may require more research, detailed investigation, or consultation with other specialists to determine whether or not a property qualifies as exempt.

Once appropriately qualified Caltrans PQS or qualified consultants have exempted properties in the APE, the properties can be dismissed without further review or consideration. The decision does not require explanation or property-by-property documentation, only the professional judgment of appropriately qualified Caltrans PQS or consultants.

Use Section 106 PA [Attachment 4](#) carefully, noting the exceptions and qualifying wording. It is especially critical to note that the listed properties are *not* exempt if they do not meet the criteria in Attachment 4.

If the Caltrans PQS or qualified consultant can reasonably determine that a property has potential to possess significance or if it could potentially contribute to the significance of a larger property such as a historic district or landscape, it is not exempt.

Consultants shall be expected to meet the same standards and requirements as Caltrans PQS; they should not be held to either a greater or lesser level of effort than Caltrans PQS in exempting properties. Neither consultants nor Caltrans PQS are required to record or document exempt properties in any way, except as they responsibly deem necessary. Exempt properties need not be listed, mapped, or evaluated, nor should they be individually addressed in the technical studies. A statement that "consistent with Section 106 PA Attachment 4, properties/ other properties are exempt from evaluation," is all that is required to be included in the technical studies.

If the Caltrans PQS or consultant determine, for good and sufficient reason, that individual recordation of an exempt property is warranted, the level of documentation should be commensurate with the nature of the property. In some situations, there may be a professional or ethical responsibility to record a resource that is exempt under the Section 106 PA, such as when it is required by an Information Center. Documentation may also be

appropriate in other instances, such as to avoid the later “discovery” of an exempted archaeological feature during construction. In that case, archaeological site record forms (e.g., DPR 523 Primary Record Form and Location Map), or database entry may constitute an adequate record. In general, however, exempt properties do not warrant any level of recordation.

In situations where the Section 106 PA does not apply, such as on Tribal Lands, the Caltrans PQS or qualified consultant should use a Letter Report. See [Exhibit 6.1](#) for guidance. Letter Reports are used solely for exempting properties from evaluation when the Section 106 PA does not apply; they are not used for any other purpose.

Do not discuss exempt properties in the HPSR, as in accordance with the Section 106 PA, SHPO does not review Caltrans findings of properties that have been exempted. Evidence that Caltrans has used the exempt properties stipulation of the Section 106 PA typically can be handled by simply checking the appropriate box of the HPSR form or by including the statement, “consistent with Section 106 PA [Attachment 4](#), properties/ other properties are exempt from evaluation,” in a narrative text version of the HPSR (See [Exhibit 2.6](#)). Public Resources Code [5024\(a\) and \(b\)](#) requires Caltrans to inventory the structures it owns. For this reason, when Caltrans-owned resources are exempted from further evaluation, a copy of the HPSR, or Historical Resources Compliance Report (HRCR) for state-only projects with the appropriate checked box or exempting statement, needs to be sent to the Chief of the Built Environment Preservation Services Branch (BEPS) in CSO. See [Exhibit 2.14](#) for guidance on completing HRCRs.

Contact the CSO Section 106 Branch Chief for any questions concerning the applicability of the Section 106 PA Attachment 4 to specific properties.

Interstate Highway Exemption

Pursuant to federal law, under 23 USC 103(c)(5)(A)-(C), the Interstate Highway System is exempt from Section 106, except for individual elements that have been determined by the Secretary of Transportation to have national or exceptional historic significance and are considered historic properties for Section 106 and Section 4(f) purposes. The exemption embodies the view that the Interstate System is historically important, but only certain particularly important elements of that system... The exemption takes no position on the eligibility of the Interstate System as a whole.”

See [Chapter 2 Section 2.2.7](#) for a discussion of this exemption. Much of the Interstate Highway System in California is already exempted from evaluation because it meets the

conditions outlined in Section 106 PA [Attachment 4](#). In a few cases, however, portions of the system that are 50 years old or older may have historic values *other* than association with the Interstate Highway System. Contact the CSO Section 106 Branch Chief for any questions concerning the applicability of this Exemption.

The Interstate Highway exemption is for federal undertakings only and does *not* exempt Caltrans from compliance with CEQA, PRC 5024 or other state laws and regulations.

On occasion it may be necessary to evaluate portions of the Interstate System that do not meet the conditions outlined in Section 106 PA Attachment 4, and that may have historic values other than association with the Interstate Highway System.

4.4.1.2 PRC 5024 MOU Exemptions

State-owned cultural resources may be exempt from evaluation when they meet the criteria outlined in [5024 MOU Attachment 4](#). The difference between the Section 106 PA and the 5024 MOU is that Resource Types 3 through 7 in Attachment 4 need to be recorded on an abbreviated DPR 523A Primary Record that is either included in or created by the Caltrans Cultural Resources Database (CCRD). This recordation is required for Caltrans property management purposes, such as planning for future surveys and survey updates.

See [Exhibit 4.4](#) for information on recordation.

4.4.2 Properties Requiring Study

When a project area may contain properties that are not exempt under Section 106 PA [Attachment 4](#) and therefore require studies, the DEBC and HRC must consider the nature of the potential historical associations to determine the level of identification effort and evaluation, as well as which cultural resources specialists will be required to conduct these activities. Appropriately qualified Caltrans PQS or consultants shall then proceed with identification efforts.

The Caltrans PQS or consultant shall make a reasonable and good faith effort to identify historic properties. This effort may include:

- Background research.
- Consultation with knowledgeable individuals.
- Oral history interviews.
- Field survey.

- Consultation with Native Americans who may attach religious and cultural significance to properties in the project area.

The effort shall take into account past planning, research, and studies; the magnitude and nature of the undertaking; the degree of federal or state involvement; the nature and extent of potential effects on historic properties; and the likely nature and location of potential historic properties.

Project areas that had been previously surveyed may require resurveying under certain circumstances, such as when conditions have changed, earlier studies do not appear adequate for the current undertaking, or previously surveyed properties have since turned 50 years old. The passage of time, changing perceptions of significance, past errors of judgment, or reduction in the number of similar resources may all be cause for resurveying.

Cultural resources may be found significant for a variety of reasons that include their history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and cultural associations as defined in the NRHP Criteria for Evaluation. The following discussion divides the universe of cultural resources into broad categories that correspond with the types of expertise typically needed to evaluate such properties. Those categories include:

- *Prehistoric archaeological resources*: evaluated by prehistoric archaeologists, in consultation with Native Americans.
- *Historical archaeological resources*: evaluated by historical archaeologists, sometimes in collaboration with architectural historians.
- *Built environment resources*: evaluated by architectural historians, and sometimes by historical archaeologists in collaboration with architectural historians.
- *Traditional Cultural Properties and under CEQA tribal cultural resources*: evaluated by prehistoric archaeologists or ethnographers in consultation with Native Americans, historical archaeologists, or architectural historians, depending on the property's potential values.

4.4.2.1 Prehistoric Archaeological Resources

Prehistoric archaeological resources are typically sites, activity areas, and ruins either predating or immediately postdating non-Native American entry into the region, characterized by material residues of substantially Native American origin. Prehistoric archaeologists are the cultural resources professionals who are trained to investigate these sites.

Prehistoric archaeological remains may be in the form of deposits of cultural material or features found in ground or on its surface, or they may be districts composed of groups of prehistoric archaeological sites. Specialists trained in the field of prehistoric archaeology should record these resources during archaeological surveys and evaluate them as necessary.

Prehistoric archaeological sites are typically distinguished from isolated finds by criteria such as the density of cultural materials present. Sites generally have concentrations of material that can be distinguished from isolates and extensive very low density scatters (so-called "background noise") common in some parts of the state such as the Modoc Plateau and Long Valley. Isolates are exempt properties that generally do not merit recordation, as discussed above in Section [4.4.1](#). Their notation in the Archaeological Survey Report (ASR), without formal recordation, typically exhausts the research value and potential significance of isolates; see [Exhibit 5.1](#) for additional guidance.

Qualified prehistoric archaeologists evaluate prehistoric archaeological resources, in consultation with Native Americans. [Chapter 5](#) provides guidance on the procedures to follow in recording and evaluating prehistoric archaeological resources.

Some sites may have traditional cultural values or other intangible values ascribed to them by Native Americans. Prehistoric archaeologists incorporate these values into the site's identification and as prescribed during consultation. The expertise of a Caltrans PQS or consultant with training or experience in ethnography or other specialty may be required. Some sites with traditional cultural values may meet the definition of a Traditional Cultural Property, or under CEQA a tribal cultural resource (see below).

The value that Native Americans may ascribe to a site because of burials or skeletal remains transcends the NRHP criteria. Consultation with Native Americans on the appropriate treatment of the burials or remains and associated objects must occur. This consultation is conducted by a prehistoric archaeologist, usually in tandem with studies conducted on an archaeological site. [Chapter 3](#) provides further discussion addressing sites with Native American traditional cultural values and human remains and Native American Traditional Cultural Properties or under CEQA tribal cultural resources.

4.4.2.2 Historical Archaeological Resources

Historical archaeological resources are sites, activity areas, cultural landscapes, and ruins of buildings and structures, where the *location itself* possesses archaeological value, regardless of the significance of any existing standing building or structure. They are

properties that possess some kind of cultural deposits or complex of features, whether subsurface or buried, whose primary value is in archaeological research.

Qualified historical archaeologists evaluate historical archaeological sites and activity areas. Qualified architectural historians or historical archaeologists, or both as a team, may evaluate other resources such as landscapes, cemeteries, battlegrounds, mines, canals, roads, trails, farms, and ruins, depending on the applicable potential NRHP criteria. Examples of ruins would include a building without a roof and with two or more collapsed or missing walls, an abandoned ditch system that can no longer convey water, and the foundations of a gold mining and milling operation. [Chapter 6](#) provides guidance on the procedures to follow in recording and evaluating historical archaeological resources.

Historical archaeological resources should be noted in the ASR and formally recorded if appropriate. Some types of historic deposits and features are exempt properties that generally do not merit recordation, evaluation, or further review, as discussed above in [Section 4.4.1](#). The lack of clearly defined associations, loss of integrity, or very low density of materials can distinguish these from historical archaeological resources. Some examples of exempt properties are refuse materials tossed by the roadside, isolated historic items, and mixed deposits of modern and historic materials.

4.4.2.3 Built Environment

The built environment consists of intact buildings, structures, objects, and associated features; non-archaeological sites, and districts composed of these resources. Most built environment properties can be identified when conducting a windshield, or reconnaissance, survey; others become apparent through background research. Built environment properties typically are visible in aerial photographs and appear on APE maps that delineate buildings and structures by their footprints.

The built environment includes resources such as designed and vernacular landscapes, cemeteries, mines, locations of important historic events such as treaty signings, and other locations. When these properties may include historical archaeological or other cultural values, their evaluation may require the collaboration of architectural historians and historical archaeologists.

Qualified architectural historians record and evaluate built environment resources. There are instances where qualified historical archaeologists may also record and evaluate built-environment resources. When these properties may include historical archaeological or other cultural values, their evaluation may require the collaboration of architectural

historians and historical archaeologists. [Chapter 7](#) provides guidance on the procedures to follow in recording and evaluating built environment resources.

Some built environment property types do not merit recordation, as discussed above in [Section 4.4.1](#).

4.4.2.4 Traditional Cultural Properties and Tribal Cultural Resources

Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) are a special category of cultural resources that are associated with the traditional cultural practices or beliefs of a living community. They may consist of buildings, structures, objects, sites, or districts that are rooted in a traditional community's history *and* are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of that community. TCPs may also be the locations of important events that contain no physical remains, such as a location associated with the traditional beliefs of a Native American group about its origins, cultural history, or the nature of the world. They are typically identified through background research and oral testimony. “Properties that have achieved significance only within the 50 years preceding their evaluation are not eligible for inclusion in the Register unless ‘sufficient historical perspective exists to determine that the property is exceptionally important and will continue to retain that distinction in the future.’ (*National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Form*) This is an extremely important criteria consideration with respect to traditional cultural values. A significance ascribed to a property only in the past 50 years cannot be considered traditional.” (*National Register Bulletin 38*) A property needs to meet the definition above and be evaluated and determined to be eligible for the inclusion in the NRHP to be a TCP.

Most properties that will qualify as TCPs are Native American TCPs, which are most appropriately evaluated by prehistoric archaeologists who have training or experience in ethnography, in consultation with Native Americans. *National Register Bulletin 38* offers guidance on the identification and evaluation of TCPs. See also [Chapter 3](#).

Effective in 2015, under CEQA there is a new category of historical resource called a tribal cultural resource, which is defined in PRC 21074(a). The statute identifies a tribal cultural resource as a CRHR or local register eligible site, feature, place, cultural landscape or object that has cultural value to a California Native American tribe. The process of identifying tribal cultural resources is the same as for Traditional Cultural Properties, as explained above.

To date, very few non-Native American TCPs have been identified in California, although some potential properties have been evaluated, and in consultation with the SHPO, determined to be not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. Potential TCPs should be referred to the appropriate cultural resources specialist, who will consider whether a potential TCP may be present, requiring recordation and evaluation.

4.5 Background Research

Background research is conducted prior to reconnaissance or windshield surveys as a means to guide identification efforts within the APE. It includes reviewing previous survey efforts, existing information on known historic properties, and any data concerning possible historic properties not yet identified. The scope of the background research will depend on the

- Magnitude of the undertaking,
- Extent of potential effects to historic properties,
- Relevance of previous cultural studies in the vicinity,
- Availability of documentary or oral information, and
- Number and types of properties that can be reasonably anticipated.

For screened undertakings listed in Section 106 PA [Attachment 2](#), the Caltrans PQS will conduct the level of background research necessary to determine whether an undertaking is exempt from further review or consultation under Section 106. It may require a field review, examination of project plans, consultation with knowledgeable people, or review of relevant documents, such as previous studies, maps, or photographs of the project area. The extent of the screening effort should be in proportion to the complexity, scale, and location of the undertaking and the potential for historic properties to be present and to be affected. See Section [4.2.1](#), above for a description of the screening process.

In all cases where cultural resources identification efforts are required for a project, certain minimum levels of background research must be carried out, and more detailed research will be conducted as necessary. See [Exhibit 4.2](#) for standard sources of information that may be useful in conducting this research. The results of the research will be documented and used to identify the potential existence of cultural resources in the APE or Study Area and to determine what additional identification and evaluation measures may be required.

4.6 Initial Surveys

4.6.1 Reconnaissance Surveys

Reconnaissance, or windshield, surveys are a visual inspection, typically a first walk-through or drive-through, of a project's APE or Study Area. They can provide evidence or an indication of the presence or absence of properties requiring study and of the project's potential to have an effect on historic properties. They may be conducted to

- Help determine whether an undertaking can be screened,
- Exempt properties that will not require evaluation, and
- Verify the extent of modern ground disturbance.

In addition, they may be used to verify the presence of resources identified through background research and to identify any additional properties that may require consideration.

These surveys, along with preliminary research, can provide information on the likelihood of cultural resources requiring study within a given corridor for comparison among project alternatives. The Caltrans PQS should convey to the DEBC in a memorandum: the results of the reconnaissance survey and any relevant background research, and recommend any additional work that will be required.

4.6.2 Native American Consultation

The purpose of Native American coordination is to identify during the project's initial survey phase any potential resources with Native American values and any issues of Native American concern relating to the undertaking's potential effects on historic properties. Qualified prehistoric archaeologists or the District Native American Coordinator (DNAC) should seek information from individuals and organizations likely to have knowledge of potential resources with Native American values in the project APE or Study Area. Any Native American concerns that may require attention should be identified during this initial survey.

Following the procedures described in [Chapter 3](#), the prehistoric archaeologist or the DNAC will initiate contacts with potentially interested Native American groups and the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). Good faith efforts to contact Native American groups may entail telephone, in person, or written contacts, depending on the complexity of a project and the rapport established with particular groups. The NAHC is to be contacted for information about any resources listed in their Sacred Lands files.

4.6.3 Field Surveys

This section provides general guidance regarding archaeological and built environment field surveys. Chapters [5](#), [6](#), and [7](#) provide specific direction by discipline and resource type on survey methods and report preparation.

If a field survey is not necessary for a particular project, document the reasons in a memo and place it the project file, and if appropriate, attach it to the HPSR.

4.6.3.1 Archaeological Surveys

The purpose of an archaeological survey is to identify and record all resources in the APE or Study Area that meet the NRHP definition of an archaeological site. In accordance with Caltrans policy, appropriately qualified Caltrans PQS or qualified consultants meeting the same criteria need to survey nearly all ground-disturbing projects in the field for archaeological resources. An archaeological survey is always conducted unless it can be shown that all ground surfaces have undergone substantial modern disturbance, or the APE or Study Area has been previously surveyed to appropriate standards. Plowed fields and graded areas should be surveyed, because undisturbed portions of sites may still exist within those areas. In some urban areas, where no original ground surface is exposed, background research should be conducted to determine whether previously recorded sites are known, and to identify the potential for buried sites that may require identification measures other than a pedestrian archaeological reconnaissance survey, e.g., a geo-archaeological survey or remote sensing. See [Chapters 5](#) and [6](#) for detailed discussion of prehistoric and historical archaeological survey methods.

4.6.3.2 Built Environment Surveys

The purpose of a built environment survey is to identify and record, and also to evaluate, all built environment resources within the APE or Study Area that have any potential to meet the NRHP criteria. The built environment survey will consider buildings, structures, objects, districts, and non-archaeological sites for NRHP eligibility under criteria A, B, and C, and in rare circumstances, under Criterion D, and simultaneously consider whether the properties meet similar criteria as historical resources under CEQA. Evaluation is an integral component of built environment surveys, not separate from the identification and recordation process, and not subject to deferral to a later stage of the project. Field surveys of the built environment consequently follow a different path from archaeological surveys, consisting of a single continuous process from identification through evaluation.

Under Section 106 PA [Attachment 4](#), architectural historians may determine to be exempt from evaluation or further review built environment properties that categorically possess little potential to meet NRHP criteria. Exempt properties do not typically require any level of recordation.

Previous recordation of exempt properties, including assignment of trinomials that was done in the course of an archaeological survey does not obligate architectural historians to evaluate those properties.

See [Chapter 7](#) for further details on built environment survey methods.

4.6.3.3 Survey Access

When it is necessary to enter private property, permission must be first obtained from property owners or tenants. For survey access to certain public lands, also, permits may be required.

Under Caltrans policy, District Right of Way handles all access requirements involving private lands. The DEBC should designate a single cultural resources staff person for each project to coordinate with Right of Way staff regarding access permission for all advance studies. Staff shall carry copies of any rights of entry paperwork into the field.

Not all surveys require access onto the property. Built environment surveys can often be conducted from the public right of way, without entering private property or restricted areas, and neither residential back yards nor building interiors need be entered or examined in the normal course of a survey. On occasion, such as when surveying large parcels or complex properties, it may be necessary to enter private property or restricted public property in order to survey the area adequately. At such times, right of access to that property must first be obtained.

4.6.3.4 Field Safety

Caltrans staff and consultants conducting field surveys on Caltrans and local assistance projects must be familiar with Caltrans safety policies and procedures for field trips, visiting construction and maintenance sites, and field surveys. These policies and procedures are found in the

- [Caltrans Safety Manual](#), particularly [Chapter 5](#) sections 5.08 and 5.13 and the Code of Safe Practices for Field Trips (Appendix A)
- [Caltrans Construction Manual](#), Chapter 2, sections on [Safety](#) and [Traffic](#).

- [Caltrans Surveys Manual, Chapter 2](#) (Safety), and the [Caltrans Code of Safe Surveying Practices](#)

In addition, Caltrans office staff visiting projects in the field must be familiar with the [Caltrans Safety Manual, Chapter 5](#) sections 5.08 and 5.13 and the Code of Safe Practices for Field Trips (Appendix A) and provide this information to others visiting in the field, such as staff from partner agencies, consulting parties, and others who need to visit construction, maintenance and field survey sites.

The “buddy system” is strongly encouraged for fieldwork, and staff always should ensure they know how to get help promptly in an emergency. In some areas, it is advisable to check in with the local law enforcement agency before beginning work.

A first aid kit, cell phone, and drinking water should always be kept on hand, and other safety equipment may be in order if special hazards exist. When working with heavy equipment or along the roadside, all staff must wear OSHA-approved hard hats, sturdy shoes, and safety vests.

The Caltrans Safety and Surveys Manuals cover most potential hazards encountered during surveys, but hazardous wastes and other unsafe physical conditions may also be encountered at some built environment properties or historical archaeological sites.

Properties associated with industrial activities may contain chemical contamination or toxic waste, and dangerous substances used in industrial processes may remain at a site or in the soil. The possible presence of such substances is not always revealed in background research, so it is best to consider soils at any industrial processing area as potentially contaminated and to avoid substances in containers or leaching from the soil. Suspected toxic wastes must be reported to the District Hazardous Materials Coordinator. Care must also be taken when working in agricultural areas, as herbicides and pesticides sprayed on farm fields may leave toxic residues for several days after spraying.

Wells, mineshafts, and other depressions can pose considerable risk to surveyors. Mineshafts can be hundreds of feet deep and are often obscured by brush or debris. They may contain contaminated air, gases, or unstable structural members or walls. Surveyors should avoid walking over piled debris or into dense stands of vegetation that may obscure such deep depressions. Entry into dilapidated buildings should also be avoided, as they may contain deteriorated and weakened structural members and unsafe wooden floors or stairs.

If a property owner or tenant objects to survey activity, or if a situation appears to present any threat, staff must leave the property immediately.

Safety of employees and good relationships with the public are both prime considerations while conducting surveys or other fieldwork. Any safety factors or access restrictions that limit a surveyor's ability to conduct a full survey may be explained in the technical document.

All surveys and other fieldwork shall be conducted in keeping with the [Caltrans Code of Safe Surveying Practices](#).

4.6.4 Recordation

Record prehistoric and historical archaeological sites in detail during the identification process, following the procedures described in chapters 5 and 6. Archaeological properties and features that are exempt under Section 106 PA [Attachment 4](#) are not required to be recorded; however, under certain circumstances, such as those described in Section [4.4.1](#) above, the Caltrans PQS or consultant conducting the survey may determine that some minimal level of recordation is appropriate, commensurate with the nature of the property.

For built environment properties, recordation is begun during identification but not completed until later, during the evaluation stage, in order to include the evaluative component. Guidance for recordation of built environment properties is provided in [Chapter 7](#). Built environment properties that are exempt under Section 106 PA Attachment 4 do not require any level of recordation, nor do they warrant any mapping or listing. If the Caltrans PQS or consultant conducting the survey deems any recordation necessary because of circumstances, it should be minimal and commensurate with the nature of the property.

For all property types, recordation must include careful delineation of boundaries to ensure that they are adequate for consideration of project effects. Generally, boundaries should be drawn to include the entire property, even when portions of a property fall outside the initial APE or Study Area (see Section [4.3](#) for discussion of APEs). The APE or Study Area normally should be expanded to include the known or reasonably anticipated boundaries of a property, but it is not always necessary to include entire large or complex resources where potential effects on the whole would clearly be negligible.

Inclusion in the APE does not mean that all portions of properties must always be fully recorded. Portions of an archaeological site outside of the proposed right of way that are not subject to direct effect may often be adequately described for the purposes of the undertaking based only on what is known about them from previous surveys or documentary evidence. Similarly, for large properties such as potential historic districts or long linear resources, defining the overall extent, general configuration, and major characteristics of the property may be adequate description of the property as a whole, without recording specific features outside the area subject to effect.

Questions about appropriate levels of recordation may be referred to the CSO Section 106 Branch Chief.

4.6.5 Reporting

The Screened Undertaking memo to the project manager and for the project files constitutes the only documentation necessary to complete the Section 106 process for screened undertakings that have been determined exempt from further review in accordance with Section 106 PA [Attachment 2](#).

Properties determined to be exempt from evaluation under Section 106 PA [Attachment 4](#) need only the statement, “consistent with Section 106 PA Attachment 4, properties/ other properties are exempt from evaluation,” included in the technical studies. Do not discuss exempt properties in the HPSR, as Caltrans does not request SHPO concurrence in this finding. Evidence that Caltrans has employed the properties exempt stipulation of the Section 106 PA can typically be handled by checking the appropriate box of the short-form HPSR (see [Exhibit 2.6](#)), or by adding the statement, “consistent with Section 106 PA Attachment 4, properties/ other properties are exempt from evaluation,” to the narrative version of the HPSR.

The results of cultural resources surveys will be reported in the appropriate technical studies. Normally, archaeological survey results will be reported in an Archaeological Survey Report (ASR) (see [Chapter 5](#)), while the evaluation of both historical archaeological sites and built environment properties may be reported in a Historical Resources Evaluation Report (HRER), which may be a single combined document, if appropriate (see [Chapters 6](#) and [7](#) and [Exhibit 6.2](#)).

4.6.6 Report Review and Distribution

4.6.6.1 Peer reviews

Peer review is the single most important step in ensuring quality control for work done under the Section 106 PA. Peer reviews are conducted

- To ensure that reports are adequate,
- Professional standards met,
- Conclusions acceptable and supported by evidence, and
- Format and content guidelines followed.

They are useful in improving the general quality of reports, sharing information between authors and reviewers, and promoting relative consistency in style and content. [Exhibit 2.11 Table C](#) contains information on the Caltrans PQS levels that are required for peer review of cultural resources documents, while [Exhibit 2.13](#) provides guidelines for conducting peer reviews. Reviews always must be respectful, constructive, and honest, in accordance with these guidelines.

Caltrans PQS certified in the appropriate discipline and level must peer review all reports. If needed, districts may forward reports to CSO or to another District for peer review by qualified staff. Peer reviews should receive the highest priority in work assignments and should be conducted as promptly as possible, taking no longer than 15 working days, preferably 10 days or less.

4.6.6.2 Report Approvals

Following peer review, as outlined in [Exhibit 2.11 Table C](#), Caltrans PQS must review and approve all documents prepared for undertakings that come under the terms of the Section 106 PA – regardless of their origin – for quality of reporting, soundness of conclusions, and compliance with the Section 106 PA. This review is essential to the quality assurance required by the Section 106 PA, and it cannot be delegated.

After satisfactory Caltrans PQS review, DEBCs are responsible for reviewing and approving all documents prepared under their jurisdiction, including reports prepared by CSO on their behalf, for any other departmental concerns. DEBCs have 10 working days after receipt to review and approve CSO-prepared reports. If CSO does not receive comments within that period, CSO may assume that the District has approved the document. Similarly, CSO Branch Chiefs are responsible for reviewing and approving documents prepared under their direction when the documents are not specifically related to district

project, such as evaluation of headquarters facilities, or work requested by other headquarters divisions.

4.6.6.3 Transmittal of Documents

Caltrans transmits documents to SHPO and CSO or retains them in the District as directed by [Chapter 2](#), in accordance with the stipulations of the Section 106 PA, and for state-owned cultural resources, in accordance with the stipulations of the 5024 MOU. The Districts send one copy of each transmitted document and copies of all related correspondence to CSO for filing. If state-owned cultural resources are involved, for PRC 5024 purposes send a copy of the transmittal letter that identifies the state-owned properties and the outcome of the evaluation to the BEPS Branch Chief in CSO. Provide copies of archaeological reports and site records to the appropriate Information Center. Built environment studies and records are evaluative documents, and are thus not transmitted directly to Information Centers but instead SHPO forwards them there following concurrence in the findings.

Transmittals may be hard copy or electronic submittals, depending on a document's content and complexity and the needs of the review agencies. A transmittal letter that clearly states the purpose of the submittal, the conclusions being presented, and the regulatory action being requested must accompany the documents. See [Exhibit 2.12](#) for examples of transmittal letters and memos (e.g., No Historic Properties Affected, Eligible Historic Properties, Caltrans to SHPO: Initial Consultation for Adverse Effect, Caltrans to SHPO: Initial Consultation for Adverse Effect, Caltrans to SHPO: Initial Consultation for Adverse Effect).

4.7 Cultural Resources Evaluations

When resources could be affected by an undertaking, they must be evaluated for their eligibility for the NRHP, unless they qualify as properties exempt from evaluation under Section 106 PA/5024 MOU Attachment 4, or they can be protected by Environmentally Sensitive Area designation, in accordance with [Section 106 PA/5024 MOU](#) Attachment 5. All other properties subject to effect must be evaluated.

4.7.1 Requesting Evaluations

The DEBC, in consultation with the PQS, is responsible for requesting any required evaluations of resources that are subject to effect by a proposed undertaking.

Evaluations of cultural resources must be conducted by Caltrans PQS meeting the appropriate level of professional qualifications, as detailed in [Section 106 PA/PRC 5024 MOU Attachment 1](#), or by consultants meeting the same professional standards. As described in Section [4.4.2](#), above, prehistoric archaeologist Caltrans PQS or consultants evaluate prehistoric archaeological sites using the guidance offered in [Chapter 5](#); historical archaeologist Caltrans PQS or consultants evaluate historical archaeological sites using the guidance in [Chapter 6](#); and architectural historian Caltrans PQS or consultants evaluate buildings, structures, objects, non-archaeological sites, and districts composed of such resources using the guidance provided in [Chapter 7](#). Specialists may work individually or in collaboration with other specialists, depending on the kinds and complexity of properties involved and on any multiple values that may be present. See [Exhibit 1.6](#) for guidance in determining which Caltrans PQS or consultant specialists are needed for studies of the various cultural resources types.

Requests to CSO, other districts, or consultants for studies, including evaluations, should be accompanied by

- Project description,
- Mapping, and schedules;
- Existing background and survey information; and
- Copies of any previous studies of the project area.

Adequate time must be allotted for evaluations in project development schedules, particularly for project areas containing a large number of properties or complex resources or when archaeological excavation programs may be required to complete the evaluations (see [Exhibit 2.3](#)).

4.7.2 Conducting Evaluations

Evaluations of the resources that have been identified within a project APE are conducted to determine whether they are eligible for the NRHP and whether they are historical resources under CEQA. [National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation](#) provides the basic guidance Caltrans uses for determining significance and assessing integrity when evaluating cultural resources for NRHP eligibility. Properties must be evaluated in a Historical Resources Evaluation Report (HRER) or an

Archaeological Evaluation Report (AER) and the appropriate DPR 523³ forms. The DPR 523 series of inventory forms have been adapted for Caltrans use; the Caltrans DPR 523 form templates are available on the Caltrans *Standard Environmental Reference* Volume 2-Cultural Resources ([SERv2](#)) website.

The evaluation must contain substantive information on each property, including a physical description, significance finding (eligible or ineligible for the NRHP), justification and evidence for the finding, photographs, and a map. For properties found eligible, it must also cite the applicable NRHP criteria and explain how the criteria apply, define boundaries, list period of significance and level of significance (local, state, or national), and if appropriate, identify the property's contributing and noncontributing elements, including setting. NRHP boundaries must be depicted on the APE maps. See [Exhibit 2.15](#) for guidance in preparing summaries of these essential elements of eligibility determinations. For CEQA purposes, the evaluation must also cite the applicable California Register of Historical Resources criteria that qualify the property as a historical resource under CEQA.

Eligibility information is contained in the HPSR, supporting technical reports (HRER or AER), and DPR 523 forms for the resources being evaluated and those findings presented in the HPSR, except when all potential values of an archaeological site can be protected by the establishment of an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). In that case, [Section 106 PA/5024MOU](#) Attachment 5 allows the site to be treated as eligible for the purposes of the undertaking without conducting a formal evaluation (see [Chapter 2, Section 2.4.3](#)).

With CSO's approval, identification and evaluation may sometimes be phased where there are many project alternatives or where access is restricted pending right-of-way acquisition. The FHWA, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and SHPO all discourage unnecessary excavation of archaeological sites because of costs and to avoid impacts to sites that would otherwise not be affected. Thus, the phased approach to evaluation ensures that excavation is limited to sites within the selected construction alternative rather than being extended to all alternatives under consideration.

Under the Section 106 PA, the Caltrans district now determines eligibility. Consequently, Caltrans PQS will state that properties *are* or *are not eligible*, rather than saying

³ Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR 523) inventory forms that are used for recording and evaluating forms within the state for submittal to the Office of Historic Preservation and the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) regional information centers.

that they *appear* so. Consultants will continue to conclude that properties appear eligible or not eligible, but when Caltrans transmits the finding, the transmittal letter will state that Caltrans finds properties either eligible or not eligible.

Detailed discussion regarding what constitutes appropriate level of documentation is contained in [Chapter 5](#) for prehistoric archaeological resources, [Chapter 6](#) for historical archaeological resources, and [Chapter 7](#) for built environment resources.

4.8 Cultural Resources Study Documents

Cultural resources study documents should be prepared as efficiently and effectively as possible, taking advantage of opportunities to streamline document preparation. Among those opportunities are the use of existing overviews instead of redoing research and creating new text, and the combination of related documents when feasible, for greater efficiency.

4.8.1 Using Existing Documents

Instead of rewriting general historical contexts, it is acceptable to excerpt relevant portions of historical overviews from earlier reports covering the same geographical area. *It is necessary, however, to properly cite the text as coming from the older report* (e.g., “The following discussion is excerpted [verbatim *or* with minor editing for purposes of the current project] from [cite report]”). Often the earlier reports established the significant themes for an area; unless these themes have changed, or additional themes must be addressed, additional research is not required. For example, there have been a series of highway projects in Fresno in the past twenty years. General historical overviews in earlier Caltrans technical studies summarizing Fresno’s general growth, prehistory, and history can be reused. This allows cultural resources specialists to more efficiently use their time researching additional pertinent themes and pursuing site-specific research.

4.8.2 Combining Documents

When a project APE contains a combination of archaeological sites, prehistoric or historical, and built resources or properties with other values, documents should be combined, where appropriate, in order to reduce duplication of effort and to ensure seamless consideration of all values and resource types. Research, overviews, and mapping should be combined, whenever possible, for work that is done by a multi-disciplinary team or compiled in a single effort. Separate documents may be warranted when reports must be prepared at different stages of a project or by different entities or when subjects or formats are incompatible.

An example of combined reporting would be evaluating both historical archaeological sites and built environment properties in a single [HRER](#). Similarly, a combined AER/HRER may be used when evaluating both prehistoric and historical archaeological sites in a project area.

When a combined report is prepared, the document should contain all of the required elements of each report type, with appropriately qualified staff each writing the separate contributions. The reporting requirements for each discipline should be accommodated in a flexible manner; but a uniform citation style should be selected, typically the style appropriate for the dominant or primary resource type.