NOTICE OF INTENT TO ADOPT A NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Who: County of San Luis Obispo

What: A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) has been prepared and issued for the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works Jack Creek Road at Paso Robles Creek Bridge Replacement Project. The purpose of this safety improvement project is to replace the existing structurally deficient bridge with a cast-in-place concrete box girder 2-span bridge approximately 225-feet-long and 28-feet-wide. The new bridge will be designed to carry emergency vehicles and improve access to the public and properties served by Jack Creek Road. Construction will be scheduled during the non-rainy season when conditions are dry, or creek flows are at their lowest, however creek diversion and dewatering will likely be required. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures will be implemented to ensure project impacts are less than significant. The bridge is located within the North County Planning Area, Supervisorial District 1, approximately 6 miles west of the community of Templeton on Jack Creek Road.

Where: Copies of the proposed MND and all the associated documents referenced in the MND are available for review at the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works, 976 Osos Street, County Government Center Room 206, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408. The ND is also accessible on the Public Works website at https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/pw/jackcreekbridgemnd

Comments: The 30-day review and comment period for the proposed MND begins on February 4, 2022 and ends on March 7, 2022. Written comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the review period and should be addressed to: Matthew Willis, Environmental Specialist, mwillis@co.slo.ca.us, County Government Center, Room 206, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408.

Public Hearing: The County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing to consider the adoption of the MND. The hearing is tentatively scheduled for late March 2022. Interested persons can access the Board of Supervisor's agenda at http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/bos/BOSagenda.htm to locate the date of the public hearing for this project.

JACK CREEK ROAD AT PASO ROBLES CREEK BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT
ED22-004; 300556; SCH 2022020122

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS DIVISION

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Project Title & No. Jack Creek Road at Paso Robles Creek Bridge Replacement Project ED22-004 (300556)

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED: The proposed project could have a "Potentially Significant Impact" for environmental factors checked below. Please refer to the attached pages for discussion on mitigation measures or project revisions to either reduce these impacts to less than significant levels or require further study.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Public Services
☐ Agriculture & Forestry Resources	☒ Hazards & Hazardous Materials	☐ Recreation
☒ Air Quality	☒ Hydrology & Water Quality	☐ Transportation
☒ Biological Resources	☐ Land Use & Planning	☒ Tribal Cultural Resources
☒ Cultural Resources	☐ Mineral Resources	☐ Utilities & Service Systems
☐ Energy	☒ Noise	☐ Wildfire
☐ Geology & Soils	☐ Population & Housing	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation, the Environmental Division Manager finds that:

☐ The proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ The proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ The proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ Although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Matthew Willis		Environmental Specialist, Dept of Public Works	2/1/22
Prepared by (Print)	Signature		Date
Keith Miller		Environmental Div Manager, Dept of Public Works	2/1/22
Reviewed by (Print)	Signature		Date

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Project Environmental Analysis

The County's environmental review process incorporates all of the requirements for completing the Initial Study as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The Initial Study includes staff's on-site inspection of the project site and surroundings and a detailed review of the information in the file for the project. In addition, available background information is reviewed for each project. Relevant information regarding soil types and characteristics, geologic information, significant vegetation and/or wildlife resources, water availability, wastewater disposal services, existing land uses and surrounding land use categories and other information relevant to the environmental review process are evaluated for each project. Exhibit A includes the references used, as well as the agencies or groups that were contacted as a part of the Initial Study. The County uses the checklist to summarize the results of the research accomplished during the initial environmental review of the project.

Persons, agencies or organizations interested in obtaining more information regarding the environmental review process for a project should contact the County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department, 976 Osos Street, Rm. 206, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93408-2040 or call (805) 781-5252.

A. Project

DESCRIPTION: In partnership with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the San Luis Obispo County Department of Public Works (County) proposes to replace an existing bridge (Bridge No. 49C-0342) – on Jack Creek Road over Paso Robles Creek in northern San Luis Obispo County. The project area is located approximately six miles west of the community of Templeton, approximately 260 feet north of State Route 46 (SR-46), in the North County planning area, Adelaida sub area, in Supervisorial District # 1 (Figures 1, 2, and 3 – Vicinity and Biological Study Area Maps and representative photographs).

The purpose of the project is to improve public safety by replacing the existing bridge with a new bridge that is structurally sound, able to carry emergency vehicles, and improve access to the public and properties served by Jack Creek Road. A Caltrans inspection determined the bridge to be structurally deficient and eligible for replacement under the federal Highway Bridge Program. The new bridge will be constructed to meet current applicable American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and Caltrans Criteria.

The project includes removing the existing 11-span, 204-foot-long bridge and replacing it with a cast-in-place concrete box girder 2-span bridge approximately 225-feet-long and 28-feet-wide to accommodate two 10-foot-wide travel lanes, 2-foot-wide shoulders, and two concrete barrier rails with guard rail end treatments. Existing wood and steel bridge pilings and piers would be removed. The new single concrete bridge column would be approximately 4.5 feet in diameter with a seven-foot diameter pile. New concrete abutments would be supported by concrete piles and the embankment will be protected with rock slope protection (RSP). Additional construction activities include clearing and grubbing vegetation, stream diversion and dewatering, public utility relocation, stormwater treatments, installation of falsework, road approach work, and habitat mitigation. Construction access, material storage, and equipment/vehicle staging would occur within the designated County right-of-way (ROW) and adjacent private land to the southeast or southwest to be secured under a Temporary Construction Easement (TCE).

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

The project would result in permanent impacts to 0.368 acre and temporary impacts to 1.414 acres. Construction is expected to take nine months and will be mostly completed during the dry season (May through October) to take advantage of low flow conditions in the creek. Jack Creek Road at the bridge will be closed during construction. Traffic will be detoured on Jack Creek Road to Vineyard Drive or SR-46.

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER(S): County ROW; adjacent parcels: 039-201-012 (southeast and southwest), 039-191-022 (northeast), and 039-191-033 (northwest)

Latitude: 35.54852° N **Longitude:** 120.79292° W **SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT #** 1

B. Existing Setting

Plan Area: North County **Sub:** Adelaida **Comm:** NA

Land Use Category: Agriculture Rural Lands

Combining Designation: Flood Hazard

Parcel Size: Not applicable

Topography: Nearly level , prominent creek corridor coursing through project area

Vegetation: Riparian

Existing Uses: Agricultural uses , residential

Surrounding Land Use Categories and Uses:

North: Agriculture; ***East:*** Agriculture;

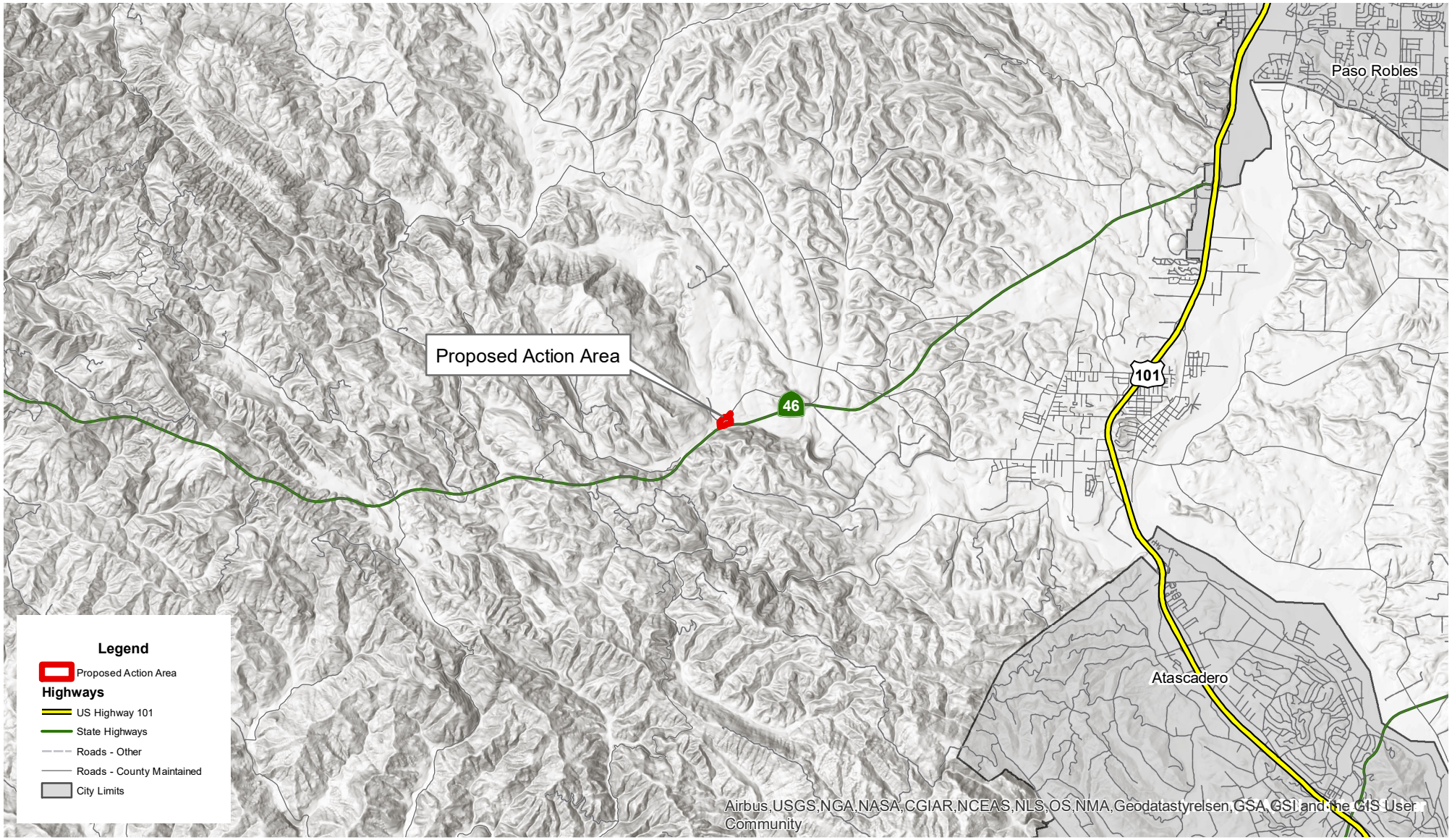
South: Open Space; ***West:*** Agriculture;

C. Environmental Analysis

The Initital Study Checklist provides detailed information about the environmental impacts of the proposed project and mitigation measures to lessen the impacts. All sources referenced in the analysis below can be found in Exhibit A.

This project replaces an existing bridge with a new bridge built to current AASHTO, Caltrans, and County standards. Nearly all of the project-related impacts would be temporary, occurring during the active construction period. Once constructed, several project-related impacts would be beneficial such as removing concrete from the stream channel, increasing hydraulic capacity by reducing the number of bridge spans, and constructing a new structurally sound bridge capable of carrying emergency vehicles.

There are a number of County plans and regulations potentially applicable to the project. These include the County General Plan, the North County Area Plan, the Templeton Community Plan, and the County standards contained in Title 22 of the County Code. The County is not required to comply with the land use permit requirements of Title 22 (Inland Land Use Ordinance), but it strives to adhere to the spirit and intent of these plans in project design.



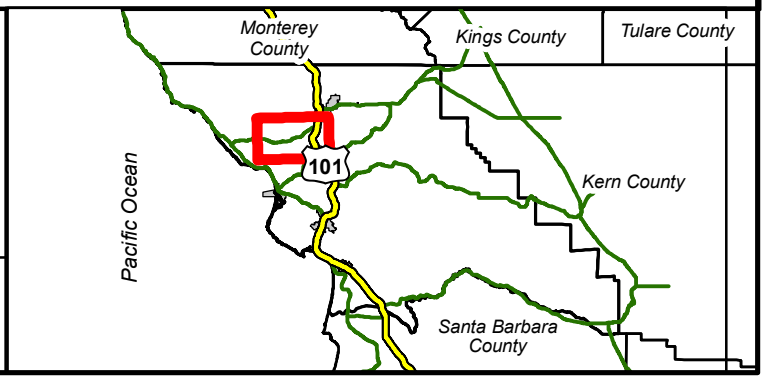
PROJECT VICINITY MAP

Jack Creek Bridge Replacement Project
Bridge No. 49C-0342; BRLO-5949(156)

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

1:100,000
0 4,500 9,000 18,000 Feet

Map by: BUva
Date: 6/22/2021



PROJECT LOCATION MAP

Jack Creek Bridge Replacement Project
Bridge No. 49C-0342; BRLO-5949(156)

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

1:2,000
0 87.5 175 350
Feet

Map by: BUva
Date: 6/22/2021

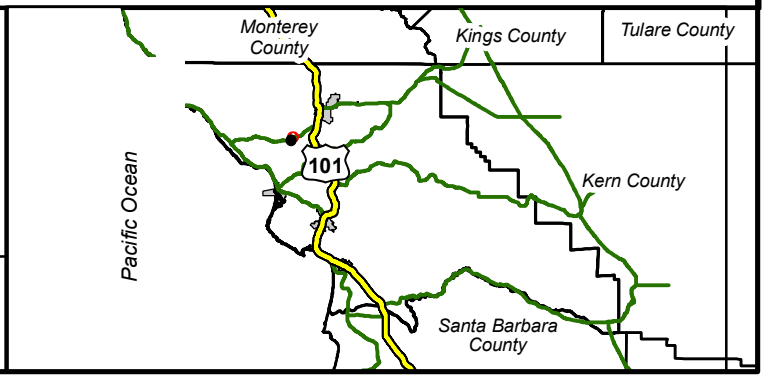


Figure 3 – Representative Photographs

Photo 1. Jack Creek Road Bridge over Paso Robles Creek, facing northeast. Photo taken May 4, 2021.

Photo 2. Paso Robles Creek looking upstream from the Jack Creek Road Bridge, facing west. Photo taken September 28, 2017. Conditions are expected to be similar to this during construction.

Photo 3. Likely staging area southeast of the Jack Creek Road Bridge, facing east. Photo taken May 4, 2021.

Photo 4. Jack Creek Road Bridge over Paso Robles Creek, facing east. Conditions are expected to be much drier than this during construction. Photo taken May 4, 2021.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

I. AESTHETICS

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:					
(a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(b)	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c)	In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (public views are those that are experienced from 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(d)	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

The following is based on a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) Memorandum prepared by County staff (2021) for the proposed project. Jack Creek Road is a tree-lined road through agricultural fields and vineyards with views to vineyards and hills with fields and forest beyond. Roadside vegetation is primarily mature oaks. Vegetation at the Jack Creek Road bridge consists of dense riparian shrub thickets, providing relatively open views of the surrounding landscape, including a steep forested hillside along the south side of SR-46 immediately south of the bridge.

There are only brief, highly filtered views of the bridge to travelers on SR-46. The bridge is also visible from See Ranch Lane at the intersection with Jack Creek Road. The visual elements of the existing bridge are the concrete deck that is level with the adjacent road surface and a low-profile metal beam guardrail and timber rail along each side of the bridge.

Discussion

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

While SR-46 is a scenic travel route connecting Highway 101 in Templeton to SR-1 just south of Cambria, it is not a designated scenic highway. The existing vegetation provides a highly filtered view of the bridge to travelers on surrounding roads. The proposed bridge replacement consists of a low-

profile structure that is comparable to the existing bridge in the same location, and not expected to be visible for more than brief periods and would be largely screened by vegetation to travelers on surrounding roads. Therefore, the project would not have a substantial effect on the scenic character of the area and would not impact a scenic vista.

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

The project is not in a state scenic highway. Additionally, bridge replacement would not require damage to any rock outcrops or historic buildings. The project would result in temporary and permanent impacts to natural communities including forest and woodland habitats that currently contribute to the visual character of the area. Per Biological mitigation measures, native trees that are removed would be replanted (See Exhibit B). Impacts would be less than significant.

(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 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?*

The project is located in a non-urbanized, publicly accessible area. The project would not substantially degrade the character or quality of the views from surrounding roads. However, heavy equipment, vehicles, and construction materials located within the project site and staging areas would be visible from the immediate surrounding areas during project construction. These construction-related visual impacts would be temporary and limited to the construction window, and therefore impacts would be less than significant.

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

The project does not include any new source of light or glare.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project would not have an adverse impact on aesthetics and no mitigation measures are required.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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 Dept. 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 forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:				
(a)	Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(c)	Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(d)	Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

The project site is in the Templeton Agricultural Preserve Area. There are lands under Williamson Act Contract in the vicinity (south side of SR-46, bordering Jack Creek Road to the east of the project site) but not within the project area. There are agricultural fields near the bridge along Jack Creek Road, See Ranch Lane,

and SR-46. The mapped soil unit at the bridge location is riverine deposit and is not considered prime farmland soil.

The project site is in an area mapped as oak woodland having less than 10% blue oak. Jack Creek Road has scattered mature oaks along the roadside and in the bordering fields. A large contiguous block of coastal oak woodland (34 to 75% coverage of coastal oaks) occurs along the south side of SR-46 in the vicinity of the project area with more coastal oak woodland blocks between 34 and 100% coverage west and northwest of the project area. These areas are mapped as agricultural land. There is no managed forest land or timberland at or adjacent to the project site.

Discussion

(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?*

The project site is surrounded by agricultural land uses; however, the work would be limited to the existing ROW in areas that are not currently used and would not be used in the future for agricultural purposes. A review of the California Department of Conservation Important Farmland Finder shows that the main work area contains designated Grazing Land, Farmland of Local Importance, and Farmland of Local Potential, but no Prime Farmlands. The staging areas southeast and southwest of the bridge (APN 039-201-012) are considered Prime Farmlands. The staging areas total approximately 1 acre, respectively. They are separated from each other as well as other prime soils, and agricultural areas. The staging areas are located within the 100-year floodplain. Based on aerial photographs neither staging area has been used for agricultural production for decades.

A TCE would be obtained from the landowner. After construction, the staging areas would be returned to pre-existing conditions/contours. The project would not result in direct or indirect conversion of farmland and would not permanently block access to either staging area or agricultural areas. Therefore, the project would not convert farmland to non-agricultural use.

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

While there are lands in agricultural use and under Williamson Act contract in the general vicinity of the project site, the project will not affect zoning, access to, or use of these properties. Construction would require a temporary road closure, but the east end of Jack Creek Road provides an alternative access to any property that relies on Jack Creek Road for access. Therefore, there are no impacts.

(c) *Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?*

The project site does not conflict with the existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of forest land, or timberland zoned for Timberland Production as there are no designated forest land or timberlands within the project area, therefore there are no impacts.

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

The project would remove trees in the ROW for construction access. However, the project would not result in the loss or conversion of forest land to non-forest use as there are no designated forest lands within the project area, therefore there are no impacts.

(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?

Permanent impacts from the project would occur within the County road ROW, which are considered dedicated to developed/urban use (which includes roadway development and use). There are no designated forest lands within the project area. There are no impacts.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project is consistent with surrounding land uses and would not adversely affect surrounding agricultural areas. The project would not result in impact to or conversion of Prime Farmland or Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local or Statewide Importance, timberlands or forest lands. The project would be limited to temporary construction staging on two portions of a parcel adjoining County ROW, which would be restored to pre-existing conditions upon completion of construction. Therefore, no significant impacts to agricultural and forest resources are anticipated and no mitigation measures are necessary.

III. AIR QUALITY

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:					
(a)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(c)	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(d)	Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

San Luis Obispo County is in non-attainment status for ozone and particulate matter 10 micrometers in size and smaller (PM_{10}) under the California standards. This means that the air quality standards for these pollutants are not being met. The County's Air Pollution Control District's (APCD) Clean Air Plan describes strategies to reduce emissions of these pollutants with the goal of improving air quality to meet the state standards by the earliest possible date.

The Clean Air Plan provides guidance for long-term emissions, cumulative effects, and countywide programs developed with the goal of reaching acceptable air quality levels. The air quality improvement strategies in the Clean Air Plan that are generally most applicable to Public Works projects are those aimed at reducing the use of fossil fuels and reducing vehicle travel. Based on an analysis using California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod), the County determined that operational emissions were below APCD thresholds, therefore, no operational emission mitigation is required.

The CEQA Air Quality Handbook (2012) was referenced for air pollutant significance thresholds during construction and mitigation measures to be employed when exceeding thresholds. These include standard idling restrictions for construction vehicles and equipment, control measures for grading activities that would generate airborne dust or disturb naturally occurring asbestos (NOA), and control measures for disturbance of hydrocarbon-contaminated soils and demolition of asbestos-containing buildings and structures.

A referral was submitted to the APCD and the County received a response on November 2, 2021. APCD's recommendations are incorporated in Exhibit B.

Discussion

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

The project is consistent with the applicable San Luis Obispo County APCD CEQA Air Quality Handbook and therefore would have no impact. The project replaces an existing bridge and would not affect vehicle use such as by generating new traffic or increasing vehicle miles. Therefore, the source control measures in the Clean Air Plan are not directly applicable to the project and the project does not conflict with the Clean Air Plan.

(b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

San Luis Obispo County has been designated as an attainment area federally, but as a nonattainment area for ozone and PM_{10} under the California standards. The proposed project would not result in a cumulative considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant. The project would result in short-term construction equipment exhaust and fugitive dust emissions. CalEEMod analysis confirmed that operational level emissions were below thresholds warranting project-specific emissions mitigation. Construction related pollutants may occur during the proposed bridge replacement, but this does not constitute a considerable regional net increase, as pollutant-producing work would be temporary and compliant with the APCD Air Quality Guidelines. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant impact.

The use of diesel engines, diesel idling, diesel fuel, and portable equipment 50 horsepower (hp) or greater, if required for construction, would have to comply with the relevant State laws to reduce ozone precursors and diesel particulate matter (Section 2485 of Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations (for on-road vehicles) and Section 2449 of the CARB In-Use Off-Road Diesel regulation (for off-road equipment). These requirements would help ensure the project does not contribute to a considerable net increase of criteria air pollutants.

(c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Persons living in nearby residences may be considered sensitive receptors for purposes of assessing potential air quality impacts. The Noise Impact Analysis (SWCA, 2021) notes that there is one private residence located within 500 feet of the project – approximately 180 feet east of the project boundary. Sensitive receptors within the project area may be exposed to air pollutants during the construction phase of the project. Diesel engine idling is regulated by State law and apply to diesel-powered construction vehicles and equipment used for the project and are intended to help improve air quality; implementation of these would help minimize the potential for exposure to nearby sensitive receptors. Exposure to the noise or engine idling would be temporary during certain times of the day during construction, and therefore would have a less than significant impact.

NOA is identified as a toxic air contaminant potentially present in serpentine and other ultramafic rocks. The closest ultramafic outcrops are located approximately 3.5 miles west of the project location, the project site is not in the County APCD's NOA buffer area, and therefore, NOAs is not expected to be encountered at the project site. If demolition of structures containing asbestos or lead-based paint is necessary, an APCD permit may be required.

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

The project is not expected to result in other emissions that would adversely affect a substantial number of people. Project-generated odors (typically associated with construction projects) would be short-term and limited to the immediate construction area.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project is likely to result in temporary construction-related air quality impacts, such as fugitive dust, but not expected to generate air emissions that would exceed designated air emission thresholds determined by APCD to be significant. Construction activities in close proximity to residences have the potential to expose people to airborne dust and diesel particulates. Implementation of the air quality control measures such as using water trucks or APCD approved dust suppressants listed in Exhibit B, for example, would reduce potential air quality effects to less than significant levels.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(b)	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(e)	Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Setting

Numerous biological field surveys and focused assessments, including seasonally timed botanical surveys and bat surveys, were conducted to classify the baseline site conditions and to assess the potential for presence of special-status plant and wildlife species and their habitats. The analysis included an evaluation of federal and state listed species known to occur in the region that was based on a review of occurrences documented within the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), and official species lists obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the project. The species described below are limited to those that were determined to have potential to occur within the project limits during construction activities.

The vegetation communities observed within the project limits were classified and further evaluated for their potential to support special-status plant and wildlife species. Descriptions of the vegetation communities observed onsite are provided below. Discussions of jurisdictional waterways, designated critical habitat, and special-status plant and wildlife species with potential to occur within the project limits are also presented.

The Biological Study Area (BSA) for the project comprises 6.19 acres and encompasses all areas of potential ground disturbance (including staging areas) for the proposed action. The BSA is larger in size than the actual project limits to account for buffering around work areas. Actual project impacts would be determined based on the detailed plans for final design, access to work areas, and construction staging. Currently, a total of 1.4 acres of temporary impacts are anticipated from vegetation clearing/trimming, construction access and staging, and stream diversion. A total of 0.4 acre of permanent impacts are anticipated from installation of new bridge abutments, bridge structure, and roadwork. Existing bridge pilings and piers would be removed from below the ordinary high-water mark (OHWM) of Paso Robles Creek, but no adverse permanent impacts below the OHWM would occur.

Land Cover Types

The BSA is in a rural area surrounded by open space, agriculture, and low-density residential land uses. The dominant vegetation communities present within the BSA include coast live oak woodland and forest, upland mustard fields, arroyo willow thickets, poison oak scrub, stream channel, and ruderal. The remaining portion of the BSA is comprised of developed areas (i.e., roadway). The habitat types are described in greater detail below:

Coast live oak woodland and forest is present within the BSA, with coast live oak dominant and valley oak co-dominant. These oaks form an open to continuous canopy along the roadway portions of the BSA and along the riparian corridor. The understory is a mix of native shrubs, such as California bay, coyote brush, common snowberry, western poison oak, and brown dogwood, as well as native and non-native grasses and herbaceous species. A total of 2.70 acres of coast live oak woodland and forest was identified within the BSA, which includes portions of the oak tree canopy that overlaps Jack Creek Road.

Upland mustard fields occupy upland areas formerly used for crop production. These areas are not currently farmed but the landowner periodically discs the ground. Upland mustard fields support nonnative herbaceous plant species such as black mustard, poison hemlock, star-thistle, ripgut grass, bur-clover, and henbit. A total of 1.51 acres of upland mustard fields are present within the BSA and would be used primarily for equipment and material staging.

The riparian corridor associated with Paso Robles Creek supports arroyo willow thickets which is a scrubby streamside habitat, varying in canopy cover from relatively open to impenetrable. Both shrub and tree forms of arroyo willow are dominant on the banks of the creek, along with red willow, mulefat, western

sycamore, and California black walnut hybrids. Most of the oak trees are rooted outside the stream channel. The understory includes poison oak, Himalayan blackberry, blue elderberry, and stinging nettle. A total of 1.32 acres of arroyo willow thickets are present in the BSA. Access to the underside of the bridge would occur through this land cover type.

A small section of poison oak scrub occurs on the northwest side of the bridge. This area appears to have once been part of the coast live oak woodland and forest, but the lack of a tree canopy allows for dense cover dominated by poison oak and to a lesser extent common snowberry, California blackberry, and California bee plant. A total of 0.31 acre of poison oak scrub thicket is present in the BSA.

The area directly associated with Paso Robles Creek in the BSA is classified as stream channel. Within the stream channel, plant species include water speedwell, mint, dock, sow thistle, and mulefat. This area is inundated with flowing surface water during the wet season (December-June) and dry rocky cobble with emergent vegetation during the dry season (July-November). There were no areas dominated by emergent wetland vegetation outside the OHWM in the BSA. A total of 0.25 acre of stream channel is present in the BSA. Construction activities, primarily the stream diversion and bridge structure removal, under the bridge would occur in this habitat.

Ruderal areas are considered land cover types subject to regular maintenance activities or disturbance where nonnative grasses and herbaceous plant species dominate. As with the BSA, ruderal areas are often upland areas associated with roadways. Plant species within this habitat type are primarily nonnative and naturalized grasses including bromes, milk thistle, cheeseweed, and foxtail barley. A total of 0.06 acre of ruderal habitat is present within the BSA.

Jurisdictional Waters

The Jack Creek Road bridge crosses Paso Robles Creek just downstream of its confluence with Jack Creek. The flow in the creek is intermittent; surface water may or may not be present depending on the time of year. Paso Robles Creek is subject to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) jurisdiction and regulation due to the presence of an identifiable OHWM, evidence of a clearly defined bed and bank, connectivity to traditionally navigable waters (Salinas River), and presence of riparian vegetation.

Critical Habitat

Paso Robles Creek (within the BSA) and Jack Creek (just upstream of the BSA) are designated critical habitat for the South-Central California Coast steelhead (steelhead) Distinct Population Segment (DPS). No other designated critical habitat occurs within the BSA.

Special-Status Habitats and Species

The CNDDB and official lists from the USFWS and NMFS identified 15 special-status plant taxa and 12 special-status wildlife species that have been documented as occurring within a 5-mile radius of the BSA or may occur within the BSA. Because the plant and wildlife lists are regional, an analysis of the range and habitat preferences for those species was conducted to identify which species have the potential to occur on or around the project site.

The stream channel is considered a sensitive habitat type because it is within a jurisdictional area and designated as critical habitat for steelhead, whether the species is present or not. The arroyo willow thicket, poison oak scrub, and portions of the coast live oak woodland and forest are also considered sensitive habitat types because they are within a jurisdictional area. Oak woodland habitats are protected by California Public Resources Code Section 21083.4 (Senate Bill 1334), which directs counties to evaluate and mitigate for impacts to oak woodlands when reviewing projects under CEQA.

Special-status Plants

The habitat types observed within the BSA provide suitable habitat or growing conditions for special-status plant species; however, none were observed during appropriately timed botanical surveys, and none are anticipated to be present in the BSA.

Special-status Wildlife

The habitat types observed within the BSA provide suitable habitat for special-status wildlife species, as well as migratory birds and roosting bats. Western pond turtle, bald eagle, pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, western red bat, western yellow bat, western mastiff bat, pocketed free-tailed bat, and big free-tailed bat were observed or detected during biological field survey efforts conducted between 2017 and 2021. Additionally, steelhead, California red-legged frog (CRLF), Coast Range newt, lesser slender salamander, two-striped gartersnake, Monterey dusky-footed woodrat may occur in the BSA. Descriptions of the special-status species determined to have potential to occur within the project limits are included below.

South-Central California Coast Steelhead DPS

The South-Central California Coast steelhead DPS is the anadromous (ocean-rearing) form of rainbow trout in Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties. Adults migrate up to hundreds of miles from the marine environment into the freshwater streams and rivers of their birth to spawn (typically late winter through early spring). Steelhead require cool, clear, coastal streams and rivers with abundant shade and structure and loose, gravel substrates to spawn. This species is listed as federally threatened and is a CDFW Species of Special Concern (SSC).

The portion of Paso Robles Creek within the BSA supports potentially suitable steelhead habitat, but no steelhead were observed within the BSA, and there have been no documented occurrences of steelhead in this area for decades. According to instream flow assessment data collected in spring and summer of 2013 for the *San Luis Obispo County Regional Instream Flow Assessment*, Paso Robles Creek does not carry sufficient flows to provide steelhead habitat (Stillwater Sciences, 2014). Individual steelhead are considered to have a low potential to occur within the BSA, although their presence cannot be ruled out unless the stream is dry.

California Red-Legged Frog

California red-legged frog, a primarily diurnal frog, is federally listed as threatened and is a CDFW SSC. This species occurs in a variety of lowland and foothill habitat types that include (or are in proximity to) aquatic features, such as ponds or streams with dense or shrubby emergent riparian vegetation, that are required for breeding. The typical CRLF breeding season extends from November through April.

The portion of Paso Robles Creek within the BSA supports potentially suitable aquatic breeding and non-breeding habitat for this species. CRLF may use the creek banks that support vegetation as refugia. There are reported occurrences of CRLF about 2 miles downstream. No CRLF were observed within the project limits. Protocol-level survey efforts were not conducted, but presence in the BSA is inferred.

Coast Range Newt, Lesser Slender Salamander, Two-striped gartersnake, Western Pond Turtle

Coast Range newt, lesser slender salamander, two-striped gartersnake, and western pond turtle are all CDFW SSC and documented within a five-mile radius of the BSA. Coast Range newt, lesser slender salamander, two-striped gartersnake were not observed within the BSA during the field surveys which included aquatic sampling and coverboards. However, the BSA may provide suitable aquatic habitat for these species and the adjacent habitat types with shaded slopes and deep leaf litter in broadleaf upland forests are considered suitable upland/dispersal habitat. Several western pond turtles (including a breeding pair) were observed in and around the BSA on multiple survey efforts.

Monterey Dusky-footed Woodrat

Monterey dusky-footed woodrat is a CDFW SSC that typically occurs in shrublands and forests including riparian woodlands in the Santa Lucia Mountains. This species constructs large conspicuous stick nests of which several were observed within the BSA. Because specimens were not trapped and examined, it could not be determined which subspecies of woodrat is present within the BSA, but Monterey dusky-footed woodrat is known to occur in this region.

Nesting Birds

A variety of raptor and passerine bird species have the potential to nest within the project area and are protected during the nesting period under the provisions of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503 and 3503.5, and eagles are protected year-round under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Many bird species may use the habitat types observed on-site for nesting, especially the bridge structures, and habitats that contain tall trees and dense shrub cover. However, special-status birds, such as least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, and California condor are not considered to have potential to nest onsite due to lack of suitable habitat. The Arroyo Willow Thicket within the BSA potentially provide suitable habitat for the least Bell's vireo, but this species has not been documented nesting in the Central Coast region for decades.

Active nests of Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Oak Titmouse have been observed within the BSA, as well as remnant nests likely belonging to Cliff Swallows. Bald and golden eagles have been observed flying over the BSA, but there is no suitable nesting habitat and the BSA is highly unlikely to be used as foraging habitat.

Special-Status Bats

The BSA provides day and night roosting habitat, as well as foraging habitat for a number of bat species. An ongoing multi-year bat survey effort utilizing direct observation and acoustic detection techniques identified 18 bat species using the BSA at various times of the year. Some species are considered infrequent visitors while others remain year-round.

Various regulations (Title 14, Section 251.1 of the California Code of Regulations and California Fish and Game Code Section 4150) afford protections to bats, which are classified as indigenous non-game mammal species regardless of their listing status. Seven of the documented species are considered CDFW SSC: pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, western red bat, western yellow bat, western mastiff bat, pocketed free-tailed bat, and big free-tailed bat.

Additionally, impacts to bat maternity colonies, which are considered native wildlife nursery sites, could be considered potentially significant under CEQA. Six bat species were determined to use the underside of the bridge as a day roost and others may roost in the crevices or cavities of trees. Four species were determined or are expected to have recently used the bridge as a maternity roost for rearing young: pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, Yuma myotis, and Mexican free-tailed bat.

Discussion

(a) *Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?*

No special-status plant species were observed within or around the BSA during the seasonally timed botanical surveys. Therefore, no impacts to special-status plants would result from the project.

While highly unlikely, steelhead may be present within the BSA during project implementation and project activities may result in take of this species via injury or death during diversion and

dewatering. Potential indirect effects to steelhead from the project also have potential to occur, including adverse effects to water quality downstream of the project area from sediment deposition, erosion, and habitat modifications.

CRLF may use the banks of Paso Robles Creek and may be present within the BSA during construction, which could result in take via injury or death during dewatering and other ground disturbing-activities. Indirect impacts to CRLF may also occur, including adverse effects to water quality from sedimentation, erosion, or other habitat modifications.

Coast Range newt, lesser slender salamander, two-stripe gartersnake, and western pond turtle all may be present in the aquatic and riparian areas of the BSA and the adjacent upland/dispersal habitat. If these species are present during construction, there is potential for direct impacts during dewatering and other ground-disturbing activities. Indirect impacts may also occur via adverse effects to water quality from sedimentation, erosion, and other habitat modifications.

The typical nesting bird period is February 1 through September 1 and this period is expected to overlap with the anticipated construction schedule to some extent. If nesting birds are present on-site during construction, direct impacts may occur via injury or death during vegetation removal or other ground-disturbing activities. Indirect impacts to nesting bird species may result from construction noise or other general disturbance, which may cause premature fledging of young, nest abandonment, starvation, and reduced health of nestlings.

Suitable habitat for special-status and maternal roosting bat species occurs within the BSA. Bats roost on the existing bridge structure and potentially in the trees and snags within the BSA, and they forage throughout the habitat types within the BSA. Because bat species that form maternity colonies typically have only one young per year, recovery from population declines is very slow. If special-status or maternal roosting bat species (particularly flightless young) are present during construction, direct impacts may occur via injury or death. Indirect impacts to special status bats may result from construction noise and other general disturbance, as well as inadvertent creation of habitat for predatory species.

Once completed, the project would not have adverse effects on biological resources. The project replaces the existing bridge with a span bridge in the existing ROW and would not result in permanent changes to the creek bed, riparian areas, or flow conditions. The project would result in potentially significant impacts to jurisdictional areas and special-status wildlife. Prior to and during construction implementation of design features like Diversion and Dewatering Plan, as well as avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, such as crew trainings, qualified biological monitoring and preconstruction surveys, species protection measures, bat exclusion, seasonal restrictions, erosion and sedimentation control, and invasive species control, would reduce these impacts to a less than significant level.

(b) *Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?*

Project implementation would result in both temporary and permanent impacts to natural communities and jurisdictional areas as quantified in the table below:

Natural Community	Estimated Permanent Impacts (acres)	Estimated Temporary Impacts (acres)
Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest	0.168	0.570
Arroyo Willow Thicket	0.001	0.214
Poison Oak Scrub	0.013	0.018
Stream Channel	0.000	0.093
Jurisdictional Area		
Corps Jurisdiction	0.000	0.093
CDFW/RWQCB Jurisdiction	0.133	0.383
Steelhead Critical Habitat	0.000	0.093

The arroyo willow thicket, coast live oak woodland and forest, and poison oak scrub habitats form the riparian canopy and demarcate the CDFW/RWQCB jurisdictions associated with Paso Robles Creek. Riverine (i.e., stream channel) habitats located within the OHWM and under the riparian canopy are within Corps jurisdiction. The OHWM of Paso Robles Creek is also stream channel is also designated critical habitat for steelhead.

Tree removal and vegetation clearing would be required for access to the work areas, removal of the existing bridge, and construction of a new bridge. Wherever feasible, efforts would be made to trim trees instead of removing them; however, several large oak and willow trees would be removed.

Temporary impacts to native habitat types would be mitigated in-kind onsite at a 1:1 ratio, to the extent feasible as described within the Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). Permanent impacts to state jurisdictional riparian habitats and waters and jurisdictional waters of the United States would likely be mitigated for at a 3:1 ratio. However, the final mitigation ratios for state and federal jurisdictional areas and riparian habitat would be determined during the permitting phase of the project and the HMMP would be finalized prior to acquisition of the permits. Removal of invasive species may provide opportunities for planting native trees and shrubs to enhance the existing native plant communities, although these areas are limited within the BSA.

With use of these restoration ratios and compliance with all of the various regulatory permit terms and conditions, the potential impacts to sensitive habitat types; including jurisdictional waters of the United States and waters of the state and riparian habitat areas, would be reduced to less than significant levels.

(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?*

Implementation of the project is expected to result in temporary and permanent impacts to federal and state jurisdictional waters, but no wetlands. Permanent impacts would result from installation of the approach abutments of the new bridge, placement of RSP, and a new bridge piling. Temporary impacts would result from vegetation trimming and removal, diversion and dewatering, and falsework required for construction. Project staging has been designated outside of the riparian areas to avoid unnecessary impacts to jurisdictional areas.

The project does not result in changes to the creek bed or flow conditions of Paso Robles Creek. With the implementation of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, such as seasonal restrictions and limiting tree removal there would be a less than significant impact to state or federally protected wetlands.

(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?*

Construction would be conducted during the dry season to avoid potential impacts to aquatic species. In the event water is present during construction, dewatering would be accomplished with small diversion berms and pumping water out of the construction zone at each bridge abutment location. The diversion and dewatering plan would be implemented in a manner that would avoid significant impact to aquatic species that rely on the creek for migration, nursery, and foraging habitat. Construction effects on nesting birds would be avoided by conducting pre-construction surveys for nesting birds and waiting to conduct vegetation clearing until active nesting has been completed.

Maternal bat colonies are considered native wildlife nursery sites. Four species were determined or are expected to have recently used the bridge as a maternity roost for rearing young. Because bat species that form maternity colonies typically have only one young per year, recovery from population declines is very slow. If maternal roosting bat species (particularly flightless young) are present during construction, direct impacts may occur via injury or death, and indirect impacts may result from construction noise and other general disturbance, as well as inadvertent creation of habitat for predatory species. Potential impacts to maternal bat colonies would be minimized to the greatest extent practicable by implementing a Bat Mitigation Plan. The Bat Mitigation Plan would describe pre-during and post-construction measures to minimize impacts. These measures would include installing passive exclusion on the bridge to discourage use and installation of replacement habitat on the bridge structure, for example. The Bat Mitigation Plan would be developed and implemented with the aid of a qualified biologist.

Once completed, the replacement single piling bridge would result in a net gain and improvement to steelhead designated critical habitat and the riparian habitat because existing concrete within the channel would be removed. The project would not have permanent impacts on the creek channel and would not alter existing channel conditions, riparian bank, or flow conditions that determine the habitat conditions for steelhead and other aquatic species.

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

Although the project would require removal of native oaks and other trees, reviews of the North County Area Plan - Adelaida Subarea Plan, Title 22 of the County Code, the Templeton Community Plan, and others found that the project does not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. After construction, project implementation would result in a net improvement to the overall habitat quality within the project area, because existing concrete in the creek channel would be removed. Permanently impacted and temporarily disturbed areas would be mitigated for and restored with native plant species (including oak trees) appropriate for the area and all invasive plant species would be removed.

(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?

The project site is not subject to any adopted or approved habitat conservation plans and therefore, the project would not conflict with the provisions of any such plans.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The proposed project has the potential to impact federal and state jurisdictional waters, sensitive vegetation communities, special-status wildlife, nesting birds, and roosting bats. Impacts of the project on biological resources would generally be limited to temporary construction impacts.

Biological Opinions from USFWS and NMFS pertaining to CRLF and steelhead, respectively, have been acquired and provide protective measures for these and other species. Those measures and additional avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures (BIO 1 through BIO-49 in Exhibit B) address impacts to biological resources and reduce them to less than significant levels. These measures include efforts to restore temporarily disturbed areas, implementing erosion control and water quality protection measures, conducting pre-construction surveys for special-status wildlife species, and limiting project boundaries. Biological monitoring conducted by agency-approved biologists would be conducted throughout the construction phase of the project to ensure compliance with the protective measures. A Diversion and Dewatering Plan as well as a Bat Mitigation Plan would also be implemented. These measures may be refined by regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over the project during the permit acquisition phase. With the exception of the Bat Mitigation Plan, the recommended mitigation measures to address biological resources, while extensive, are typical for a bridge replacement project of this scope and scale.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(c)	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

Consideration of cultural resources under CEQA (Section 15064.5) includes evaluation of project impacts on resources listed in or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. This can include, among other things, historical buildings, structures, and sites, and archaeological resources. Analysis of potential project impacts on cultural resources includes a search for sites listed or eligible for listing in the Register at the project site or in the vicinity, and studies to determine the presence or likely presence of cultural resources that could be impacted by the project.

In the event that an archaeological resource is identified in or near a project area, appropriate mitigation measures are determined with the goal of documenting the significance of the site and avoiding inadvertent destruction of the site. The findings from these studies are used to determine if construction monitoring is warranted in cases where there is reasonable likelihood of encountering previously unidentified resources.

The Jack Creek Road Bridge, spanning Paso Robles Creek was built in 1938, and was reconstructed in 1969. Based on archival research conducted November 27, 2019, no historical buildings, structures or sites listed in the California Register of Historical Resources are located in or near the project area. The bridge is not listed in the California Register. The bridge was evaluated for eligibility by the Caltrans Structure Maintenance & Investigations of Historical Significance- Local Agency Bridges in March 2019 and was determined as being ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places (US Federal Highway Administration, 2019) and the California Register of Historical Resources. Note that the Caltrans refers to the bridge as Paso Robles Creek Bridge.

A records search at the Central Coast Information Center (CCIC) was conducted on November 4, 2015 and it was determined that while no cultural resources were identified within the project area, three cultural resource sites exist within a two mile radius of the project area, additionally twelve cultural resource investigation reports have been conducted within the two-mile radius. Given that the record search was five years old, a subsequent record search was conducted on March 20, 2020. The results of the updated record search confirmed that no cultural resources exist in the project area.

Archaeological surface surveys were conducted on March 18, 2020, and on August 27, 2020 (Laurie & Wheeler, 2021). The survey identified a prehistoric cultural resource adjacent to the project area. The site was recorded, and the project area was redesigned in order to avoid impacting this site. The archaeological survey of the project area did not identify significant cultural resources within the redesigned project area.

The Paso Robles Creek and Jack Creek corridors would be considered archaeologically sensitive because they provided access to water, fish, and a diversity of plants and animals associated with the riparian zones.

Discussion

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

The project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an above-ground historic resource because there are no such resources at or near the project site. The Jack Creek Road Bridge has been determined ineligible for listing on a National or State register (US Federal Highway Administration).

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

No significant archaeological resources are known to exist within the project area; therefore, the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource. The project disturbance area would be limited to the existing previously disturbed bridge footprint and County ROW. However, due to the heightened archaeological sensitivity of the area and resources identified adjacent to the project area, periodic construction monitoring would be conducted by a qualified archaeologist. Further, standard mitigation measures would be followed in the event any previously unidentified archaeological resources are discovered during construction.

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

As described in (b), there is low likelihood that the project would disturb cultural resources. No previously identified dedicated cemeteries or human remains were identified within or adjacent to the project area. However, due to the archaeological sensitivity of the area and location at Paso Robles Creek, it is appropriate to include mitigation measures to be followed in the event construction activities result in the discovery of human remains.

Conclusion/Mitigation

Because of past site disturbances, there is low likelihood of encountering archaeological resources during project construction. Based on the archaeological sensitivity of the area it is appropriate to include mitigation measures that require pre-construction briefings for construction crews, periodic cultural resource monitoring, and prescribed actions to be taken in the event previously unanticipated resources are discovered during construction. With the inclusion of these mitigation measures, potential adverse effects to cultural resources would be reduced to a less than significant level (see CR-1 through CR-4 in Exhibit B).

VI. ENERGY

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(b)	Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

Energy considerations under CEQA are intended to evaluate projects with respect to the goals of decreasing energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels and increasing reliance on renewable energy sources (CEQA Guidelines Appendix F). Relevant factors for consideration can include energy consumption required for the project, compliance with energy standards, and effects of the project on local and regional energy supplies, electricity demand, and transportation energy requirements.

This bridge replacement project was evaluated for impacts to energy. The replacement bridge does not require the installation or modification of an energy source.

Discussion

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

The project would replace an existing bridge with no change in capacity or transportation patterns so there would be no energy consumption impacts relevant to project operation.

Consideration of the project's construction energy requirements and energy use efficiencies pertain to construction vehicle emissions, which have been evaluated in the Air Quality section. Construction emissions would be designed and managed to avoid wasteful or unnecessary consumption of fuel that would contribute to air emissions. Therefore, the project is not expected to contribute to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of fossil fuels.

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

The County is collaborating with two adjoining counties to develop energy efficiency programs to help reduce energy use, reduce carbon emissions, and meet the goals of local climate action plans. Efforts to date have focused on building codes, construction workforce training, and residential energy efficiency assistance programs. These County efforts are not directly relevant to the bridge repair project.

The project would not conflict or obstruct a state or local EnergyWise plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency, and therefore would have no impacts.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project would not result in significant effects on energy resources. The air quality impact assessment for the project, described in the Air Quality section above, addresses construction-related consumption of fossil fuels from the perspective of corresponding air emissions, and recommends project-specific mitigation measures that may avoid wasteful or unnecessary fuel consumption. No additional mitigation measures are required.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

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

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(f)	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

The project site is not in the Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone and there are no known active or capable faults in the vicinity. The entire county is mapped as a seismically active area. The bulk of the central portion of the County, including the project site, is mapped as a D1 hazard zone based on the USGS Seismic Design Standards. Secondary seismic hazards, including liquefaction, settlement, and landslides, could result from the interaction of ground shaking with existing soil conditions. The project area is relatively flat and is not considered a landslide risk area. The soil types have low to moderate erodibility and pose low liquefaction risk.

The mapped geological unit at the site is alluvium, which consists of unconsolidated fine-grained sand, clay loam, and silty clay (to a depth of approximately 42 feet below ground surface) deposited along valley floors. This unit follows the creek bed and floodplain of Jack Creek and Paso Robles Creek in the vicinity of the project. Shallower alluvium deposits are generally too young to preserve fossil resources. Geotechnical borings were conducted at the project site to characterize soil properties and inform the project design.

Discussion

(a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

(a-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.

The site does not lie within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, and no known active faults are mapped within or through the project area. Based on the mapping, the potential for fault rupture at the site is low, and therefore would have no impact.

(a-ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Ground shaking is primarily a function of the distance between a particular area and the seismic source, the type of materials underlying the site and the motion of fault displacement. The number or frequency of large magnitude earthquakes that may occur during the life of the Project cannot be predicted reliably. The potential hazards or adverse effects of ground shaking depend on several factors that include the severity of ground shaking; the nature, depth, and extent of the seismic event; the type of structures involved; and the local topography. No active faults that could produce strong ground shaking are located within the project area; however, the entire county is potentially subject to seismic activity.

The Foundation Report (Yeh and Associates, Inc., 2021) prepared for the project includes a structure design that would meet Caltrans Seismic Design Criteria. There are no unique circumstances that

would require considerations beyond those criteria. With the proposed implementation of the recommendations in the Foundation Report, potential impacts would be less than significant.

(a-iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Soil liquefaction is a secondary effect associated with seismic loading. It can occur when saturated, loose to semi-compact, granular soils, or specifically defined cohesive soils, are subjected to ground shaking sufficient to increase pore pressure to trigger liquefaction. In general, liquefaction hazard is most severe within the upper 50 feet of the ground surface. The subsurface conditions below the new bridge generally consisted of medium dense to dense clayey sand and gravel and stiff to hard sandy clay and clayey silt above the groundwater table that overlies shale of the Monterey Formation at or below the existing streambed elevation. These materials are not considered vulnerable to liquefaction during the design earthquake event and the project area is mapped in areas of low liquefaction potential. The bridge has been designed to meet Caltrans Seismic Design Criteria and would therefore have a less than significant impact related to seismic-related ground failure.

(a-iv) Landslides?

Landslides are the downslope motions of conglomerations of earth materials, bedrock, or combinations of both. The chance of a landslide occurring are increased by increases in slope gradient, looseness of material, clay content of the bedrock, underground springs, unfavorable slope orientation with existing fault boundaries, human disturbance of the landslide, increases in water content, earthquake forces to help mobilize the mass, and disturbance of the lateral confining forces.

The project area is mapped in areas of low landslide potential. The project area is relatively flat and is not considered at risk from landslides. The project is not expected to increase or exacerbate the risk of potential landslide and would have a less than significant impact.

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

Grading, vegetation removal, excavation, and placement of fill materials required for the project could result in temporary soil erosion, sedimentation, and/or stormwater runoff. No substantial changes in the existing site topography would occur and all disturbed areas would be restored to pre-project conditions, to the extent feasible, upon completion of construction activities. When construction is completed, the project site would be restored and revegetated. Construction in jurisdictional areas would be conducted outside of the normal rainy season, thus minimizing potential erosion and adverse water quality impacts to Paso Robles Creek. The project would not require excessive grading and is not going to result in significant geologic impacts related to erosion or displacement/loss of topsoil and would therefore result in a less than significant impact.

(c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

The Foundation Report (Yeh and Associates, Inc., 2021) determined the project is located on Quaternary age sediments (Qa) composed of alluvial sand and gravel. Geotechnical bore samples identified that the project is not located on a geologic unit or soils that are unstable or would become unstable as a result of the project. Therefore, landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence,

liquefaction, or collapse are not of concern for this project. Additionally, the bridge would be designed to meet the most current requirements of the AASHTO and would therefore result in a less than significant impact.

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

Expansive soils swell or heave with increases in moisture content and shrink with decreases in moisture content. The mapped soil units at the site have low shrink-swell potential and therefore would have a less than significant impact.

(e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

The use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems are not proposed for the project and therefore would have no impact.

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

The project replaces the existing bridge abutments in the same location with minor material increase in dimensions. Earth disturbance will be limited to previously disturbed areas. As such, it is unlikely that the project would impact paleontological resources, if they exist onsite.

No unique paleontological resources or unique geologic features were identified at the project location, and none are known to exist in the area. The project would have less than significant impacts to paleontological resources. No mitigation measures are required.

Conclusion/Mitigation

Development of the project is required to meet or exceed the most current requirements of the AASHTO standards and Caltrans design criteria, which have been developed to establish the minimum requirements necessary for road design to safeguard the public health, safety and general welfare through structural strength, stability, access, and other standards. These requirements would reduce potential impacts resulting from seismic risk, geologic stresses, and soil stability to a less than significant level. No mitigation measures are required.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(b)	Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions are broadly recognized as contributing to an increase in the earth's average surface temperature and long-term changes in climate. Potential GHG emissions associated with the project would be limited to burning fossil fuels from construction vehicles and equipment.

The passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, recognized the need to reduce GHG emissions and set the GHG reduction goal for the State of California into law. The law codifies the statewide goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. This is to be accomplished by reducing GHG emissions from significant sources via regulation, market mechanisms, and other actions.

In January 2021, the APCD released interim Greenhouse Gas Guidance (APCD 2021). The interim guidance replaces previous thresholds of significance for GHG emissions that were based on a 2020 planning horizon. Current recommended options for CEQA consideration of GHG emissions include: (a) consistency with a qualified climate action plan; (b) no net increase; and (c) lead-agency-adopted defensible CEQA GHG emissions thresholds. Generally, these approaches generally pertain to new commercial and residential development and vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which are not relevant for the project.

Discussion

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

As discussed in the Air Quality section, a project referral was submitted to the APCD, and their comments were incorporated into the evaluations in the Air Quality Section. The project would not generate operational air emissions. The project would result in short-term construction equipment exhaust emissions as well as emissions from construction commutes and a slight increase in VMT for traffic using the detour (as the bridge would be closed to through traffic), which result in contributions of GHG emissions. Based on the small scope of the project and the short-term construction duration, construction is not expected to generate greenhouse gas emissions that would have a significant impact on the environment.

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

The project does not conflict with the County's EnergyWise Plan and would not result in new operational emissions. The project would not conflict with any applicable plans, policies, or regulations intended to reduce GHG emissions.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project would not generate operational emissions beyond existing levels. Construction emissions would be limited in scale and duration.

As described under the Air Quality section above, Exhibit B includes a list of mitigation measures typically used to mitigate impacts to air quality from construction projects. Standard mitigation measures regarding construction equipment standards and vehicle idling would also help reduce GHG emissions to less than significant levels. No additional mitigation measures specific to GHG are required.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(c)	Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(f)	Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(g)	Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Setting

The Initial Site Assessment (ISA) study prepared for this project (WRECO, 2021) helped identify potential or known hazardous materials, hazardous waste, and/or contamination in the project area.

A review of the Envirostor database did not identify documented contaminated sites within a mile of the project. The RWQCB's GeoTracker database does not list any underground tank incidents or spill/release response actions near the project area. According to the Cortese List the project is not located in an area of known hazardous material contamination.

Utility poles along the roadway may contain metals (arsenic, chromium, and copper), petroleum hydrocarbons (creosote), and pentachlorophenol. The treated wood upholding the metal barricade and the painted wood along the sides of the roadway may contain potential lead-based paint (LBP). Potential aerially-deposited lead (ADL) may occur in exposed soil along the roadway from historical vehicle emissions during the leaded gasoline era. Historical agricultural practices (pesticides, metals) in the adjoining areas could have potential impact on the soil and water quality. Structural elements of the bridge may contain asbestos-containing materials (ACM) in the concrete, caulking connecting parts of the bridge, and the concrete supports beneath the bridge. As discussed in the Air Quality section, the project area is approximately 3.5 miles east of ultramafic rock outcrops known to contain asbestos, and the project area is not in the County APCD's NOA buffer area. Therefore, NOA is not expected in the project area.

The project area at the bridge and to the west is mapped as a 'very high' Fire Hazard Severity Zone; between the bridge and Templeton and Paso Robles to the east is mapped as a 'high' Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The project area and the surrounding rural areas are under the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) jurisdiction. The closest CalFire station is approximately seven miles from the project site in Paso Robles and emergency response time is 5 to 10 minutes.

The project area is not in or near an Airport Review area or within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. There is no adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan for the project.

Discussion

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

The project does not propose the use of hazardous construction materials, but existing materials within the project area such as wooden guard rail posts, other treated wood products, asphalt or concrete containing ADL or ACM may be encountered. As described in Exhibit B, Caltrans' guidance pertaining to proper handling and disposal of LBP, asphalt, and concrete would be implemented, and hazardous materials would be transported to proper disposal facilities thereby reducing project-related impacts to less than significant levels.

(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?*

Oils, gasoline, lubricants, fuels, and other potentially hazardous substances would be used and stored onsite during construction activities. Should a spill or leak of these materials occur during construction activities, sensitive resources within the project vicinity could be adversely impacted. As described in (a), demolition of the existing bridge and roadway may include handling of and exposure to hazardous materials. Uses of these hazardous substances and hazardous materials

handling would be short-term (only during construction) and subject to standard requirements outlined in Exhibit B (including a Spill Plan) and would have a less than significant 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?*

As described in (b), construction would be managed to prevent potentially hazardous spills and releases, and hazardous materials, substances, or waste would be handled and disposed of properly. The closest school is over two miles away to the east (Vineyard Elementary School in Templeton), so the project would have no impact to schools.

(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?*

Based on database review and review of surrounding land uses, the project is not in or near a hazardous materials site.

(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?*

The project site is over 12 miles from the Paso Robles Municipal Airport and approximately 10 miles from the Airport Review Area. Therefore, the project is not within an airport land use plan or airport review area and would have no impact.

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

There is no adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan for the project. A short-term, temporary bridge closure would be required to demolish and replace the bridge. Emergency access to all locations on either side of the bridge would still be possible.

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

The project would not affect the risk of or exposure to wildland fires or response time. The project would not significantly interfere with the ability to access parcels and areas on either side of the bridge.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project's potential to have adverse effects due to presence and/or handling of hazardous materials or hazardous conditions is limited to construction-related activities. A limited Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) would occur to collect soil samples in areas planned for soil disturbance in upcoming construction and test the soil for ADL, pesticides, and metals. Mitigation measures pertaining to LBP, hazardous wood, asphalt and concrete materials are described in Exhibit B. Additionally, implementation of the mitigation measures described in the Biological Resources section regarding spill protection ensure impacts would be less than significant (see Exhibit B).

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(b)	Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	☐	☐	☐	☐
	(i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☒	☐	☐
	(ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;	☐	☒	☐	☐
	(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	☐	☒	☐	☐
	(iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(d)	In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(e)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Setting

The project area occurs immediately downstream of the confluence of Jack Creek and Paso Robles Creek, the latter of which intermittently flows through the project area and goes on to join the Salinas River in Templeton approximately six miles downstream. The upper Salinas River is on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Section 303(d) listed of impaired surface waters based on sodium, chloride, and pH, and is proposed to be listed for turbidity; no Total Maximum Daily Load has been developed yet. Paso Robles Creek and Jack Creek have not been listed as impaired.

The project is not in a groundwater basin defined by the California Department of Water Resources.

The mapped 100-year floodplain (Federal Emergency Management Agency) encompasses a broad area at the intersection of Jack Creek Road and SR-46, including the Jack Creek bridge and adjoining lands on both sides (approximately 200 feet to the northeast and approximately 380 feet to SR-46 to the southwest).

The project site is not located within the state Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) coverage area but would result in the temporary disturbance of more than one acre and preparation of a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) would be required. The plan would describe how stormwater runoff and sedimentation and erosion would be controlled during construction to prevent adverse effects related to soil erosion and drainage.

The existing facility does not treat stormwater runoff. The project includes two biofiltration swales and basins at each end of the bridge to collect and treat bridge and roadway stormwater with a series of bioretention filter media, permeable base rock, and natural filtration through the ground before encountering perforated pipes.

Discussion

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

Paso Robles Creek is not listed as impaired for any water quality standards so there are no specific water quality parameters of heightened concern. There is potential for adverse effects on water quality in the creek from construction-related erosion and sedimentation and spills related to construction equipment. Use of standard sedimentation and erosion controls, as described in the Biological Resources section (in Exhibit B) and implementation of a SWPPP would ensure that the project does not violate water quality standards or otherwise degrade surface water or groundwater.

(b) *Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?*

The project area is not located within a mapped groundwater basin. Minimal amounts of groundwater are expected to be encountered during the removal and drilling of pier pilings. The project would not alter existing hydrologic conditions including substantially decreasing the groundwater supply or substantially interfering with groundwater recharge. Project-related impacts to groundwater are less than significant and no mitigation is required.

(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:

(c-i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

As discussed in (a), construction activities have the potential to cause erosion and sedimentation from disturbed areas. Appropriate sedimentation and erosion controls would be used to ensure there is no substantial erosion or siltation. Operational impacts would be reduced compared to current conditions by incorporation of post-construction stormwater controls designed to updated standards.

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

The project utilizes the existing footprint of the bridge and road and would not result in a material increase in the amount of impervious surface. Post-construction stormwater management features (e.g., bio swales and stormwater basin) would be incorporated into the project design to prevent direct discharges of stormwater runoff from the road into the adjacent surface waters. The stormwater system would be appropriately sized to accommodate anticipated surface runoff in a manner that would prevent an increase of polluted runoff.

(c-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?

There is potential for construction-related erosion to occur during excavation activities and until all disturbed areas have been reseeded and are appropriately stabilized. This would be minimized with the use of standard sedimentation and erosion controls and BMPs discussed in the SWPPP that would be prepared. The project design includes post-construction stormwater management features (e.g., bio swales and stormwater basins) to allow natural filtration and prevent direct discharges of stormwater runoff from the road into the adjacent surface waters.

(c-iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

The entire project area is in the mapped 100-year floodplain. The bridge replacement would be designed to allow passage of up to a 100-year flood event without impeding or redirecting flood flows. The new bridge would improve the existing hydraulics by providing longer spans with fewer piers in the channel. The bridge replacement would not result in a loss of flood storage in the 100-year floodplain.

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

The reconstructed bridge would be constructed of clean materials that would not pose a risk of release in the event the bridge structures are inundated during flood events. All refueling, building, and maintenance materials would be stored in the staging area which would be at least 60 feet from the waterway.

The temporary diversion structures (i.e., cofferdams) in the creek would be clean materials free from pollutants that could otherwise leach out into the waterway during inundation and would be removed from the water upon completion of construction.

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

The project is not in an area that is subject to a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. The project is a substantial distance upstream from the nearest surface water subject to water quality control regulations, the Salinas River. The project does not have the potential to contribute pollutants to Paso Robles Creek that could affect the water quality parameters of concern in the Salinas River downstream, namely, sodium, chloride, and pH.

Conclusion/Mitigation

Implementation of the mitigation measures included in the Biological Resources and Hazards Sections would avoid and reduce the potential project-related impacts to water resources and hydrology to less than significant levels. Similarly, compliance with AASHTO, Caltrans, and the other applicable design standards and specifications would provide assurances that surface and groundwater resources are protected during construction. Preparation and compliance with a SWPPP would also ensure that potential water quality impacts from sedimentation and erosion are avoided and minimized. Operational impacts of the project would be minimized by designing the project to maintain or improve the existing flood capacity and conveyance conditions at the bridge, and to treat stormwater runoff prior to discharge to adjacent surface waters. No additional measures are required or proposed to protect water quality. Based on the proposed amount of water to be use and the water source, no significant impacts from water use are anticipated.

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

Surrounding land uses consist primarily of agricultural land and rural lands sparsely developed for residential use. The project was reviewed for consistency with policy and/or regulatory documents relating to the environment and appropriate land use. Referrals were sent to outside agencies to review for policy consistencies (e.g., CalFire for Fire Code, APCD for Clean Air Plan). New land uses are not proposed for the project and project implementation would not modify any existing land uses within or around the project area.

Discussion

(a) Physically divide an established community?

Although a traffic detour would be implemented during construction, the project replaces an existing bridge and would provide for improved access to the surrounding properties. The detour would reroute traffic for a few rural residences but would not divide an established community.

(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?

The project is compatible with the surrounding uses and would improve the safety of the bridge for the benefit of the local community. The project is not within or adjacent to any Habitat Conservation Plan or Natural Community Conservation Plan areas. The project was found to be consistent with the pertinent plans and policy documents of the County or other agencies. The project would not 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.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project complies with the applicable land use plans and policies of the referral agencies and is consistent with the goals and requirements of County plans and ordinances. The project would not have a significant impact on land use and planning, and no mitigation is required.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

The project area is not located near any surface mines or energy/extractive areas.

Discussion

(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?

The project would impact disturbed lands within the County ROW and is not located within or near any known mineral resources.

(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?

The project is not located within or near any delineated mineral resource recovery sites.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project is not expected to impact mineral resources and no mitigation measures are necessary.

XIII. NOISE

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project result in:					
(a)	Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(b)	Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

A Noise Impact Analysis was prepared (SWCA, 2021) for the project to identify predicted construction-related noise impacts compared to County thresholds to identify potential impacts and develop feasible noise mitigation measures, if applicable. The existing ambient noise environment is characterized by intermittent vehicle noise from Jack Creek Road, SR-46, and various agricultural activities surrounding the project site.

Noise-sensitive land uses typically include residences, schools and parks. The closest sensitive noise receptor is a rural residence approximately 180 feet northeast of the project site. The project site is over 12 miles from the Paso Robles Municipal Airport and approximately 10 miles from the Airport Review Area. There is a private airstrip just over one mile north of the project area.

Discussion

(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?

Project-related noise would be limited to the construction window. This includes bridge construction noise and truck traffic noise from material deliveries and detoured vehicles. The project is not expected to generate noise exceeding a maximum noise level of 86 decibels in the vicinity of sensitive receptors (i.e., rural residences) and the project-related noise would be temporary and confined to certain times of the day. The project is not expected to generate long-term loud noises

and with the implementation of the mitigation measure listed in Exhibit B, would have a less than significant impact.

(b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

The surrounding private residences are all located more than 25 feet (the Federal Transit Administration's vibration standard) from the project limits and no significant vibration-inducing construction methods (such as pile driving) would be utilized during construction. The nearest residence is approximately 180 feet away where noise levels would attenuate considerably before reaching. Heavy equipment would generate ground borne noise and vibration, but these activities would be limited in duration and consistent with other standard construction activities. Impacts related to exposure of persons or generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels would be less than significant.

(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?

The project area is located over one mile from a private airstrip and more than 10 miles from a public use airport. Therefore, the project would not expose people residing in the area to excessive noise levels.

Conclusion/Mitigation

Noise from construction activities may intermittently dominate the noise environment in the immediate area of construction. Construction noise would be short term, intermittent, and often overshadowed by existing local traffic noise from surrounding roadways, including SR-46. Proposed mitigation measure NS-1 restricts construction activities to daylight hours.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(b)	Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

The project area is undeveloped and unpopulated with open space (riparian corridor) and fallow fields. The area is further surrounded by active agriculture, scattered rural residences, and outbuildings.

Discussion

(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)?

The project would replace a bridge at the end of its useful life. It would not change road capacity and would not alter existing transportation networks. It would not induce growth.

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

The project would mostly occur within County ROW and would not displace any people or housing, and therefore would have no impact.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project would have no impacts on population and housing and no mitigation measures are necessary.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
	Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

The purpose of this project is to improve public safety by replacing the existing bridge with a new bridge that is structurally sound and would sufficiently carry emergency vehicles and improve access to the public and properties served by Jack Creek Road.

As described in the Hazards and Hazardous Materials section, the project is in a 'very high' Fire Hazard Severity Zone, is served by CalFire, and has an emergency response time of 5 to 10 minutes. There are no schools, parks, or other public facilities in close proximity to the project.

A referral letter was sent to CalFire who requested notification of when the bridge and section of Jack Creek Road would be closed and when it reopens.

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

Discussion

(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, police protection, schools, parks, or other public facilities?*

The proposed project would have no effect on police, fire, schools, or other public services and would not result in the need for new services or facilities. No new structures would be built, and there would be no increase in population or traffic as a result of the project.

Response time for emergency vehicles is not anticipated to be adversely impacted during bridge and road closures for construction. Construction would not interfere with access to See Ranch Lane at the west end of Jack Creek Road. Access to the east side of the bridge would be from Vineyard Drive, a detour adding approximately 2,000 feet for a traveler to/from the east (including emergency response vehicles from Templeton/Paso Robles) and approximately 4.3 miles for a traveler to/from the west. Outreach to emergency providers and affected residents would be conducted prior to a construction closure for the project to provide adequate notice of the closure and allow for planning alternative routes.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project includes a temporary detour during construction but ultimately would improve public services and access in the area. Therefore, the project would not result in substantial adverse impacts to public services and no mitigation is required.

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XVI. RECREATION

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

There are no officially designated or proposed parks or trails at or near the project area.

Discussion

(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?

The project would have no effect on use of or demand for parks or recreational facilities in the region.

(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?

The project does not include recreational facilities and would not require construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project is not proposed in a location that would affect use or access to any trail, park, recreational resource, coastal access, and/or recreational use area.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Conflict with a program plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(b)	Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c)	Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(d)	Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

The project is located in a rural area where there are no nearby transit/bus stops and the area does not have walkability enhancing features such as pedestrian/bicycle connections. There have been zero (0) reported accidents in the past 5 years along Jack Creek Road. The County has established the acceptable Level of Service (LOS) on roads for this rural area as "C" or better. LOS "C" is considered the standard acceptable threshold with a good level of service for all study roadways outside of any Urban Reserve Limit line. The existing road network in the area of Jack Creek Road is operating at acceptable levels. No significant traffic-related concerns were identified.

Senate Bill 743, which was codified into the Public Resources Code section 21099, requires communities to achieve a 15% reduction in VMT. This resulted in a CEQA Guidelines change regarding the analysis of transportation impacts. As described in the December 2018 Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, VMT is considered the most appropriate metric to evaluate a project's transportation impacts under CEQA, replacing LOS and other similar metrics for consideration of significant environmental effects.

Discussion

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

The project results in a temporary road closure at the bridge. A Detour Plan via Vineyard Drive has been created and would be implemented. The project would not include any changes in capacity of the bridge or regional transportation networks and therefore would not result in any changes in VMT. The project does not conflict with any congestion management program or any plans or

programs regarding public transit, bicyclist, or pedestrian facilities and therefore would have no impact.

(b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b) - Criteria for Analyzing Transportation Impacts - relate to VMT for land use projects, transportation projects, qualitative analysis, and associated methodology utilized to evaluate VMT. This transportation project is consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b)(2) in that it would not change transportation routes, the capacity of the existing road, or traffic volumes. The temporary detour for the road closure would result in less than significant impacts on VMT.

(c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Travelers may not be used to the temporary detour via Vineyard Drive, but this would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature. Based on existing road speeds and configuration (vertical and horizontal road curves), sight distance is considered acceptable for the proposed project, and therefore would have a less than significant impact. The new bridge design would not increase hazardous design features and would improve the safe passage of large vehicles.

(d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

The project includes a temporary detour during construction but ultimately would enhance access for fire protection and emergency services by constructing a new bridge that would be able to accommodate the passage of emergency vehicles. Emergency access to locations west of the bridge would not be affected. Emergency access to locations immediately east of the bridge on Jack Creek Road would be subject to a short detour taking Vineyard Drive to Jack Creek Road. Outreach to emergency providers (e.g., CalFire) and affected residents would be conducted prior to a construction closure for the project to provide adequate notice of the closure and allow for planning alternative routes.

Conclusion/Mitigation

Implementation of the project would not result in any permanent adverse traffic impacts. The project includes a temporary detour during construction but ultimately would improve the safety and capacity of the new bridge to accommodate emergency vehicles. The project does not conflict with any adopted traffic policies, plans or other transportation programs. Transportation-related impacts are anticipated to be less than significant and only temporary, and no mitigation measures are necessary.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(a)	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:				
	(i) 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	☐	☐	☒	☐
	(ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

The Cultural Resources section describes the archaeological setting for the project site.

With respect to archaeological resources, the project site is in a region historically occupied by the Chumash and the Salinan. The Chumash occupied the coast between San Luis Obispo and northwestern Los Angeles County, inland to the San Joaquin Valley. They were divided into two broad groups, of which the Obispeño were the northern group.

Both tribes have a rich and complex history dating back as much as 10,000 years before present. The material culture and lifeways of the Northern Chumash appear to have been similar in many ways to their northern neighbors, the Salinan. Both tribes had a complex system of social organization. They were hunter-gatherer-fishers and resided in numerous permanent villages and temporary camps, following annual cycles of hunting and gathering. Acorns provided a main staple of the diet.

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On March 19, 2020, the Native American Heritage Commission provided the results of the Sacred Lands File (SLF) search, as well as a list of Native Americans who may have knowledge of cultural resources in the project area. The SLF results were negative.

In order to meet AB 52 consultation requirements, outreach to thirteen Native American tribal individuals was conducted (Northern Chumash Tribal Council; Salinan Tribe of San Luis Obispo, Monterey and San Benito Counties; yak titÿu titÿu yak tiłhini – Northern Chumash Tribe; San Luis obispo County Chumash Council, Chumash Council of Bakersfield, Xolon Salinan Tribe; Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians; Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians; and the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation). Four tribal responses were received. One tribal response stated that the project area is outside of their traditional tribal boundaries and deferred to local tribes. One tribe requested information on the project's tribal outreach and then deferred to the local tribes. One tribal response did not identify any known sensitive sites within the project area. One tribal representative requested that a tribal cultural resource specialist monitor ground disturbing activities associated with the project.

No other tribal representatives commented on the project.

Discussion

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

(a-i) *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)?*

An archaeological survey, internal records search of the County's cultural resource database, and CCIC record search did not identify historical resources that are listed in or eligible for listing in a local register of historic resources, and therefore would have no impact.

(a-ii) *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.*

An archaeological survey, internal records search of the County's cultural resource database, CCIC record search, SLF search, and Native American outreach did not identify significant tribal resources within the project area. A prehistoric tribal resource was identified adjacent to the project area during the archaeological survey; however, the project area was redesigned to avoid impacting this site and no resources were identified within the current project area. Additionally, cultural resource mitigation measures (see CR-1 through CR-4 in Exhibit B) would be implemented as part of the project.

As described in the Cultural Resources section, no listed historical or archaeological resources have been identified in the project area, but the site is considered sensitive for archaeological resources. Tribal consultation under AB 52 did not result in new information about tribal cultural resources that should be considered for the project.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The mitigation measures described in the Cultural Resources section address the archaeological sensitivity of the project area. No additional impacts to tribal cultural resources have been identified and no additional mitigation measures pertaining to tribal cultural resources are required.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
(a)	Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(b)	Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(e)	Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

Existing overhead AT&T communication lines are within the project limits and would require relocation.. Utility relocations would occur within the bridge project footprint and not expected to result in impacts beyond those already identified for the bridge. There are no water or wastewater facilities in or near the project area.

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Discussion

(a) *Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?*

The project would not require the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities. A portable chemical toilet would be available for use by construction crews during construction.

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

Water may be used during construction for dust control and would be provided for via a water truck. The project would not require the utilization of water supplies from a service system and therefore would have 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?*

The project would not require wastewater treatment or impact the capacity or demand of existing wastewater treatment services. No wastewater systems are proposed as part of this project, and wastewater impacts are considered not applicable and therefore would have 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?*

Except for limited quantities of construction debris, which would be disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations, the project would not generate solid waste in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant impact.

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

The project would comply with all federal, state, and local management and reduction statues and regulations related to solid waste and would therefore have no impact.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project would not have significant effects on utilities or service systems (water, wastewater, or otherwise), and no mitigation measures are necessary.

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XX. WILDFIRE

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:					
(a)	Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
(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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Setting

The project would enhance access for fire protection services by accommodating emergency vehicles. The project is located within a 'very high' severity risk area for fire, within State/CalFire responsibility with a response time of approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Project referrals were sent to the CalFire; their review did not present any fire and/or life safety concerns, and the only comment was to notify them when the bridge would be closed and then reopened.

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Discussion

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

(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?*

(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?*

(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?*

Regarding (a) through (d), potential impacts of the project on emergency response would be limited to construction as discussed under Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Public Services, and Transportation. There is no adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan applicable to the project.

The project would replace an existing bridge with no material changes that would adversely impact any factor related to the occurrence of, or risks posed by, wildfires. Installation of new infrastructure that would require standard maintenance activities (such as pavement sealing, crack repair, etc.) are not expected to exacerbate fire risk that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment and therefore would result in a less than significant impact.

Conclusion/Mitigation

The project would not have a significant impact on wildfire risk and no mitigation measures are necessary.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(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?	☐	☒	☐	☐
(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)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
(c)	Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Setting

The project area is undeveloped open space (riparian corridor) and sparsely populated scattered rural residences associated with agricultural uses. The project involves demolishing the existing bridge and constructing a new one in the same location and alignment.

Discussion

(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?*

The existing structure of the Jack Creek Road Bridge is used by several bat species as a maternal roosting colony where females give birth and raise their young until the young can fly and forage on their own. Several species of bats roost in the bridge year-round, opting not to use separate

summer and winter roosts. Removal of the existing bridge and roosting habitat has the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment for the maternal roosting and year-round resident bats. With implementation of the biological resources mitigation measures included in Exhibit B, including the preparation of a Bat Mitigation Plan in coordination with resource agencies, the project would have a less than significant impact on fish and wildlife species, plants, and animal communities.

(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)?

The project would not change the configuration or function of the existing bridge and therefore the project would not result in operational impacts. Construction-related impacts would be temporary and limited by the limited duration and scope of the project. There are no known projects in the vicinity that would result in similar impacts during a similar time period. Therefore, the project would not contribute to any cumulative considerable impacts.

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

The project would not result in environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. Construction would require a short-term/temporary road closure; impacts on emergency access have been considered. Any road closures would be coordinated with emergency responders and local residents, would be for a short duration, and with alternative access routes identified. The anticipated effects of the project would not substantially conflict with adjacent land uses. Implementation of the project would result in net benefits to transportation and public safety. Therefore, the project is not expected to have adverse impacts, but rather is expected to have some beneficial impacts, on human beings.

Conclusion/Mitigation

With the implementation of the project-specific mitigation measures, including appropriate measures listed in Exhibit B (particularly for bats), the project would have a less than significant impact on the environment.

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Exhibit A - Initial Study References and Agency Contacts

The County Public Works Department has contacted various agencies for their comments on the proposed project. With respect to the subject application, the following have been contacted (marked with an ☒) and when a response was made, it is either attached or in the application file:

Contacted	Agency	Response
☐	County Public Works Department	**Not Applicable**
☐	County Environmental Health Services	**Not Applicable**
☒	County Agricultural Commissioner's Office	InFile**
☐	County Airport Manager	**Not Applicable**
☐	Airport Land Use Commission	**Not Applicable**
☒	Air Pollution Control District	InFile**
☐	County Sheriff's Department	**Not Applicable**
☒	Regional Water Quality Control Board	InFile**
☐	CA Coastal Commission	**Not Applicable**
☒	CA Department of Fish and Wildlife	InFile**
☒	CA Department of Forestry (Cal Fire)	InFile**
☒	CA Department of Transportation	InFile**
☒	Templeton Community Services District	InFile**
☒	Other Templeton Area Advisory Group	InFile**
☒	Other Department of Toxic Substances Control	InFile**
☒	Other US Army Corps of Engineers	InFile**
☒	Other USFWS and NMFS	InFile**

** "No comment" or "No concerns"-type responses are usually not attached

The following checked ("☒") reference materials have been used in the environmental review for the proposed project and are hereby incorporated by reference into the Initial Study. The following information is available at the County Public Works Department.

☒ Project File for the Subject Application

County Documents

☐ Coastal Plan Policies
☒ Framework for Planning (Coastal/Inland)
☒ General Plan (Inland/Coastal), includes all maps/elements; more pertinent elements:
- ☒ Agriculture Element
- ☒ Conservation & Open Space Element
- ☐ Economic Element
- ☐ Housing Element
- ☒ Noise Element
- ☒ Parks & Recreation Element/Project List
- ☒ Safety Element

☒ Land Use Ordinance (Inland/Coastal)
☒ Building and Construction Ordinance
☒ Public Facilities Fee Ordinance
☐ Real Property Division Ordinance
☐ Affordable Housing Fund
☐ Airport Land Use Plan
☐ Energy Wise Plan
☒ North County Plan Area/Adelaida Sub Area
☐ Design Plan
☐ Specific Plan
☐ Annual Resource Summary Report
☐ Circulation Study

Other Documents

☒ Clean Air Plan/APCD Handbook
☐ Regional Transportation Plan
☐ Uniform Fire Code
☐ Water Quality Control Plan (Central Coast Basin – Region 3)
☒ Archaeological Resources Map
☒ Area of Critical Concerns Map
☒ Special Biological Importance Map
☒ CA Natural Species Diversity Database
☒ Fire Hazard Severity Map
☒ Flood Hazard Maps
☒ Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Survey for SLO County
☒ GIS mapping layers (e.g., habitat, streams, contours, etc.)
☐ Other

Initial Study – Environmental Checklist

In addition, the following project-specific information and/or reference materials were considered as a part of the Initial Study:

1. Association of Environmental Professionals. 2021. *2021 California Environmental Quality Act Statute & Guidelines*.

2. California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2017. *Historical Significance - State Agency Bridges*. October 2017.

3. _____. 2019. *Caltrans Structure Maintenance and Investigations*. March 2019.

4. County of San Luis Obispo (County) Department of Public Works, 2021. *Biological Assessment - Jack Creek Road at Paso Robles Creek, San Luis Obispo County.* August 2021.

5. _____. 2021. *Farmland Technical Memorandum for the Jack Creek Bridge Replacement Project, BRLO-5949(156).* June 2021.

6. _____. 2021. *Visual Impact Assessment for the Jack Creek Bridge Replacement Project, BRLO-5949(156).* July 2021.

7. _____. 2015. *The Land Use and Circulation Elements- The Area Plans.* Prepared by the County Department of Planning and Building.

8. _____. 2011. *Land Use Ordinance- Title 22 of the County Code.* Adopted by the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors. Amended by approval of Dalidio Ranch Initiative Measure.

9. _____.1990. *Templeton Community Design Plan.* Prepared by Urban Design Studio and Engineering Development Associates for the County.

10. _____. Air Pollution Control Districts (APCD). 2012. *CEQA Air Quality Handbook – A Guide for Assessing the Air Quality Impacts for Projects Subject to CEQA Review*. April 2012.

11. H.T. Harvey & Associates. 2019. *Caltrans Bat Mitigation: A Guide to Developing Feasible and Effective Solutions*. Prepared for California Department of Transportation Division of Environmental Analysis. Sacramento, CA.

12. Laurie, L., and T. Wheeler. 2021. *Archaeological Survey Report for the Jack Creek Road at Paso Robles Creek Bridge Replacement Project, San Luis Obispo County, California. Federal Aid Project No. BRLO-5949(156).* Prepared for the County of San Luis Obispo, CA. Report on file with the County of San Luis Obispo.

13. Stillwater Sciences. 2014. *San Luis Obispo County Regional Instream Flow Assessment*. January 2014.

14. SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA). 2021. *Jack Creek Road at Paso Robles Creek Bridge Replacement Project Historic Property Survey Report*. Prepared for California Department of Transportation District 5, and County of San Luis Obispo Public Works Department, San Luis Obispo, CA. March 2021.

15. _____.2021. *Noise Impact Analysis for the Jack Creek Road at Paso Robles Creek Bridge Replacement Project, San Luis Obispo County, California*. Prepared by SWCA in San Luis Obispo, CA.

Prepared for Quincy Engineering in Rancho Cordova, CA.

16. US Federal Highway Administration, National Bridge Inventory Data for Jack Creek Road over Paso Robles Creek, San Luis Obispo County, California, latest available inspection July 2018 (https://bridgereports.com/1052306).

17. WRECO. 2021. *Initial Site Assessment-Structural Elements Investigation. Jack Creek Road at Paso Robles Creek Existing Bridge (No. 49C-0342) Replacement Project San Luis Obispo County, California*. Prepared by WRECO for Quincy Engineering in Rancho Cordova, CA.

18. Yeh & Associates, Inc. 2021. *Bridge Foundation Report – Paso Robles Creek Bridge Replacement on Jack Creek Bridge, Existing State Bridge. No. 49C-0342 San Luis Obispo County, California*. Prepared by Yeh & Associates, Inc. in Grover Beach, CA. Prepared for Quincy Engineering in Rancho Cordova, CA.

Exhibit B - Mitigation Summary

The Department of Public Works has agreed to incorporate the following avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures into the project. These measures become a part of the project description and therefore become a part of the record of action upon which the environmental determination is based. Development activity must occur in strict compliance with the following measures.

Air Quality

AQ-1 During construction, proper abatement of lead-based paint must be performed to prevent the release of lead particles from the site. For additional information regarding lead abatement, contact the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Health Department at 805-781-5544 or Cal-OSHA at 818-901-5403. Additional information can also be found online at www.epa.gov/lead.

AQ-2 During demolition activities, the County and Contractor will ensure compliance with the requirements stipulated in the National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants (40CFR61, Subpart M - asbestos NESHAP) which may include:

- Written notification to the APCD, within at least 10 business days of activities commencing,
- Asbestos survey conducted by a Certified Asbestos Consultant, and
- Written work plan addressing asbestos handling procedures in order to prevent visible emissions.

AQ-3 To manage fugitive dust emissions and minimize nuisance impacts:

- Reduce the amount of the disturbed area where possible,
- Use water trucks, APCD approved dust suppressants (see Section 4.3 in the CEQA Air Quality Handbook), or sprinkler systems in sufficient quantities to prevent airborne dust from leaving the site and from exceeding the District's limit of 20% opacity for greater than 3 minutes in any 60-minute period. Increased watering frequency will be required whenever wind speeds exceed 15 mph. Reclaimed (non-potable) water should be used whenever possible. Since water use is a concern due to drought conditions, the contractor should consider the use of an APCD-approved dust suppressant where feasible to reduce the amount of water used for dust control,
- Dirt stock-pile areas should be sprayed daily and covered with tarps or other dust barriers as needed,
- Roadways, driveways, sidewalks, etc. to be paved should be completed as soon as possible, and building pads should be laid as soon as possible after grading unless seeding, soil binders or other dust controls are used,
- Fugitive dust mitigation measures should be shown on grading and building plans, and
- The contractor or builder should designate a person(s) to ensure fugitive dust emissions do not result in a nuisance and to enhance the implementation of the mitigation measures as necessary to minimize dust complaints and reduce visible emissions below the APCD's limit of 20% opacity for greater than 3 minutes in any 60-minute period. Their duties shall include holidays and weekend periods when work may not be in progress (for example, wind-blown dust could be generated on an open dirt lot).

AQ-4 Portable construction equipment, 50 horsepower (hp) or greater, used during construction activities may require California statewide portable equipment registration (issued by the California Air Resources Board) or an APCD permit.
Refer to: www.slocleanair.org/library/download-forms for which equipment and operations may have permitting requirements.

Biological Resources

BIO-1 Prior to construction, the County of San Luis Obispo will obtain a Section 404 Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for project-related impacts that will occur in areas under state and federal jurisdiction.

BIO-2 Prior to construction, the County of San Luis Obispo will prepare a comprehensive Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) that provides for a 1:1 restoration ratio for temporary impacts and a 3:1 enhancement ratio for permanent impacts, unless otherwise directed by regulatory agencies. To the extent feasible, mitigation activities will be implemented within the BSA and/or the Paso Robles and Jack Creek riparian corridors and in areas in and adjacent to the BSA that support exotic species, contain agricultural trash, and have erosion. These areas provide the most optimal mitigation opportunities onsite, though offsite mitigation will also likely be needed. Revegetation will be conducted using native plant species. The final HMMP will identify the specific mitigation sites and be implemented immediately following project completion.

BIO-3 The County and Contractor will conduct a constructability meeting to avoid and minimize impacts to native trees, including mature valley and coast live oaks. If possible, trimming of trees rather than complete removal is the preferred approach within temporary impact areas.

BIO-4 Prior to initiation of any construction activities, including vegetation clearing or grubbing, sturdy high-visibility fencing will be installed to protect the jurisdictional areas adjacent to the designated work areas. This fencing will be placed so that unnecessary adverse effects to the adjacent habitats are avoided. No construction work (including storage of materials) will occur outside of the specified project limits. A qualified biologist will aid in the placement of the fencing and will be on site to monitor tree removal. The fencing will remain in place during the entire construction period, be monitored periodically by a qualified biologist, and be maintained as needed by the contractor.

BIO-5 Construction activities within jurisdictional areas will be conducted during the dry season when stream flows will be at annual lows (generally June 1 through October 31) in any given year, or as otherwise directed by the regulatory agencies. Deviations from this work window can be made with permission from the relevant regulatory agencies.

BIO-6 Prior to construction, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan or a Water Pollution Control Plan will be prepared in accordance with County of San Luis Obispo requirements. Provisions of this plan will be implemented during and after construction as necessary to avoid and minimize erosion and stormwater pollution in and near the work area.

BIO-7 Prior to construction, the contractor will prepare a Spill Plan and will be prepared for prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. Workers will be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur. Materials will be kept at the site and readily available to allow rapid containment and cleanup of spilled material. If a spill occurs, Project activities will immediately cease until cleanup of the spilled materials is completed. The appropriate agencies will be notified immediately by the County.

BIO-8 During construction, erosion control measures (e.g., silt fencing, fiber rolls, and barriers) will remain available onsite and will be utilized as necessary to prevent erosion and sedimentation in jurisdictional areas. Use of synthetic plastic mesh products is prohibited. Erosion control measures and other suitable Best Management Practices used will be checked to ensure that they are intact, functioning effectively, and maintained on a daily basis throughout the duration of construction. The contractor will also apply adequate dust control techniques, such as site watering, during construction to protect water quality.

BIO-9 During construction**,** Cleaning and refueling of equipment and vehicles will occur only within a designated staging area at least 60 feet (20 meters) from wetlands or other aquatic areas. Equipment and vehicles will be checked daily for leaks. If leaks occur, Caltrans or their contractor will contain the spill and remove the affected soils.

BIO-10 No debris, rubbish, creosote-treated wood, soil, silt, sand, cement, concrete, or washings thereof, or other construction-related materials or wastes, oil or petroleum products or other organic material or earthen material will be allowed to enter into or be placed where it may be washed by rainfall or runoff into the creek. Any of these materials placed within or where they may enter the creek will be removed immediately. Lumber used for temporary construction operations must be unfinished and untreated wood. When construction is complete, any excess material will be removed from the work area so that such material does not wash into the creek.

BIO-11 In areas where concrete is used, a dry work area must be maintained to prevent conveyance of runoff from curing concrete to the surface waters of the adjacent stream at all times. The Contractor will install the necessary containment structures outside of forms to control the placement of wet concrete/cement and to prevent it from entering the channel outside of those structures. No concrete/cement will be poured or applied if the seven-day weather forecast indicates a chance of rain. At all times when pouring or working with wet concrete/cement there will be a designated monitor to inspect the containment structures and ensure that no concrete or other debris enters the channel outside of those structures. Poured concrete/cement will remain isolated from surface waters and soils that could become saturated and allowed to cure for a minimum of 30 days or until the pH does not exceed 9.0. Water that inadvertently contacts uncured concrete must not be discharged into surface waters.

BIO-12 During construction, no pets will be allowed on the construction site.

BIO-13 During construction, trash will be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, trash and construction debris will be removed from the work areas.

BIO-14 Invasive vegetation removed from the construction site will be taken to a permitted landfill to prevent the spread of invasive species. If soil from weedy areas with invasive exotic plant species must be removed offsite, the top six inches containing the seed layer in areas with weedy species will be disposed of at a permitted landfill.

BIO-15 To prevent the spread of noxious weeds into the area, heavy equipment and vehicles should be power washed before and after they are used at the project site.

BIO-16 During construction, the project will make all reasonable efforts to limit the use of imported soils for fill. Soils currently existing onsite should be used for fill material. If the use of imported fill material is necessary, the imported material must be obtained from a source that is known to be free of invasive plant species, or the material must consist of purchased clean material such as crushed aggregate, sorted rock, or similar.

BIO-17 During construction, the biological monitor(s) will ensure that the spread or introduction of invasive plant and wildlife species is avoided to the maximum extent possible.

BIO-18 All erosion control materials including straw bales, straw wattles, or mulch used onsite must be free of invasive species seed.

BIO-19 Prior to construction, all project personnel will participate in an environmental awareness training program conducted by a qualified biologist. The program shall include a description of the sensitive aquatic resources (e.g., steelhead, California red-legged frog, and bats) and their legal/protected status, federally designated critical habitat within the Biological Study Area, avoidance/minimization measures to be implemented during the project, and the implications of violating federal Endangered Species Act and permit conditions. Invasive species control, erosion and sedimentation control, permit requirements, and the project boundaries will also be discussed. If appropriate, the biologist may train and designate a representative of the County of San Luis Obispo or other designee to provide training to subcontractors or personnel that will be onsite for short durations during the project.

BIO-20 The County of San Luis Obispo (County) will retain qualified biologist(s) with expertise in the area of anadromous salmonid biology, including handling, collecting, and relocating salmonids; salmonid/habitat relationships; and biological monitoring of salmonids. The County shall ensure that all fisheries biologists demonstrate prior knowledge and experience in stream channel design and restoration and fish passage design, and be qualified to conduct fish collections in a manner which minimizes all potential risks to ESA-listed salmonids. Electrofishing, if used, shall be performed by a qualified biologist and conducted according to the *NOAA Fisheries Guidelines for Electrofishing Waters Containing Salmonids Listed under the Endangered Species Act*. The biologist will monitor the construction sites during placement and removal of cofferdams and channel diversions to ensure that any adverse effects to salmonids are minimized. The biologist will be onsite during all dewatering events to capture, handle, and safely relocate salmonids to an appropriate location. The biologist will notify Elena Meza at 707-575-6068 or elena.meza@noaa.gov (or current Caltrans Liaison) one week prior to capture activities in order to provide an opportunity for NMFS staff to observe the activities. During fish relocation activities the fisheries biologist shall contact NMFS staff at the number above, if mortality of federally listed salmonids exceeds the three percent of the total steelhead collected, at which time NMFS will stipulate measures to reduce the take of salmonids.

BIO-21 If pumps are needed to temporarily dewater the site, intakes will be completely screened according to *National Marine Fisheries Service's Fish Screening Criteria for Anadromous Salmonids* to prevent steelhead and other sensitive aquatic species from entering the pump system (typically wire mesh no larger than 0.2 inch). The pumps will be checked daily, at a minimum, to ensure a dry work environment and minimize adverse effects to aquatic species and habitats. Diverted water will be released downstream at an appropriate rate to maintain downstream flows during construction and so that suspended sediment will not re-enter the stream.

BIO-22 Upon completion of construction activities, diversions or barriers to flow will be removed in a manner that would allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate. Alteration of the streambed will be minimized to the maximum extent possible; imported material will be removed from the streambed upon completion of the project.

BIO-23 Steelhead will be handled with extreme care and kept in water to the maximum extent possible during rescue activities. All captured fish will be kept in cool, shaded, aerated water protected from excessive noise, jostling, or overcrowding any time they are not in the stream, and fish will not be removed from this water except when released. To avoid predation, the biologists will have at least two containers and segregate young-of-year fish from larger age-classes and other potential aquatic predators. Captured steelhead will be relocated, as soon as possible, to a suitable instream location in which suitable habitat conditions are present to allow for adequate survival of transported fish and fish already present.

BIO-24 If any salmonids are found dead or injured, the biological monitor will contact NMFS staff at 707-575-6068 or elena.meza@noaa.gov. All salmonid mortalities will be retained (for tissue sampling) until further direction is provided by the NMFS biologist.

BIO-25 Caltrans and the County will allow any NMFS employee(s) or any other person(s) designated by NMFS, to accompany field personnel to visit the project site during activities.

BIO-26 Fill material for cofferdams/in-stream diversions will be fully confined with the use of plastic sheeting, sandbags, or with other non-porous containment methods, such that sediment does not come in contact with stream flow or in direct contact with the natural streambed. All loose fill material for cofferdams or access ramps will be completely removed from the channel by October 31.

BIO-27 Once construction is completed, all project-introduced material (pipe, gravel, cofferdam, etc.) must be removed, leaving the creek as it was before construction. Excess materials will be disposed of at an appropriate disposal site.

BIO-28 Caltrans or the County will provide a written report to NMFS by January 15 of the year following construction of the project. The report must contain information regarding project construction, fish relocation, and post-construction vegetation monitoring.

BIO-29 Only U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)-approved biologists will participate in activities associated with the capture and handling of California red-legged frogs. Biologists authorized under the Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) do not need to resubmit their qualifications for subsequent projects conducted pursuant to the PBO, unless the Service has revoked their approval at any time during the life of the PBO.

BIO-30 Ground disturbance will not begin until written approval is received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) that the biologist(s) is qualified to conduct the work. The California Department of Transportation will request approval of the biologist(s) from the Service.

BIO-31 A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)-approved biologist will survey the project area no more than 48 hours before the onset of work activities. If any life stage of the California red-legged frog is found and these individuals are likely to be killed or injured by work activities, the approved biologist will be allowed sufficient time to move them from the site before work activities begin. The Service-approved biologist will relocate the California red-legged frogs the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and will not be affected by the activities associated with the project. The relocation site should be in the same drainage to the extent practicable. The California Department of Transportation will coordinate with the Service on the relocation site prior to the capture of any California red-legged frogs.

BIO-32 A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)-approved biologist will be present at the work site until California red-legged frogs have been relocated out of harm's way, workers have been instructed, and disturbance of the habitat has been completed. After this time, the County of San Luis Obispo (County) will designate a person to monitor onsite compliance with minimization measures. The Service-approved biologist will ensure that this monitor receives the training outlined in the previous measure, as well as training in the identification of California red-legged frogs. If the monitor or the Service-approved biologist recommends that work be stopped because California red-legged frogs would be affected in a manner not anticipated by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), County, and Service during the review of the proposed action, they will notify the resident engineer (the engineer that is directly overseeing and in command of construction activities) immediately. The resident engineer will either resolve the situation by eliminating the adverse effect immediately or require that actions that are causing these effects to be halted. If work is stopped, Caltrans, County, and the Service will be notified as soon as possible.

BIO-33 All refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles will occur at least 60-feet from riparian habitat or water bodies and in a location from where a spill would not drain directly toward aquatic habitat (e.g., on a slope that drains away from the water). The monitor will ensure contamination of habitat does not occur during such operations.

BIO-34 Habitat contours will be returned to their original configuration to the greatest extent that is feasible at the end of project activities. This measure will be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with the project, unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Transportation, and County of San Luis Obispo determine that it is not feasible or modification or original contours would benefit the California red-legged frog.

BIO-35 The number of access routes, size of staging areas, and the total area of activity will be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project. Environmentally Sensitive Areas will be established to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete construction and minimize the impact to California red-legged frog habitat; this goal includes locating access routes and construction areas outside of wetlands and riparian areas to the maximum extent practicable.

BIO-36 The County of San Luis Obispo and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will attempt to schedule work for times of the year when impacts to the California red-legged frog would be minimal. For example, work that would affect large pools that may support breeding would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the breeding season (November through May). Isolated pools that are important to maintain California red-legged frogs through the driest portions of the year would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the late summer and early fall. Habitat assessments, surveys, and technical assistance between Caltrans and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during project planning will be used to assist in scheduling work activities to avoid sensitive habitats during key times of year.

BIO-37 To control sedimentation during and after project implementation, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and County of San Luis Obispo will implement the Best Management Practices (BMPs) outlined in any authorizations or permits issued under the authorities of the Clean Water Act that it receives for the specific project. If BMPs are ineffective, Caltrans will attempt to remedy the situation immediately, in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

BIO-38 Unless approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, water will not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.

BIO-39 A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)-approved biologist will permanently remove any individuals of invasive species, such as bullfrogs, crayfish, and centrarchid fishes from the project area, to the maximum extent. The Service-approved biologist will be responsible for ensuring their activities are in compliance with the California Fish and Game Code.

BIO-40 If the California Department of Transportation and County of San Luis Obispo demonstrate that disturbed areas have been restored to conditions that allow them to function as habitat for the California red-legged frog, these areas will not be included in the amount of total habitat permanently disturbed.

BIO-41 To ensure that diseases are not conveyed between work sites by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist, the fieldwork code of practice developed by the Declining Amphibian Task Force will be followed at all times.

BIO-42 Project sites will be re-vegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area, using locally collected plant materials to the extent practicable. Invasive plants will be controlled to the maximum extent practicable. This measure will be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities with the project, unless the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Transportation, and County of San Luis Obispo have determined that it is not feasible or practical.

BIO-43 The County of San Luis Obispo (County) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will not use herbicides as the primary method to control invasive plants. However, if the County and Caltrans determine the use of herbicides is the only feasible method for controlling invasive plants at a specific project site, it will implement the following additional measures to protect California red-legged frog:

- The County and Caltrans will not use herbicides during the breeding season for California red-legged frog;

- The County and Caltrans will conduct surveys for California red-legged frog immediately prior to the start of herbicide use. If found, California red-legged frog will be relocated to suitable habitat far enough from the project area that no direct contact with herbicide would occur;
- Black locust and other invasive plants will be cut and hauled out by hand and painted with glyphosate-based products, such as Aquamaster® or Rodeo®;
- Licensed and experienced County or Caltrans staff or a licensed and experienced contractor will use a hand-held sprayer for foliar application of Aquamaster® or Rodeo® where large monoculture stands occur at an individual project site;
- All precautions will be taken to ensure that no herbicide is applied to native vegetation;
- Foliar applications of herbicide will not occur when wind speeds are in excess of three miles per hour;
- No herbicides will be applied within 24-hours of forecasted rain;
- Application of herbicides will be done by qualified Caltrans or County staff, or contractors to ensure that overspray is minimized, application is made in accordance with the label recommendations, and required and reasonable safety measures are implemented. A safe dye will be added to the mixture to visually denote treated sites. Application of herbicides will be consistent with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs Endangered Species Protection Program county bulletins; and
- All herbicides, fuels, lubricants, and equipment will be stored, poured, or refilled at least 60-feet from riparian habitat or water bodies in a location where a spill would not drain directly toward aquatic habitat.

BIO-44 Upon completion of the project, the California Department of Transportation and County of San Luis Obispo will ensure that a Project Completion Report (for California red-legged frog) is completed and provided to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ventura Field Office.

BIO-45 Prior to and during construction, a qualified biologist shall survey the Biological Survey Area and, if present, capture and relocate any Coast Range newts, lesser slender salamander, two-stripe gartersnakes, western pond turtles, or other special-status aquatic species to adjacent suitable habitat upstream of the Biological Survey Area. Observations of these or other special-status species shall be documented on California Natural Diversity Database forms and submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife upon project completion.

BIO-46 Prior to vegetation removal, a qualified biologist will survey the area for woodrat nests. If woodrat nests are located within areas to be impacted, the nests will be picked up whole with a piece of equipment and relocated out of the impact area. If this is not feasible, a qualified biologist will dismantle the nest with hand tools (preferably during the non-breeding season) to allow woodrats in the nest to escape into adjacent undisturbed habitat. Equipment may also be used to dismantle the nest at the discretion of the biologist. The nest material will then be moved out of the work area and stacked where it is accessible to the woodrats.

BIO-47 Prior to construction, when feasible, tree removal will be scheduled to occur from September 2 through January 31, outside of the typical nesting bird season and bat maternity season, to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds and flightless juvenile bats.

BIO-48 If construction activities are proposed during the typical nesting season (February 1 to September 1), a nesting bird survey will be conducted by qualified biologists no more than two weeks prior to the start of construction to determine presence/absence of nesting birds (including least Bell's vireo and raptors) within the BSA and immediate vicinity. The California Department of Transportation will be notified if nesting birds (especially federally listed species) are observed during the surveys and will facilitate coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, if necessary, to determine an appropriate avoidance strategy. Likewise, coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be facilitated by the County of San Luis Obispo, if necessary, to devise a suitable avoidance plan and potential buffers for nesting bird species.

BIO-49 Prior to construction, the County of San Luis Obispo will prepare a Bat Mitigation Plan that would include protective measures to be refined through subsequent review, final project design, and permitting process. The Plan would reflect Caltrans guidance on addressing bats and bridges (H.T. Harvey & Associates, 2019) and include, for example:

- Description of bat habitat (i.e., cast-in-place crevice habitat and Oregon wedge-style bat boxes) to be incorporated into the design of the new bridge.
- Design of a separate stand-alone structure with roosting features to be constructed prior to demolishing the existing bridge. This structure would emulate a portion of the existing bridge by utilizing materials from roosting areas on the existing bridge to the extent feasible, having a smaller yet similar design as the existing bridge, and be placed in close proximity to the existing bridge in a comparable environmental setting.
- Appropriate survey methodology. For example, prior to and leading up to construction, qualified bat biologists conducting periodic bat surveys to monitor bat activity in the area.
- Description of appropriate passive exclusion techniques. Prior to demolishing the existing bridge and outside the typical bat maternity season of April 1 through August 31, qualified bat biologists implementing passive exclusion practices on the existing bridge, such as conducting nighttime surveys and sealing off roosting areas once all bats have left and/or installing one-way doors along crevices to allow bats to leave but not re-enter.
- Construction monitoring protocols. A qualified bat biologist would monitor the demolition of the bridge and the careful dismantling of roosting areas, looking for bats that may have been sequestered in the bridge structure and salvaging material to be potentially incorporated in the stand-alone bat structure.
- Tree removal protocols. To prevent direct mortality of bats potentially roosting in cavities, crevices, or the exfoliating bark of trees, mature trees that must be trimmed or removed for project activities should be removed in two stages over 2 consecutive days as follows:

- Day 1: remove branches and limbs and place in a pile adjacent to the tree in case bats are roosting on or within those branches. A qualified bat biologist should be present during the limb removal process to inspect the limbs and branches before and after they are cut for the presence of bats, particularly flightless young bats. The bat biologist will also inspect the main body of the trees for the presence of roosting bats. If flightless young bats are found, a buffer distance should be established in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and this buffer should be maintained until the bats are capable of flight and have left the roost. If flightless young bats are observed after the roost limb or branch has been cut, the CDFW should be notified and an appropriate protocol for relocation established under a Memorandum of Understanding.
- Day 2: on the following day and if no flightless young bats were found on Day 1, remove the remainder of the tree and dispose of all parts if necessary. The disturbance caused by chainsaw noise/vibration and alteration of the tree through limb removal, followed by an interval of one evening, will allow adult bats to abandon the tree roost(s) during nightly emergence and move to another location. Removal of the tree the day after its alteration prevents the bats from habituating to and reoccupying the altered tree.

- Limitations on activity below roosting habitat. Until all bats are safely evicted from the bridge, airspace access to and from the roost features of the structure will not be obstructed. Additionally, construction equipment (especially with diesel or combustion engines) will not be stored or operated beneath identified roost areas.
- Limitations on construction timing. To avoid potential impacts to roosting or foraging bats, no nighttime construction activities will occur for the project and no artificial lighting will be used.

Cultural Resources

CR-1 An archaeologist will provide a pre-construction archaeological briefing to all construction crews prior to initiating ground disturbing activities. The briefing will provide guidance on historical and archaeological resources and appropriate procedures to follow if such finds are inadvertently exposed during the project.

CR-2 If previously unidentified cultural materials are unearthed during construction, work shall be halted in that portion of the area until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find. Additional archaeological surveys will be needed if the project limits are extended beyond the present survey limits.

CR-3 The discovery of human remains is always a possibility during ground disturbance; State of California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 covers these inadvertent findings. This code section states that no further disturbance shall occur until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to PRC Section 5097.98. The County Coroner must be notified of the find immediately. If the human remains are determined to be prehistoric, the County Coroner will notify the NAHC, which will designate and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). The MLD shall complete the inspection of the

site within 48 hours of notification and may recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials.

CR-4 Periodic cultural resource mitigation monitoring shall be conducted by a qualified archaeologist during initial ground disturbance in areas of the project site considered to be culturally sensitive to provide for the identification, evaluation, treatment, and protection of any cultural resources that are affected by or may be discovered during construction of the proposed project.

Hazardous & Hazardous Materials

HAZ-1 Onsite personnel will comply with standards found in the Construction Safety Orders and General Industry Safety Orders as defined by Cal/OSHA.

HAZ-2 During construction, a limited Preliminary Site Investigation will be conducted to collect soil samples in areas planned for soil disturbance. The soil will be tested for aerially-deposited lead, pesticides, and metals. Soils containing these materials will be disposed of at a waste facility that accepts contaminated soil.

HAZ-3 Wood barrier posts that were coated with lead-based paint will be handled with care to ensure LBP does not fall into the waterway. The Contractor will use Caltrans SSP 14-11.13 and SSP 36-4 guidance.

HAZ-4 Asphalt and concrete from the bridge materials should be recycled per Caltrans directives SSP 60-2.01A and SSP 60-2.02 and Caltrans Asphalt-Concrete and Portland Cement Concrete Grindings Reuse Guidance.

HAZ-5 Hazardous treated wood waste will be considered hazardous waste and transported to class I hazardous waste landfills for disposal.

Noise

NOI-1 For the duration of construction, noise-generating construction activities will be limited to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on weekdays and between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. The Contractor's schedule will further refine working days and times.

Mitigation Monitoring Plan

The purpose of a Mitigation Monitoring Plan is to provide a program to examine, document and record compliance with the environmental plans and specifications pertinent to the proposed project, in order to comply with Section 21081.6 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This plan provides the standards and methods necessary to ensure and document the implementation of the environmental mitigation measures which have been included in the project description as well as with the conditions of approval placed on project permits. Responsibility for ensuring successful implementation of the Mitigation Monitoring Plan lies with the County of San Luis Obispo, as the project proponent and Lead Agency for the project under CEQA. If the recommended mitigation measures and monitoring plan are implemented successfully, the potential significant adverse effects stemming from project construction would be reduced to a level of insignificance.

Mitigation monitoring would be carried out by the Environmental Programs Division of the County's Department of Public Works. The Environmental Programs Division provides environmental services to the Department of Public Works, including mitigation compliance and monitoring, with CEQA oversight by the County Planning and Building Department.

Upon approval of the CEQA document and issuance of all required permits, the Environmental Programs Division would assign internal responsibility for compliance with each mitigation measure to one or more members of the project team. Responsible parties include the Environmental Programs Division, the Project Manager (PM), the Resident Engineer (RE), and/or on-site monitors.

Mitigation measures are organized into project design, pre-construction, construction, and post-construction tasks. Compliance with mitigation measures is documented in the project file through written reports, accompanied by project photos where necessary. Post construction monitoring of revegetation and other project components is documented by yearly reports, on a schedule typically determined by one or more of the project permits. Depending on the complexity of the post construction mitigation effort, tasks would be carried out by county staff or technical experts under contract to the County. Post construction monitoring is typically conducted for three to five years, depending on permit requirements and success criteria.

Where necessary, construction personnel would be required to attend a crew orientation meeting. The meeting would be conducted by the RE and would be used to acquaint the construction crews with the environmental sensitivities of the project site. The orientation meeting shall place an emphasis on the need for adherence to the mitigation measures and permit conditions as well as the need for cooperation and communication among all parties concerned (i.e., RE, Environmental Programs Division, regulatory agencies, construction personnel) in working together to solve problems and arrive at solutions in the field.