SCH No. 2023030209
BRLS-5953(601) &
STPL-5953(682)

The Old Road over Santa Clara River and the Southern Pacific Transportation Company Bridge, et al. Project

CEQA Findings of Fact

December 2024

Public Works
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 **Introduction**

1.1 Introduction

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21081) and the CEQA Guidelines (Section 15901) require that no public agency approve or carry out a project for which an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been certified which identifies one or more significant effects of the project on the environment unless both of the following occur:

(a) The public agency makes one or more of the following possible findings with respect to each significant effect:

1. Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.

2. Changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and have been, or can and should be, adopted by that other agency.

3. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or alternatives identified in the environmental impact report.

(b) With respect to significant effects which were subject to a finding under paragraph (3) of subdivision (a), the public agency finds that specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits of the project outweigh the significant effects on the environment.

As required by CEQA, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (LACPW) expressly finds that the Final EIR for The Old Road over Santa Clara River and the Southern Pacific Transportation Company (SPT Co.) Bridge, et al. Project (Proposed Project; Old Road Project) reflects LACPW's independent review and judgment. In accordance with the provisions of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, LACPW adopts these Findings as part of its certification of the Final EIR.

In conjunction with its adoption of these Findings, LACPW has reviewed and considered a substantial amount of material, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Old Road Project Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA); and all appendices and technical reports thereto; and

- The Old Road Project Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA); and all appendices and technical reports thereto; and

- Comments and Responses to Comments on The Old Road Project Draft EIR/EA

1.2 Organization of CEQA Findings of Fact

The content and format of this CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations is designed to meet the latest CEQA Statutes and Guidelines. The document is organized into the following sections:

Chapter 1, Introduction, outlines the organization of this document and identifies the location and custodian of the record of proceedings.

Chapter 2, Project Description, describes the location and existing setting, objectives, characteristics, and the required permits and approvals for the Proposed Project.

Chapter 3, CEQA Review and Public Outreach, describes the steps LACPW has undertaken to comply with the CEQA Guidelines as they relate to public input, review, and participation during the preparation of the Draft and Final EIRs.

Chapter 4, Findings of No Environmental Effects, provides a summary of those environmental issue areas where no reasonably foreseeable impacts would occur.

Chapter 5, Findings of Less Than Significant Environmental Effects without Mitigation, provides a summary of impacts determined to be below the threshold of significance without the incorporation of mitigation measures.

Chapter 6, Findings of Less Than Significant Environmental Effects with Mitigation, provides a summary of potentially significant environmental effects for which implementation of identified feasible mitigation measures would avoid or substantially reduce the environmental effects to less than significant levels.

Chapter 7, Findings of Significant Environmental Effects, provides a summary of potentially significant environmental effects for which no feasible mitigation measures are identified or for which implementation of identified feasible mitigation measures would not avoid or substantially reduce the environmental effects to less than significant levels.

Chapter 8, Findings on Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, provides a brief discussion of the project's compliance with the CEQA Guidelines regarding the adoption of a program for reporting and monitoring.

Chapter 9, Findings on Changes to the Draft EIR and Recirculation, provides a summary of the changes to the Draft EIR in response to public comments received and findings that changes to the Draft EIR do not require recirculation of the Draft EIR for public review.

Chapter 10, Statement of Overriding Considerations, presents the Statement of Overriding Considerations for the significant adverse effects that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of proposed mitigation measures. No statements of overriding consideration are necessary for this Project.

1.3 Record of Proceedings

The documents and other materials that constitute the record of proceedings upon which project approval is based are located at 900 S. Fremont Ave, Alhambra, CA 91803. The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works is the custodian of such documents and other materials that constitute the record of proceedings. The record of proceedings is provided in compliance with Public Resources Code Section 21081.6(a)(2) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(e).

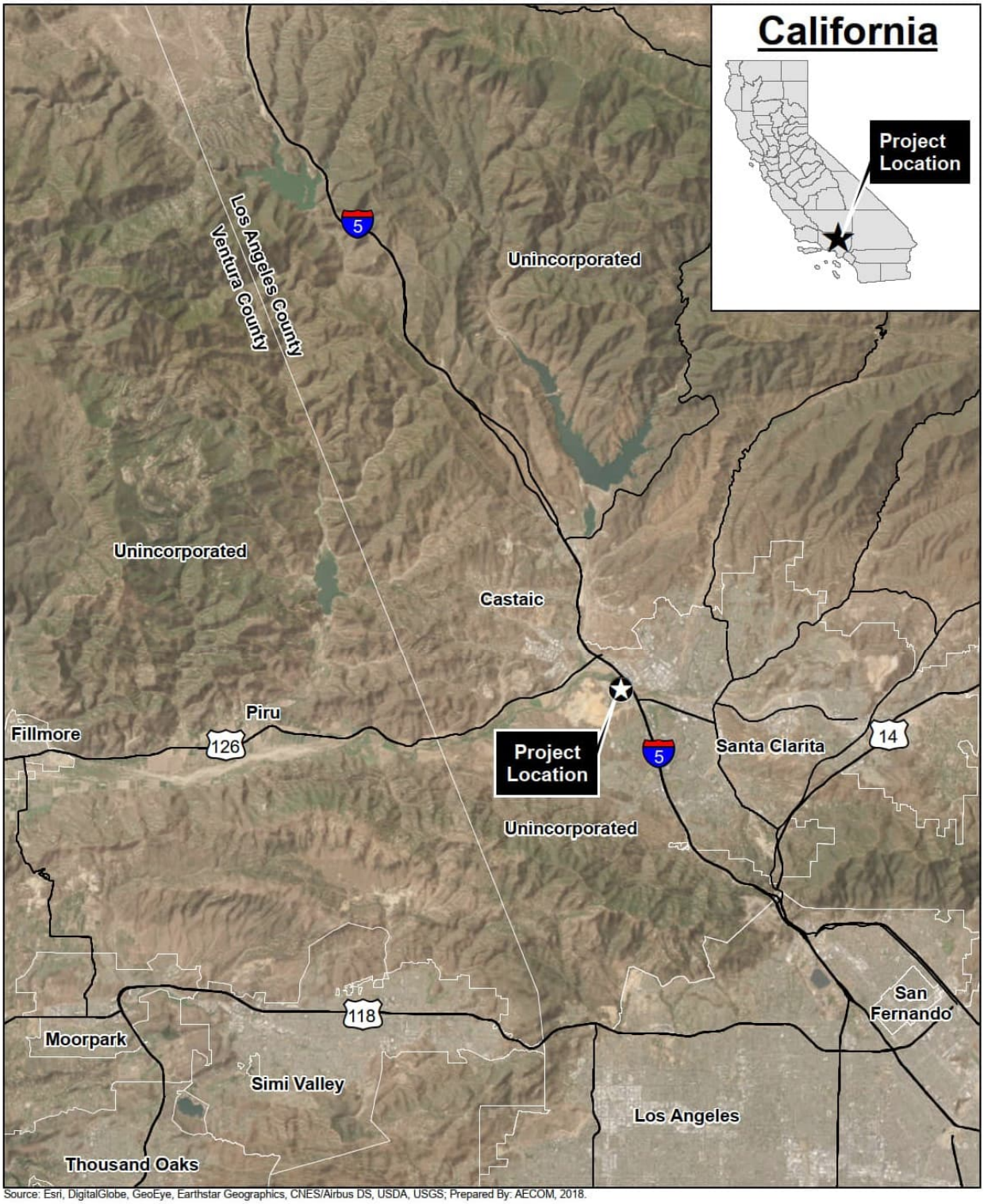
Chapter 2 **Project Description**

This section describes the proposed action and project alternatives that were developed to meet the project purpose and need, while avoiding or minimizing its potential environmental impacts. The proposed alternatives are the Build Alternative and the No-Build Alternative.

2.1 Location and Setting

The project site includes the approximately 2-mile stretch of the existing The Old Road right-of-way (ROW) between Henry Mayo Drive and Magic Mountain Parkway in western LA County. Because ROW acquisitions would be required for project implementation, the project site also includes areas adjacent to and on either side of the roadway. In addition, the proposed project would include an extension of the Multi-Use Trail. Thus, the project site would include an approximately 0.58-mile extension of the trail on the SB side of The Old Road, from where the trail travels under The Old Road and I-5 just southeast of Rye Canyon Road to just northwest of the I-5 on- and off-ramps. The area where the trail would be extended currently is developed with an access road. Regional access to the project site is via I-5, which roughly parallels The Old Road alignment and runs on the east and north sides of the roadway. Local access is via Henry Mayo Road that forms the northern boundary of the project site, Rye Canyon Road that intersects with The Old Road in the middle of the project site, Sky View Lane that intersects with The Old Road in the southern portion of the project site, and Magic Mountain Parkway that forms the southern boundary of the project site. Figure 1 shows the regional location of the project site, and Figure 2 shows the project limits and components.

The Old Road is a four-lane (two northbound [NB] and two SB lanes) roadway, located within a ROW variably measuring 140 to 160 feet wide that runs in a north/south direction parallel to I-5 through Santa Clarita Valley. The roadway's southern terminus is the junction of San Fernando Road and Sierra Highway in LA County; the northern terminus is roughly at Oak Court in the unincorporated community of Stevenson Ranch, north of Lake Hughes Road. The Old Road is identified as a Major Highway in the LA County General Plan. The roadway includes two bridges (the Santa Clara River Bridge and the SPT Co. Bridge) within the project site.



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS; Prepared By: AECOM, 2018.

0 2 4 Miles

Figure 1
Project Vicinity Map

Source: Esri Maps & Data, 2018; Prepared By: AECOM, 2019.

0 500 1,000 Feet

Muiti-Use Trail
Project Limits
Proposed Staging Area

Figure 2
Proposed Action Components

The area on the south side of the roadway is characterized primarily by undeveloped land, with an office complex west of the intersection of The Old Road and Magic Mountain Parkway, and a recreational vehicle storage facility south of the intersection of The Old Road and Henry Mayo Drive. The Old Road also crosses over the Santa Clara riverbed. Directly adjacent to The Old Road to the south is the Valencia Water Reclamation Plant, which is a LA County Sanitation District facility and serves the Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District. Further south of the project site, approximately 0.40 mile southwest of The Old Road, is the Magic Mountain amusement park. I-5 is north of The Old Road ROW, which roughly parallels the road ROW. A few locations exist where the space between The Old Road and I-5 is wider, and these areas generally include commercial uses, such as a hotel, gas station, and various restaurants. The area north of I-5 generally is characterized by commercial office uses closer to I-5 and residential uses further to the north. Currently, The Old Road does not allow parking within the roadway ROW.

2.2 Project Objectives

The specific project objectives include the following:

- Alleviate current congestion on The Old Road and adjacent roadway system.
- Reduce forecasted traffic congestion on adjacent streets to accommodate projected traffic growth on The Old Road and adjacent roadway system.
- Increase regional roadway capacity on The Old Road and adjacent roadway system to accommodate projection growth in the area.
- Enhance traffic and roadway safety on The Old Road and adjacent roadway system.
- Improve multimodal travel facilities (e.g., trails, bike lanes) in the project area.
- Replace and upgrade the FHWA-designated Structural Deficient Santa Clara River Bridge to a status of good condition.
- Provide water passage for the volume of water anticipated from an LACPW capital flood event (50-year burned and bulked storm) scenario, by repairing and increasing the height of The Old Road over the Santa Clara River Bridge.
- Improve traffic operations to be consistent with LACPW highway design speed safety standards.

2.3 Summary of the Proposed Project

The project improvements primarily would consist of reconstructing and widening The Old Road, replacing two bridges, reconstructing and widening Rye Canyon Road, and reconstructing and widening Sky View Lane, including reconfiguration of its intersection with The Old Road, as shown on Figure 2.

The Old Road over the Santa Clara River Bridge currently is not high enough to allow the volume of water anticipated from an LACPW capital flood event (defined as a 50-year burned and bulked storm) to pass under it. Replacing the bridge at a higher elevation would provide a minimum freeboard of 2.5 feet, which would allow a capital flood event to pass under it. In addition, emergency repairs were performed on the superstructure, piles, and abutment seats of the bridge immediately following the 1994 Northridge earthquake. Nonetheless, the bridge

currently is classified as structurally deficient, per FHWA standards. Replacing the bridge as part of the proposed project would eliminate that classification.

Current traffic demand in the project area meets or exceeds roadway capacity for many arterial roadways. Increases in traffic demand are anticipated over the next few years, concurrent with projected population growth in the area. Thus, the widening of The Old Road to six lanes would be critical for passage of traffic and emergency vehicles in the area.

2.4 Discretionary Actions

The following permits, licenses, agreements, and certifications (PLACs) would be required for project construction:

Agency	PLAC	Status
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Biological Opinion	A Biological Opinion was received (dated August 30, 2024), prior to the approval of the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment EIR/EA and issuance of the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 permit for filling or dredging waters of the U.S.	Following approval of the Final EIR/EA and issuance of the FONSI, permit applications will be submitted.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	1602 Agreement for Streambed Alteration	Following approval of the Final EIR/EA and issuance of the FONSI, permit applications will be submitted.
Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)	Potential Section 401 Water Quality Certification or waiver and or/Porter Cologne Act Waste Discharge Requirements Compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit	The applicable RWQCB permit would be determined during design. If needed, this permit may involve a joint “Application for 401 Water Quality Certification” and/or “Report of Waste Discharge." A statewide National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit for construction and operations would be in effect for the proposed project. A compliance review would take place during the design phase.
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Concurrence with the proposed project’s conformity to the Clean Air Act and other requirements	Air quality studies have been submitted for FHWA determination.
State Historic Preservation Officer	National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation	The Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians requested consultation and Section 106 and AB 52 consultation has concluded.

Chapter 3 **CEQA Review and Public Outreach**

LACPW has complied with the CEQA Guidelines during the preparation of the EIR for the Proposed Project. The formal scoping period was initiated with the preparation and distribution of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) (Appendix E). A NOP is required under Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines and is used to notify responsible agencies, trustee agencies, federal agencies, and the public that the lead agency intends to prepare an EIR for a project. The NOP was posted at the State Clearinghouse No. 2023030209 on February 27, 2024, and was circulated to the public agencies responsible for environmental resources affected by the proposed project. LACPW held a virtual scoping meeting for the proposed project on March 16, 2024, at 6 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, which could be accessed via a Zoom meeting link or Zoom telephone number. In addition to the publication of the NOP and virtual scoping meeting, the following public notification efforts were conducted:

- A project-specific web presence was established for convenient public access and outreach (https://pw.lacounty.gov/pmd/TheOldRoad-over-SantaClaraRiver/).
- The NOP was made available at Public Works Transportation Planning and Programs Division: 11th floor, 900 South Fremont Avenue, Alhambra, California, 91803.
- A total of 15 copies of the NOP were mailed to appropriate local, state, and federal agencies and elected officials representing the proposed project area.
- LACPW mailed the NOP to 10 tribal governments and applicable agencies.

The Draft EIR was circulated for a 52-day public review and comment period starting on February 27, 2024, and concluding on April 18, 2024. The timeframe of the public review period was identified in the Notice of Availability (NOA) attached to the Draft EIR. The public review period was conducted pursuant to CEQA and its implementing guidelines. The purpose of the public review period was to provide interested public agencies, organizations, and individuals the opportunity to comment on the contents and accuracy of the document. The Draft EIR and the Notice of Completion (NOC) were distributed to the California Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse.

Chapter 4 Findings of No Environmental Effects

Based on the Final EIR and the record of proceedings, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would have no impacts associated with aesthetics (scenic vistas and scenic resources within a state scenic highway); agriculture and forestry resources (zoning and forest land); biological resources (adopted plans); energy (adopted plans); geology and soils (landslides, expansive soil, and alternative wastewater disposal systems); hazards and hazardous materials (schools, public airport and private airstrip, emergency response plans, and wildland fires); noise (public airport and private airstrip); recreation (parks and construction or expansion of recreational facilities); and wildfires.

4.1 Aesthetics (scenic vistas and scenic resources within a state scenic highway)

The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse impact on a scenic vista or scenic resources because the project area does not include any scenic vistas or resources. No impacts would occur.

4.1.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in no reasonably foreseeable impacts relating to aesthetics (scenic vistas and scenic resources within a state scenic highway).

4.2 Agriculture and Forestry

No parcels are under a Williamson Act contract within the project limits, and no forests or timberlands are within the project limits. Furthermore, no other changes are anticipated to farmland or forest land. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

4.2.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in no reasonably foreseeable impacts relating to Agriculture and Forestry Resources (zoning and forest land).

4.3 Biological Resources (adopted plans)

The proposed project is not anticipated to conflict with the provisions of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCP), or other applicable habitat conservation plan. Although the project area is within the Santa Clara River SEA, the SEA designation is not part of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan or NCCP. The proposed project would be conducted in a manner consistent with the stipulations for working in an SEA. No impact would occur.

4.3.1 Findings

Based on Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in no reasonably foreseeable impacts relating to biological resources (adopted plans).

4.4 Energy (adopted plans)

This proposed project would not conflict with State or local plans for renewable energy and energy efficiency. The proposed project would address current and expected inconsistencies with jurisdictional plans and policies because it would increase regional roadway capacity to accommodate expected future traffic growth projections. No impact would occur.

4.4.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in no reasonably foreseeable impacts relating to energy (adopted plans).

4.5 Geology and Soils (landslides, expansive soil, and alternative wastewater disposal systems)

The project area is not in any areas susceptible to expansive soil or in a landslide area. In addition, the proposed project would not construct or modify a septic system or alternative wastewater system. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

4.5.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in no reasonably foreseeable impacts relating to geology and soils (landslides, expansive soil, and alternative wastewater disposal systems).

4.6 Hazards and Hazardous Materials (schools, public airport and private airstrip, emergency response plans, and wildland fires);

No schools are within a 0.25-mile radius of the project area. The project area is not within an airport land use plan or within 2 miles of a public airport. Outreach would occur to inform local jurisdictions, agencies, and the public of the times and locations of upcoming project construction, to avoid traffic disruptions especially for emergency response vehicles. In addition, the project improvements would enhance safety and increase capacity on roadways, to provide for emergency overflow. The widening of The Old Road would be critical for the passage of traffic and emergency vehicles in the area. The proposed project would expand existing facilities and land uses and would not expose people or structures to significant risks involving wildland fires. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

4.6.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in no reasonably foreseeable impacts relating to hazards and hazardous materials (schools, public airport and private airstrip, emergency response plans, and wildland fires).

4.7 Noise (public airport and private airstrip)

The project area is not in the vicinity of a private airstrip or within 2 miles of a public airport. Therefore, the proposed project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels. No impact would occur.

4.7.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in no reasonably foreseeable impacts relating to noise (public airport and private airstrips).

4.8 Recreation (parks and construction or expansion of recreational facilities)

The public use of parks and recreational facilities would not be affected by the proposed project because no recreational activities occurring at these locations. The Build Alternative would construct bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, an equestrian trail, as well as an extension of the Multi-Use Trail, which would improve connectivity and increase recreational opportunities in the area. No park or recreation areas exist in the project area. Therefore, no impacts would occur.

4.8.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in no reasonably foreseeable impacts relating to recreation (parks and construction or expansion of recreational facilities).

4.9 Wildfires

The project area consists of an existing roadway that would remain a roadway post-implementation, with improved multimodal facilities. The improvements would not result in installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk because the none of the improvements would require use of flammable materials. The project area is not in a landslide area or adjacent to hillside areas that would be subject to instability or increased runoff after a wildfire. No impacts would occur.

4.9.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in no reasonably foreseeable impacts relating to wildfires.

Chapter 5 Findings of Less Than Significant Environmental Effects Without Mitigation

Based on the Final EIR and the record of proceedings, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would have less than significant environmental effects associated with agriculture and forestry resources (farmland and Williamson Act), air quality resources; energy; geology and soils (seismic/ground shaking, soil erosion); greenhouse gas emissions; land use and planning; mineral resources; population and housing; public services; transportation; utilities and service systems; and wildfire (evacuations).

5.1 Agriculture and Forestry (Farmland and Williamson Act)

The proposed project would convert approximately 1.08 acres of Prime and Unique Farmland. However, the new ROW associated with the proposed project would not require acquisition of the entire parcel. Form AD-1006 was completed for the proposed project and submitted to the NRCS local field office to determine the farmland conversion impact rating. The NRCS determined that the proposed project would traverse areas currently being devoted to a variety of agricultural uses, including hay, vegetables, and fruit and nut trees. However, the proposed project rated a combined score of 125 points on Form AD-1006, which is below the threshold of 160. According to the instructions for completing Form AD-1006, sites receiving a total score of less than 160 points do not need to "consider alternative actions, as appropriate, that could reduce adverse impacts (e.g. Alternative Sites, Modifications, or Mitigation)." Therefore, according to the results of Form AD-1006, no further analysis is needed for farmland issues under the Farmland Protection Policy Act. In addition, these areas are not used currently for agricultural, and the surrounding area is highly urban. Therefore, the acquisition of Farmland of Statewide Importance would not be adverse because of the zoning of the project area and the combined score of 125 on the Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form. The impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

5.1.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, all reference documents, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant agriculture and forestry impacts to farmland and Williamson Act.

5.2 Air Quality

The project area is in Attainment–Maintenance (Serious) for CO, Attainment–Maintenance (Serious) for PM_{10}, and Nonattainment (Serious–24-hour) for $PM_{2.5}$. The proposed project would not cause or contribute to any new localized CO, $PM_{2.5}$, or PM_{10} violations or delay timely attainment of any NAAQS or any required interim emission reductions or other milestones during the time frame of the transportation plan (or regional emissions analysis). The proposed project is included in the SCAG's most recent RTP/SCS and FTIP, both of which were determined to be conforming. In addition, no sensitive receptors are within 500 feet of the project limits.

The proposed project would address current and expected roadway deficiencies of The Old Road and adjacent roadway system, such as congestion, and inconsistency with jurisdictional

plans and policies would improve because the proposed project would increase regional roadway capacity to accommodate expected future traffic growth projections.

The proposed project would result in less or similar to existing criteria pollutant emissions because of improvements in vehicle delay. Thus, the proposed project would not conflict with the AQMP, violate any air quality standards, result in a net increase of any criteria pollutant, or expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Additionally, temporary construction activities could generate fugitive dust from the operation of construction equipment. The proposed project would comply with construction standards adopted by the SCAQMD as well as with Caltrans standardized procedures for minimizing air pollutants during construction. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

5.2.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, all reference documents, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant air quality impacts.

5.3 Energy

Construction activities would result in short-term energy consumption from the use of petroleum fuels by off-road construction equipment, from on-road vehicles used by construction workers to travel to and from the project area during construction and for delivery of construction materials. The proposed project is anticipated to improve existing traffic operations and accommodate future traffic projections, eliminate choke points, and decrease traffic congestion. These improvements would improve traffic operations to be consistent with LACPW highway design speed safety standards and decrease travel time on the congested roadway system. The proposed project would enable The Old Road corridor to maximize productivity through improvements to the capacity of the roadway lanes, allowing for more flexibility in traffic movement and higher efficiencies to accommodate expected future traffic growth. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in an inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy. The impact would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

5.3.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, all reference documents, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant energy impacts.

5.4 Geology and Soils (seismic/ground shaking, unstable soils)

Although several active and potentially active earthquake faults and fault zones are in the project area, the project area does not cross any of these faults and zones, and it is not within an Earthquake Zone of Required Investigation. In addition, the proposed project would improve the bridges along The Old Road for earthquake protection. The project area is within a Liquefaction Zone, and project construction may increase the potential of soil erosion. However, implementation of avoidance measures, construction-phase BMPs, and project design features would minimize potential soil erosion and the occurrence of liquefaction (as discussed in

Section 2.3.3 of the Final EIR/EA). The impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

5.4.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, all reference documents, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant geology and soil impacts to seismic/ground shaking, and unstable soils.

5.5 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The proposed project would result in GHG emissions during construction; however, that would be offset by the long-term improvements in operational GHG emissions compared with existing conditions. As discussed in Section 2.3 of the Final EIR, the Build Alternative would result in less emissions than the No-Build Alternative and existing conditions in the opening year (2028) because of improvements in average vehicle speed and reductions in vehicle delay. In addition, in the design year (2048), ambient regional growth would result in higher GHG emissions for the Build Alternative than existing conditions in 2018, but the magnitude of emissions would be substantially lower than the No-Build Alternative in the same year. The proposed project would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Therefore, the impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

5.5.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, all reference documents, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant greenhouse gas emissions impacts.

5.6 Land Use and Planning

The proposed project would not physically divide an established community. The proposed project would establish temporary detour routes for traffic, which would allow local roadways to remain accessible throughout the duration of project construction. Access to local driveways along The Old Road and Henry Mayo Drive would be maintained. After construction is completed, the new bridge would be wider, with an increased number of lanes (6 lanes). However, the proposed project would not provide new access to an undeveloped area, nor would it influence development opportunities by expanding capacity. Although minority and low-income populations exist in and around the study area, the proposed project would benefit most area residents, including minority and low-income populations, by improving mobility and circulation throughout the area. Overall, the proposed project would be built along an existing transportation corridor and would not divide existing neighborhoods/communities. Therefore, the impacts related to the physical division of an established community would be less than significant.

In addition, as stated in Section 2.2.2 of the Final EIR, the proposed project would be consistent with all applicable State, regional, and local plans and programs. The proposed project would address current and expected roadway deficiencies on The Old Road and adjacent roadway system, such as inconsistency with jurisdictional plans and policies, because roadway capacity would increase in the regional and improve safety to accommodate expected future traffic

growth projections to meet jurisdictional plans and policies. Furthermore, the proposed project would not conflict with the existing or planned land uses in the area.

The impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

5.6.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, all reference documents, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant land use and planning impacts.

5.7 Mineral Resources

As discussed in Section 2.3.3 of the Final EIR/EA, a portion of the project area is within an MRZ-2 site, and the remainder of The Old Road is within an MRZ-3 site. Although a portion of the project area is within an area of mineral resource significance, the amount of excavation needed for the proposed project would be insignificant in relation to the size of the entire MRZ-2 area that encompasses parts of the project region. Adherence to the goals and policies regarding mineral resources in the LA County General Plan's Conservation and Natural Resources Element and the City of Santa Clarita General Plan's Conservation and Open Space Element would be followed to reduce impacts on any mineral resources. In addition, the 0.64-mile portion of The Old Road within the Castaic Junction Oil and Gas Field contains only plugged wells, and the closest active well in this field is approximately 0.54 mile from The Old Road. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in the substantial loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region or State or of a locally important mineral resource recovery site. The impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

5.7.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, all reference documents, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant mineral resource impacts.

5.8 Population and Housing

As discussed in Section 2.2.7 of the Final EIR/EA, the proposed project would require temporary construction, permanent drainage, and roadway ROW easements on portions of several properties within the project boundaries. However, the proposed project would not provide any access to previously inaccessible parcels or remove access to any properties. It also would provide additional bicycle and pedestrian access along The Old Road from surrounding communities.

Furthermore, the proposed project would not require changes to land use designations or contain elements that would influence the type or location of growth beyond what already is planned. None of the above changes would induce unplanned population growth in the area.

The proposed project would not change the distribution of existing or planned housing. No housing is in the project area. Project construction would not displace any residential units or

nonresidential properties. Therefore, the proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of people or housing that would necessitate construction of replacement housing. The impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

5.8.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, all reference documents, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant population and housing impacts.

5.9 Public Services

The proposed project would not construct any infrastructure or developments that would increase the local population, thereby necessitating the provision of new or physically altered government facilities. The impact would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

5.9.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, all reference documents, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant public services impacts.

5.10 Transportation

As discussed in Section 2.2.8 in the Final EIR/EA, the proposed project is expected to be positive for roadway circulation, decreasing congestion and delays and improving traffic flow. The roadway capacity analysis determined that traffic demand on The Old Road justifies a six-lane facility to operate more efficiently. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities also would be improved as part of the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing circulation.

As discussed in the VMT Analysis Memorandum (AECOM 2023c), the total regional VMT would decrease by 93,346 VMT in the opening year (2028) and decreases by 1,010,396 VMT in the design year (2048). Based on the results of the analysis presented in Section 2.2.8 of the Final EIR/EA, the proposed project would have a less than significant project level and cumulative level VMT impact on the regional area. Therefore, the impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

5.10.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, all reference documents, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant transportation impacts.

5.11 Utilities and Service Systems

As discussed in Section 2.2.7 of the Final EIR/EA, the proposed project would require the relocation of several utilities in the project area. Relocation of utilities would include telecommunication, natural gas, wastewater, electricity, and oil facilities. In addition, stormwater

systems would be added and extended to accommodate for the roadway widening. The utility relocations would not exceed a maximum depth of 30 feet and would not go outside the footprint of the existing ROW. The utilities relocations would result in a local construction impact.

Additionally, the proposed project would not include new development or uses beyond what currently exists or that would require water supplies. The proposed project would add additional impervious area, which could contribute to added runoff and intensity, as discussed in Section 2.3 of the Final EIR/EA. The proposed drainage system would be designed to collect the runoff and connect to the existing drainage system. The proposed project would not generate solid waste, other than during construction. Implementation of construction BMPs would ensure that this waste generation would not exceed State or local standards, the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. The proposed project also would comply with all federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. Therefore, the impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

5.11.1 Findings

Based on the Draft EIR/EA and Final EIR/EA, all reference documents, and the whole of the record, LACPW finds that the Proposed Project would result in less than significant utilities and service system impacts.

Chapter 6 Findings of Less Than Significant Environmental Effects With Mitigation

The Final EIR determined that the Proposed Project would result in potentially significant environmental effects in the areas of aesthetics (visual quality and light/glare); biological resources; cultural resources; paleontological resources; hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; tribal cultural resources; biological resources (special status species, riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community, and cumulative impacts); cultural resources (archaeological resources); geology and soils (landslides and unstable geologic unit); paleontological resources; transportation and traffic (capacity of existing circulation system and cumulative impacts); and tribal cultural resources (resources determined by lead agency to be significant and cumulative impacts). The Final EIR identified feasible mitigation measures to avoid or substantially reduce the environmental effects in these areas. Based on the information and analysis set forth in the Final EIR, impacts would be less than significant with the identified feasible mitigation measures incorporated into the Proposed Project.

6.1 Aesthetics (visual quality and light/glare)

As discussed in Section 2.2.9 of the Final EIR/EA, the proposed project would be compatible with existing views, with the exception of the raised elevation of the I-5 SB on-ramp. The additional proposed lanes would not expand the scale of the roadway substantially and would maintain the visual character of the roadway. Furthermore, corridor views would maintain continuity because the proposed project would introduce only compatible elements that already exist in some form in the project area.

Construction views temporarily would include introduction of staging areas, equipment, and materials within the project corridor, but these impacts would be limited in duration. In addition, project construction would introduce construction lighting that potentially could increase temporary lighting in the area. Implementation of AMM VIS-1 would ensure that directional lighting would be aimed downward during construction, where appropriate within the project area, so that the proposed project would comply with the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan. Operationally, new permanent lighting would be installed along The Old Road and the proposed overcrossing structure, which would be finalized during the Plan, Specifications, and Estimates phase. However, these elements are not anticipated to be a notable change to the existing lighting in the area, because the project area is urban and has a moderate level of existing ambient lighting.

The project area would be consistent with existing vividness, intactness, and unity after construction. In addition, commercial and industrial viewers would be closer to the project area than local residents and would be less likely to notice compatible uses. Viewer sensitivity in the project area would remain moderately low. Implementation of AMM VIS-2 would include a textured finish on the proposed retaining wall on Rye Canyon Road at I-5, to discourage graffiti and maintain the visual quality of the area.

Therefore, the proposed project as designed would not substantially degrade the visual character and quality of the project area. The impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

6.1.1 Findings

LACPW finds that the following mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potentially significant aesthetics resources impacts related visual character and light/glare to a less than significant level.

VIS-1: Directional lighting aimed downward at a work site will be used during project construction where appropriate in the project area.

VIS-2: A textured finish on the proposed retaining wall on Rye Canyon Road at I-5 will be included to discourage graffiti.

6.2 Biological Resources

Project implementation would not impact any federally or State-listed threatened, endangered, or candidate plant species that would have the potential to occur within BSA. Special-status plant surveys in 2023 were negative for listed plants. One non-listed special-status plant species, Southern California black walnut, was detected within the LOD and BSA. One Southern California black walnut tree would be removed by construction, and a second tree may be affected because of its close proximity to the LOD. Implementation of AMM WALNUT-1 would reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level.

For non-listed special-status wildlife species, multiple species have been detected within the BSA that have the potential to be affected by the proposed project (refer to Table 2-54 and Section 2.4.4 of the Final EIR/EA). The following non-listed special-status wildlife species are known to occur or would have the potential to occur within the LOD and be affected by the proposed project: arroyo chub, Southern California legless lizard, California glossy snake, coastal whiptail, coast horned lizard, two-striped garter snake, white-tailed kite, Cooper's hawk, California horned lark, yellow warbler, yellow-breasted chat, Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, loggerhead shrike, western burrowing owl, pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, western mastiff bat, western red bat, hoary bat, Yuma myotis, and American badger.

Temporary, direct impacts would result from the use of upland and aquatic habitat for equipment and materials staging and grading, as well as from clearing and tree removal for construction activities and access to construction sites. Permanent impacts would result from removal of occupied habitat for multiple species. Project operation would have minor effects on non-listed special-status wildlife species within the BSA.

Impacts on non-listed special-status wildlife species would be avoided and minimized by implementation of several AMMs, GEN-1 through GEN-15, and species-specific measures UTS-1 and UTS-2, WPT-1 and WPT-2, RIP-1 through RIP-3, and BAT-1 through BAT-3. By implementing these measures, the impact on non-listed special-status wildlife species would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

For federally and State-listed wildlife species, including candidate species, the proposed project would have the potential to impact UTS, arroyo toad, southwestern pond turtle, LBVI, SWFL, and mountain lion. UTS is assumed to occur in the mainstem of the Santa Clara River and may occur in the Northern Drainage. Arroyo toad historically has occurred in the area; however, after years of historical droughts and the proliferation of nonnative invasive species, it has not been documented within the BSA in several decades and likely is extirpated. Southwestern pond

turtle is known to occur throughout the BSA, in both the mainstem of the Santa Clara River and the Northern Drainage. LBVI are common summer breeders throughout riparian vegetation within the BSA, and eight territories were identified during focused surveys in 2018. Federally designated critical habitat for arroyo toad, LBVI and SWFL also would be permanently removed by the proposed project.

Both temporary and permanent impacts would result from habitat loss (including critical habitat for arroyo toad, LBVI, and SWFL) during project construction. Acreages of impacts per listed species are detailed in Section 2.4 of the Final EIR/EA. The impact on listed species would be similar to the impact previously discussed for non-listed special-status wildlife species and would include a temporary direct impact during construction and a permanent impact from removal of occupied habitat.

The impact on listed wildlife species would be avoided and minimized by implementation of several AMMs, including GEN-1 through GEN-15, and species-specific measures: UTS-1 and UTS-2, WPT-1 and WPT-2, RIP-1 through RIP-3, BAT-1 through BAT-3, and LION-1 through LION-3. Therefore, the impact on listed wildlife species would be reduced to a less-than significant level with mitigation incorporated.

The proposed project would result in temporary and permanent impacts on riparian habitat and other sensitive natural communities. Project implementation would result in temporary and permanent direct impacts on California Buckwheat Scrub, Fremont Cottonwood Forest and Woodland, and Elderberry Stand, which are summarized by acreage in Table 2-53 of the Final EIR/EA. Indirect impacts on sensitive vegetation communities also may occur from construction and use of the project area. Temporary indirect impacts, such as construction fugitive dust (which can coat vegetation and reduce photosynthesis), sedimentation and erosion, construction-generated trash/debris, and unauthorized trespass could all adversely affect vegetation. The proposed project also would have the potential for longer term impacts, such as the proliferation of invasive species through ground-disturbing activities, which may indirectly degrade adjacent native vegetation communities. Indirect impacts also may occur in the form of increased potential for wildland fires and pollution in the Santa Clara River. With implementation of AMMs VEG-5, VEG-6, and GEN-15, both temporary and permanent impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

As discussed in the NES (AECOM 2024h), the proposed project would include bank stabilization and bridge replacement over Santa Clara River, requiring permits from USACE, the RWQCB, and CDFW for the impacts on jurisdictional waters (WOTUS), wetlands, and riparian habitat.

A jurisdictional delineation was completed for the project area (initially in 2018, and updated in 2023; AECOM 2023k), which determined that the Santa Clara River is considered WOTUS, and therefore subject to regulation by USACE and the RWQCB under Sections 404 and 401 of the CWA, respectively. Overall, 5.78 acres and 0.76 acre of USACE and RWQCB jurisdictional waters and wetlands, respectively, and an additional 28.67 acres of CDFW-only jurisdictional waters are within the BSA (the Santa Clara River). An unnamed tributary to the river along the northern portion of the project area includes 0.30 acre of non-wetland waters and 0.98 acre of CDFW streambed. Stormwater drainages A and B include 0.02 acre of non-wetland waters and 0.13 acre of CDFW streambeds. Isolated riparian areas include 0.07 acre (RWQCB, CDFW) and 1.29 acres (CDFW).

Permanent impacts are proposed to occur at three project features—the Santa Clara River, the Northern Tributary, and Drainage A. The proposed project may temporarily impact 0.15 acre and permanently impact up to 0.33 acre of WOTUS. The indirect impact from expanded bridge shading would be on 0.26 acre of WOTUS. The total impacts on CDFW-jurisdictional streambeds and riparian habitat would include approximately 1.07 acre of permanent impacts and 0.43 acre of temporary impacts, as well as 0.68 acre of new bridge shading and 0.02 acre because of the new bridge columns.

The project area is adjacent to portions of the Santa Clara River, and thus the remaining jurisdictional areas may be affected by runoff from the road and increased trash and litter. In addition, the river may be indirectly impacted by nonnative species (e.g., roadside weeds), exposure to urban pollutants (e.g., fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, other hazardous materials), soil erosion, and hydrological changes (e.g., surface and groundwater level and quality).

Extensive AMMs and BMPs will be implemented for the Santa Clara River and its tributaries. Because the proposed project would impact USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW jurisdictional areas, the avoidance and minimization measures that are discussed in Section 2.4.1 would be applicable (i.e., AMMs VEG-1 through VEG-4). These measures would be incorporated into the project design, and therefore would minimize potential impacts on areas under USACE and CDFW jurisdiction. Compensatory mitigation as detailed in AMMs WATERS-1 and WATERS-2 would consist of the restoration and compensation of wetland and riparian vegetation communities, and would be refined further in the regulatory permitting process. Therefore, the impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

The proposed project would span areas of open water within the Santa Clara River and Northern Drainage, thereby eliminating any impact on surface water that is occupied by UTS and other aquatic species. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish. However, the expanded road and The Old Road Bridge would have the potential to increase the noise and artificial nighttime light over the Santa Clara River, which is a wildlife corridor. This would have the potential to interfere with the movement of local wildlife along the Santa Clara River. With implementation of AMMs LION-1 through LION-3, the impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

A detailed oak tree survey was conducted by AECOM in June 2019 (AECOM 2019b), in accordance with the LA County Oak Tree Ordinance (Sections 22.56.2050–2260 of the LA County Code), to provide information to LACWP on oak trees that may be removed or damaged by development of the proposed project.

LACPW recognizes the historical, aesthetic, and ecological qualities of oak trees and seeks to preserve and propagate this unique, threatened plant community, especially those trees that may be classified as heritage oaks. Heritage oaks are oak trees with a diameter at breast height greater than 36 inches. LA County's Oak Tree Ordinance requires an oak tree permit for any impacts on oak trees within its jurisdiction that meet certain requirements (e.g., size, age). Impacts would include cutting, destroying, removing, relocating, inflicting damage, or encroaching into the protected zone of any oak tree. The protected zone is defined as the area within the canopy of an oak tree extending to a point at least 5 feet outside the dripline or 25 feet from the trunk of a tree.

AECOM surveyed 59 native oak trees (56 *Q. lobata* and three *Q. agrifolia*) that would be subject to the LA County Oak Tree Ordinance within the BSA, which would include the proposed

grading limit line and all areas within 500 feet of the grading limit line. Approximately 50% of the BSA already has been developed. Most of the oak trees that have been recorded within the BSA occur within the limit of disturbance along both sides of The Old Road, just south of the intersection of The Old Road and Rye Canyon Road. Of the 59 native oak trees surveyed, 15 oak trees (*Q. lobata*) are planned for permanent removal because of The Old Road expansion. The oak trees planned for removal are valley oaks, two of which are heritage trees under the LA County Oak Tree Ordinance (36 inches in diameter or greater). Fourteen oak trees are within temporary impact areas associated with project construction access and temporary work areas. These areas would be avoided to the greatest extent possible during project construction-related activities.

Thirty native oak trees are within 500 feet of the limit of disturbance, none of which would be removed or encroached on. Thus, no specific avoidance efforts are feasible. However, AMMs OAK-1 through OAK-7 would be implemented to minimize the potential impact on trees that would not be removed but would be in close proximity of construction activities. Therefore, the impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

6.2.1 Findings

LACPW finds that the following mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potentially significant biological resources impacts related to special status species and riparian and other sensitive natural community to a less than significant level.

WALNUT-1: The proposed project will directly impact one Southern California black walnut tree and indirectly impact one additional tree. A preconstruction survey will be conducted to identify the exact LOD, during which protective fencing will be placed around the tree that may be indirectly affected. If feasible, the Southern California black walnut tree within the direct footprint of the expanded bridge will be transplanted outside the LOD along the bank of the Santa Clara River. In addition, because transplanting is not always successful, any Southern California black walnut tree that may be directly affected by the proposed project will be mitigated a 2:1 ratio (as individuals, not acreage). The mitigated trees will be planted nearby at an acceptable location for this species. Ideally, any replacement may be grown in a nursery and replanted before project implementation. Otherwise, purchasing walnut trees from a native plant nursery will be acceptable, preferably from stock originating in LA County. In addition, the LA County Department of Regional Planning will be included on the list of regulatory agencies to consult for the replacement ratio of 2:1 for removal of the one Southern California black walnut tree.

GEN-1: The contractor(s) will be informed, before the bidding process, regarding the biological constraints of the proposed project (which will be included in Section EC of the Special Provisions). The project limits will be clearly marked on the project plans that are provided to the contractor(s), and areas outside the project limits will be designated as “no construction” zones. A construction manager will be present during all construction activities, to oversee that work is limited to the designated project limits.

GEN-2: High-visibility environmentally sensitive area fencing and silt fencing with appropriate signs will be installed by the contractor before the start of work, to prevent habitat impacts and the spread of silt from the construction zone into

adjacent habitats. The fencing will be installed along the outer edge of work limits, in a manner that does not impact habitats to be avoided.

GEN-3: Project personnel will strictly limit their activities, vehicles, equipment, and construction materials to within the fenced construction limits, staging areas, and routes between the construction limits and staging areas. The temporary construction fencing will be removed on completion of the construction.

GEN-4: All workers will participate in a Worker Environmental Awareness Program for sensitive biological resources. Sign-in sheets will be maintained to document completion of the program by each worker. This training can be administered in person by a qualified biologist or through screening of a video/slide presentation, prepared by a qualified biologist and overseen by an on-site manager. Contractor education training will include a review of special-status species and protected habitats occurring/potentially occurring on site. Identification of these resources and all biological avoidance and minimization measures relevant to the contractors' work will be reviewed. Stop work and notification procedures will be outlined. The training program will include a section specific to UTS, southwestern pond turtle, arroyo toad, LBVI, and SWFL. Training handouts will be provided and posted at the staging areas in the project area.

In addition to a qualified biologist being available for species surveys, monitoring, and relocation activities, biological monitors will be present on a daily basis throughout the construction phase, when construction activities are adjacent to federally listed species habitat or have the potential to impact listed species. Biological monitors will be qualified for the monitoring activities and species in the area. A biological monitor will monitor the status of BMPs to ensure that they continue to be implemented after installation and prevent species that are in proximity to construction activities from being affected. In particular, construction monitoring will occur daily when ground-disturbing activities occur in/near the Santa Clara River. The biological monitors will ensure that BMPs are operating effectively, will conduct daily sweeps of the active construction areas to ensure that no listed species are impacted, and will conduct pre-activity clearance surveys ahead of vegetation/ground disturbance when in listed species habitat or critical habitat. Repeat pre-activity clearance surveys will be conducted when a lapse in occurs activities in suitable listed species habitat longer than 3 days after vegetation removal or a previous survey.

GEN-5: A qualified biologist, defined as an individual with the appropriate federal and State certifications to conduct the specified activities, will be available to relocate any listed species out of harm's way if detected within the project limits. The biologist will have verified previous experience with the species for which surveys are being conducted and will have been approved by USFWS as qualified to conduct species surveys, monitoring, and relocation activities.

GEN-6: All equipment maintenance; staging; and dispensing of fuel, oil, coolant, or any other such activities will occur in designated areas outside jurisdictional wetlands or waters and within the fenced project limits. These designated areas will be in previously compacted and disturbed areas to the maximum extent practicable, so as to prevent any runoff from entering jurisdictional wetlands or waters. Fueling of equipment will take place within existing paved areas, if feasible, greater than

100 feet from jurisdictional wetlands or waters. Contractor equipment will be checked for leaks before operation and will be repaired as necessary. "Fueling zones" will be designated on construction plans and located away from the Santa Clara River and Northern Drainage.

GEN-7: In areas that do not require excavation or grading, native vegetation will be trampled instead of completely removed, to allow regrowth and invasive plant species to be avoided to the extent practical, to reduce the potential for their spread.

GEN-8: To reduce impacts on listed species' critical and occupied habitat, before entering the project area, all personnel will remove invasive species materials, propagules, seeds, and individuals from project equipment, materials, and clothing to reduce the proliferation of invasive species. This will include checking to see that construction equipment has been thoroughly power-washed or cleaned, to remove any dirt/mud/sediment from tires and tracks.

GEN-9: The project area will be kept as clean of construction-related trash and debris as possible, to avoid attracting predators of sensitive wildlife. All food-related trash items will be enclosed in sealed containers and removed regularly from the project area.

GEN-10: Project personnel will be prohibited from bringing pets into the project area.

GEN-11: Disposal or temporary placement of excess fill, brush, or other debris will not be allowed in WOTUS or their banks along the Santa Clara River.

GEN-12: The majority of construction is expected to be undertaken during daylight; however, when nighttime construction is necessary, lighting will be of the lowest illumination necessary for human safety, will be diverted away from any native vegetation communities, and will consist of low-sodium or similar lighting, equipped with shields to focus light downward onto the appropriate subject area.

GEN-13: Exclusionary devices will be installed underneath The Old Road Bridge over Santa Clara River to prevent birds and bats from nesting during construction. Installation of these devices will be completed before February 1 (the beginning of bird breeding season) and will remain until construction is completed. A qualified biologist will inspect the area before installation for nests and evidence of breeding activity. If breeding activity is not detected, inactive nests will be destroyed to prevent birds from establishing breeding. If breeding activity is confirmed, exclusionary devices will be installed in all other areas lacking active nests. Active nests will be monitored by the biologist until breeding is completed. After breeding is completed, exclusionary devices will be installed in these areas.

GEN-14: Best efforts will be implemented (within the control of LA County, taking into consideration land ownership) to restrict public access into the Santa Clara River that can adversely affect listed fish and wildlife resources. These actions will include posting signs along the Multi-Use Trail and

where sidewalks abut the Santa Clara River, promoting public education and awareness of such ecological sensitivities, and maintaining fences and barricades to prevent unauthorized or unrestricted access to the river bottom, as applicable.

GEN-15: Compensatory mitigation for impacts on sensitive natural communities (jurisdictional wetlands and waters) will consist of a combination of in-place and in-kind restoration (at a minimum a 1:1 ratio) and enhancement. A Vegetation Management and Restoration Plan will be prepared for agency review and approval before initiating project impacts. Only native plant species will be included in the plans. Final plans will include the following information and conditions:

a. All habitat restoration/enhancement sites will be prepared for planting in a way that mimics natural habitat to the maximum extent practicable. All planting will be installed in a way that mimics natural plant distribution and not in rows.

b. Planting will be accomplished through planting palettes of container plants (and plan will specify plant species, size, and number/acre) and planting seed mix (the Vegetation Management and Restoration Plan will specify plant species and pounds/acre). The upland plant palette will include native species specifically associated with existing habitat types. The source and proof of local native status of plant material and seeds will be provided.

c. Container plant survival will be 80% of the initial plantings for the first 5 years. At the first and second anniversaries of plant installation, all dead plants will be replaced unless their function has been replaced by natural recruitment.

d. The final Restoration/Enhancement Plan will outline the irrigation schedule to the extent practical, to prevent overwatering, runoff, and plants that are artificially robust (in comparison with nearby native vegetation). Irrigation will cease after year 2 or 3, except in cases of extreme drought.

e. The final implementation schedule will indicate when all habitat effects, as well as on-site and off-site restoration/enhancement planting and irrigation, will begin and end. Off-site restoration/enhancement planting and irrigation will be completed during the concurrent or next planting season (i.e., late fall to early spring) after beginning project impacts. On-site habitat restoration/enhancement planting and irrigation (if required) will be completed during the concurrent or next planting season (i.e., late fall to early spring), after finishing each phase of project impacts in the restoration/enhancement area. Any temporal loss of habitat caused by delays in restoration/enhancement will be mitigated through habitat preservation or restoration/enhancement at a 0.5:1 ratio for every 6 months of delay (e.g., 1:1 for 12 months of delay, 1.5:1 for 18 months of delay). If LA County is wholly or partly prevented from performing its obligations under the final plans (causing temporal loss from delays) because of unforeseeable circumstances of causes beyond reasonable

control, and without the fault or negligence of LA County, they will be excused by such unforeseeable cause(s).

f. The 5 years of success criteria for restoration/enhancement areas will include a 40 to 65% absolute native cover (in comparison with adjacent native vegetation communities) or greater, depending on the native vegetation community being restored/enhanced; evidence of the natural recruitment of multiple species; 0% coverage for Cal-IPC's "Invasive Plant Inventory" species that are rated "High," and no more than 10% coverage of other exotic/weed species. Each vegetation community that is restored/enhanced will have a separate percent absolute native cover, as appropriate for the specific vegetation community. For example, this will vary with riparian woodland and marsh vegetation communities having a higher native coverage percent. The final restoration/enhancement plan will detail the specific success criteria with the target percent absolute native cover for each vegetation community.

g. A qualitative and quantitative vegetation monitoring plan with a map of proposed sampling locations will be included. Photo points will be used for qualitative monitoring, and stratified random sampling will be used for all quantitative monitoring.

h. Annual mitigation and monitoring reports will be submitted to the appropriate regulatory agency after the monitoring period, no later than December 1 of each year.

i. If maintenance of the habitat/restoration enhancement area is necessary between February 1 and September 1, a qualified biologist will survey for nesting birds within the restoration/enhancement area, access paths to it, and other areas susceptible to disturbances by site maintenance. Surveys will consist of three visits separated by 2 weeks, starting March 1 of each maintenance/monitoring year. Work will be allowed to continue on site during the survey period. However, if sensitive avian species are found during any of the visits, LACPW will notify and coordinate with the regulatory agencies to identify measures to avoid and/or minimize effects on the sensitive species (e.g., nests and an appropriate buffer will be flagged by a biological monitor and avoided by maintenance workers).

j. LACPW will mitigate at a 1:1 ratio for temporary impacts on listed species and a ratio of 3:1 for permanent impacts on listed species. In addition, the plan will include LA County Planning in the list of regulatory agencies to consult, to determine adequate replacement ratios, to mitigate temporary and permanent impacts on sensitive vegetation communities. In addition, the plan will include LA County Planning in the list of regulatory agencies to consult, to determine adequate replacement ratios, to mitigate temporary and permanent impacts on sensitive vegetation communities.

UTS-1: Before the start of construction, thorough surveys for UTS will be conducted by a qualified biologist who is highly knowledgeable and experienced in identifying UTS. The qualified biologist and survey methodology will be approved by USFWS before the survey begins.

1. Immediately before the start of construction, the qualified biologist (in close coordination with USFWS) will conduct no-take visual-only surveys for UTS throughout the Northern Drainage, to confirm absence.

    a. If UTS are detected during either survey, the Northern Drainage will be considered occupied by UTS. If this is the case, the project culvert extension option will not be considered, and an alternative design will be necessary.

    b. If UTS are not detected, the project potentially can begin.

2. Immediately following the UTS survey, a fish-excluding device will be installed and maintained. This device will be designed, installed, monitored, and maintained to (a) completely exclude UTS and other aquatic life from the project area in the Northern Drainage during the entire term of work in or near surface waters, and to (b) avoid stranding, entrapment, or entanglement of wildlife. The fish-exclusion device will be monitored regularly by a qualified biologist to verify that it is functional.

3. A surface water diversion also will be designed, installed, monitored, and maintained in a manner to verify that sufficient water flow continues to maintain aquatic life downstream from the project area in the Northern Drainage.

4. Additional BMPs will be implemented to avoid and minimize project impacts on water quality, aquatic life, nesting birds, and other natural resources. BMPs will be implemented around the periphery of work areas so that no inadvertent spills, erosion, sedimentation, or construction-related effects occur.

5. If UTS are detected within the project area or Northern Drainage, work will be halted and USFWS and CDFW will be contacted immediately.

UTS-2: For the mainstem of the Santa Clara River where UTS are assumed present, work activities will be conducted so that no surface water contact will occur, and a biological monitor will be present during all ground-disturbing activities when near the Santa Clara River. Vegetation trimming and removal will be conducted in a way to prevent contact with surface water, and BMPs will be implemented along the length of the Santa Clara River so that no inadvertent spills, erosion, or sedimentation occurs. A biological monitor will ensure that materials from concrete decking installation and concrete pouring do not fall into the Santa Clara River, and that all construction personnel and equipment remain outside the active channel. Construction of the piles within the Santa Clara River will occur during summer months to coincide with periods of low flow for the Santa Clara River, to minimize the potential for impacts on surface water in the river. The cast-in-drilled-hole pile with slurry displacement installation method has been selected specifically to avoid the need for dewatering and potential impacts on UTS. A biological monitor will be present during cast-in-drilled-hole pile installation when in proximity to the Santa Clara River, to ensure that vibration impacts do not negatively affect any aquatic species. If unforeseen circumstances arise during

construction of the bridge piles that may result in impacts on UTS, USFWS will be contacted to discuss additional potential measures to avoid impacts.

WPT-1: A qualified biologist will survey the work site no more than 48 hours before the onset of activities, to monitor for southwestern pond turtle and/or southwestern pond turtle nesting activity (i.e., recently excavated nests, nest plugs) or nest depredation (partially to fully excavated nest chambers, nest plugs, scattered eggshell remains, and eggshell fragments). Preconstruction surveys to detect western pond turtle nesting activity will be concentrated within suitable upland habitat in the project area and will focus on areas along south- or west-facing slopes with bare hard-packed clay or silt soils or a sparse vegetation of short grasses or forbs. Survey efforts will focus on suitable aerial and aquatic basking habitat, such as logs, branches, root wads, and riprap, as well as the shoreline and adjacent warm, shallow waters where southwestern pond turtle may be present below the water surface, beneath algal mats or other surface vegetation.

WPT-2: If southwestern pond turtle is observed during the preconstruction survey, the species will be avoided to the greatest extent practicable. If avoidance is not feasible, LACPW will confer with USFWS to determine the best approach so that no take of the species occurs, including additional measures such as implementation of exclusion buffers, nest enclosures, silt fencing, screening, and additional BMP implementation, as appropriate.

RIP-1: To the greatest extent possible, construction activities (such as vegetation removal) will be timed to avoid the nesting season for riparian avian species (February 1 through September 1).

RIP-2: If work is scheduled during the riparian avian breeding season (February 1 through September 1), and within LBVI or SWFL-occupied and critical habitat, a qualified biologist will conduct a preconstruction nesting survey to verify that no active bird nests are present within 500 feet of construction activities. If no nests are detected, then vegetation removal will be permitted during the nesting season. The biologist will establish and maintain a minimum 300-foot no-disturbance buffer around all active bird nests. For raptors and special-status species, this buffer will be expanded to a minimum of 500 feet.

RIP-3: If an active LBVI or SWFL nest is detected, no construction activities will be permitted within 500 feet of the nest. Work within nest buffers may not resume until the young fledge and disperse, or the nest has been determined to fail by a qualified biologist. Limits of construction to avoid a nest site will be established in the field with flagging and stakes or construction fencing.

BAT-1: No earlier than 7 days before the start of construction around the two bridge locations, a field survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist to determine whether active bat roosts are present on or within 300 feet of the project boundaries. If an active roost is identified, a determination will be made regarding whether the roost is used as a night roost, a day roost, or a maternity roost. If an active roost is removed, MM BAT-2

(below) will be implemented. Alternatively, if an active roost is identified within 300 feet of the disturbance boundary but will not be removed, MM BAT-3 (below) will be implemented. Trees and/or structures determined to be maternity roosts will be left in place until the end of the maternity season. Because the ambient noise levels already exceed acceptable noise levels from non-project-related surrounding construction activities and traffic noise, additional noise mitigation will not be implemented. Consequently, no interference will take place with bat echolocation and insect foraging.

BAT-2: If a night-roost is identified within the LOD, the roost structure will be removed during the daylight hours while the roost is not in use. If an active day roost is identified, roosting bats will be evicted by using humane exclusionary devices. Before project implementation, the proposed methods for bat exclusion will be approved by CDFW. The roost will not be removed until it has been confirmed by a qualified biologist that all bats have been successfully excluded. If an active maternity roost is identified (the breeding season of native bat species in California generally occurs from April 1 through August 31), the roost will not be disturbed and construction within 300 feet will be postponed or halted, at the discretion of the biological monitor, until the roost is vacated and juveniles have fledged, as determined by the biologist. CDFW will be consulted regarding the necessity to construct replacement roosting habitat or to modify the proposed project (as appropriate), to include features conducive to roosting. This determination will be based on the bat species to be displaced, the abundance of other roost sites in the area, and the size of the roost removed. All CDFW recommendations for roost replacement will be implemented.

BAT-3: If a night roost is identified within the 300-foot buffer of the LOD, construction-related activities will be conducted during daylight hours while the roost is not in use. If an active day roost is identified, a determination (in consultation with CDFW or a qualified bat expert) will be made regarding whether construction-related activities (i.e., noise and vibrations) can disturb roosting bats substantially. This determination will be based on baseline noise/vibrations levels, anticipated noise-levels associated with project construction, and the sensitivity to noise-disturbances of the bat species that are present. If noise is determined to result in the temporary abandonment of a day roost, construction-related activities will be scheduled to minimize the period that the roost will be subject to noise-related disturbances. If an active maternity roost is identified (the breeding season of native bat species in California generally occurs from April 1 through August 31), construction within 300 feet of the roost will be postponed or halted, at the discretion of the biological monitor, until the roost is vacated and juveniles have fledged, as determined by the biologist.

LION-1: During construction of The Old Road Bridge, any nighttime lighting necessary for work or placed around temporary work areas/laydown yards will be shielded away from the Santa Clara River. Security lights around temporarily fenced areas under or adjacent to the Santa Clara River will have motion-activated sensors, so

that they are not continually on throughout the night but only trigger if someone enters the fenced work area.

LION-2: Any permanent streetlights installed on The Old Road Bridge or along the west side of The Old Road adjacent to the Santa Clara River will be shielded, so that the light does not glare directly into native habitat in the river.

LION-3: Pending the State-listing status of mountain lion, impacts will be assessed by CDFW during the permitting process, and any necessary avoidance and minimization measures will be implemented.

VEG-1: Bridge construction activities will occur during dry portions of the year, to reduce impacts on the low-flow channel. The limits of grading and temporary work areas will be demarked with high-visibility construction exclusion fencing adjacent to areas with sensitive vegetation communities, to avoid unintentional encroachment into these sensitive areas. Signage will be posted, identifying the excluded areas as Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

VEG-2: The project will incorporate storm drain systems to facilitate meeting water quality requirements and for stormwater management, which will minimize erosion and degradation of habitat around the bridge.

VEG-3: Standard fugitive dust BMPs, and those required by a SWPPP (e.g., a water truck), will be utilized to reduce impacts of construction-generated erosion and sedimentation into the adjacent Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

VEG-4: BMPs will be implemented so that invasive plant material is not spread from the project area to other areas, during disposal off-site or from tracking seed on equipment, clothing, and shoes. Equipment/material imported from an area of invasive plants will be identified, and measures will be implemented to prevent importation and spreading of non-native plant material within the project area. All construction equipment will be cleaned thoroughly to remove dirt, seeds, vegetative material, or other debris that may contain or hold seeds of noxious weeds before arriving at and when leaving the project area. Weeds that are removed will be bagged and disposed in an authorized sanitary landfill.

VEG-5: Permanent and temporary impacts on sensitive vegetation communities will be replaced by creating or restoring habitats of similar functions and values in the BSA, or credits will be purchased through an applicable mitigation bank. Restoration will be in-kind and at a minimum 1:1 replacement ratio or other ratio, determined in consultation with the regulatory agencies. All mitigation activities will be conducted in accordance with a Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan and in consultation with USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW before the issuance of permits. The Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will outline the identification and location of areas that can be used for creation, restoration, or habitat enhancement. The plan will include a list of native plant species by habitat type, and this list may be used for on-site revegetation efforts (e.g., planting and seeding). In addition, if necessary to meet mitigation needs, the plan will identify opportunities for additional

enhancements of habitats in temporary impact areas, such as supplemental tree planting, weeding adjacent buffer habitat, or other opportunities. The enhancement opportunities will include acreage estimates of treated areas, acreage of invasive removal, and figures to show the treatment area and mapped invasive species. A habitat restoration specialist will determine the optimal areas for habitat establishment and restoration, and will prepare the Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan with details on the concept. The plan will discuss habitat restoration implementation specifically, including plant establishment methods, performance standards, the maintenance and monitoring period, and reporting. In addition, the plan will include LA County Planning in the list of regulatory agencies to consult, to determine adequate replacement ratios, to mitigate temporary and permanent impacts on sensitive vegetation communities. The minimum 1:1 replacement ratio may not be appropriate for more sensitive SEA resources.

VEG-6: As an alternative to the restoration of habitats to compensate for temporary and/or permanent removal of riparian habitats, the applicant (at the discretion of USACE and CDFW) may remove exotic plant species from the BSA in the following locations: (1) where an infestation of exotics such as giant reed occurs, so that the natural habitat functions and values are substantially degraded and at risk, and where the cover of exotics is equal to or exceeds 25% of the ground; or (2) in other areas where exotics removal will be strategic in a watershed approach to weed management, as determined by USACE and CDFW. The weed removal sites will be selected in a logical manner, so that the eradication of weeds from specific sites will contribute to the overall control of exotics in the watercourses. Removal areas will be kept free of exotic plant species for 5 years after initial treatment. In addition, native riparian vegetation will need to become established through natural colonization and, after 5 years, will need to meet the revegetation plant cover goals, established by USACE and CDFW. In addition, LA County Planning will be included among the agencies listed to consult for the removal of exotic plant species, for potential compensation for temporary and/or permanent removal of riparian habitats.

WATERS-1: LACPW will notify CDFW pursuant to Section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code. LACPW will comply with the mitigation measures detailed in the Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement issued by CDFW. LACPW also will provide compensatory mitigation for any affected stream and associated natural community.

WATERS-2: LACPW will mitigate for project impacts on streams and riparian habitat by replacing habitat at no less than a 3:1 ratio for impacts on jurisdictional features as shown in Table 2-52, except for concrete-lined Drainage A. Drainage A will be mitigated at a 1:1 ratio. CDFW considers all project impacts from sediment removal and sediment placement to be permanent. Mitigated land will support streams and riparian habitat of similar vegetation composition, density, coverage, and species richness and abundance.

OAK-1: A plan will be developed for protecting oak trees during project construction. The intent will be to install high-visibility protective fencing along the boundary of The Old Road ROW in areas adjacent to oak trees. For any oak trees outside The Old Road ROW, this plan will be prior-approved by the LA County Fire Department's Forestry Division. For any oak trees within The Old Road ROW, this plan will be prior-approved by LACPW.

Equipment damage to limbs, trunks, and roots of all remaining trees will be avoided during project construction. Even slight trunk injuries can result in susceptibility to long-term pathogenic maladies.

High-visibility protective fencing not less than 4 feet in height will be placed at the limits of The Old Road ROW, where the protective zone of any individual oak tree or dense stand of oak trees are within 200 feet of the grading limits. Oak tree high-visibility protective fencing will be in accordance with Chapter 22.176 of the LA County Code. The protective zone is defined as within the dripline of an oak tree and extending to a point at least 5 feet outside the dripline, or 15 feet from the trunk of a tree, whichever distance is greater. This fencing will be inspected before the start of project construction in the area and will remain in place until construction is completed.

OAK-2: Care will be taken to limit grade changes near the protective zone of an oak tree. Grade changes can lead to plant stress from oxygen deprivation or oak root fungus at the root collar of oaks. Minor grade changes farther from the trunk are not as critical but can negatively affect the health of the tree if not carefully monitored by a County-approved certified arborist.

- The grade will not be lowered or raised around the trunk (i.e., within the protective zone) of any oak tree without the approval of an LA County forester or LACPW (as applicable), or an LA County-certified arborist as specified in an approved oak tree permit. A certified arborist will supervise all excavation or grading within the protective zone of an oak tree.

- Trenching, excavation, or clearance of vegetation within the protective zone of an oak tree will be accomplished by use of hand tools or small handheld power tools. Any major roots encountered will be conserved to the greatest extent possible and treated as recommended by the certified arborist.

- No utility trenches will be routed within the protective zone of an oak tree unless no feasible alternative locations are available, and such action will be prior-approved by an LA County forester or LACPW, as determined appropriate.

OAK-3: The following items will guide equipment storage:

- No storage of equipment, supplies, vehicles, or debris will be permitted within the protective zone of an oak tree.

- No dumping of construction wastewater, paint, stucco, concrete, or any other cleanup waste will occur within the protective zone of an oak tree.

- No temporary structures will be placed within the protective zone of any remaining oak tree.

OAK-4: Healthy trees, if not maintained, often grow beyond their ability to support themselves and fail at their naturally occurring weakest point. This point typically is at a branch union or near the main crotch of the tree. Weight-reduction pruning and/or cabling will be part of tree maintenance and preservation program, and specifically:

- Pruning of replacement oak trees and preserved oak trees will include the removal of dead wood and stubs, and medium pruning of branches measuring 2 inches in diameter or less.

- Pruning of replacement oak trees and preserved oak trees will be in accordance with the guidelines published by the National Arborist Association. In no case will more than 25% of the overall tree canopy and 10% of the overall root mass of any oak tree be removed. After pruning, installation of support cables to prevent future main crotch failures may be necessary, based on a County-certified arborist's determination.

- All replacement oak trees will be maintained in accordance with the principles set forth in the publication, Oak Trees: Care and Maintenance (LA County Fire Department, Forestry Division 2022).

- A 5-year maintenance period will begin on the start replacement tree planting. All replacement trees failing to survive within this period will be replaced.

OAK-5: Care will be taken to avoid placing any irrigation devices within watering distance of the protected zone of oak trees. Oak trees survive and thrive on annual rainfall alone and generally do not require supplemental irrigation, except during periods of extreme drought or for establishment of newly planted trees (i.e., replacement trees):

- Irrigation water will not reach within 15 feet of any oak trunk.

- Grass and ground covers will not be planted under the canopy of any oak trees.

OAK-6: An LA County-approved arborist will evaluate the effects of mistletoe, pathogens, and insect pests on the preserved and planted oak trees within the 5-year maintenance period, in addition to the overall health and structural integrity of the trees, to ensure the longevity of the remaining oak trees.

OAK-7: Damage to remaining trees will be avoided by workers and equipment during construction activities:

- A qualified biologist or LA County-certified arborist will monitor on-site construction and grading activities occurring near all identified oak tree protection zones, to ensure that damage to oak trees does not occur.

- Before the start of construction, a qualified biologist or LA County-certified arborist will schedule a field meeting to inform construction workers where all protective zones are located and the importance of avoiding encroachment within the protective zones.

OAK-8: Replacement Trees. All oak trees that are removed will be replaced by a tree of the same species at a ratio of 2:1. All heritage trees that will be removed will be replaced at a 10:1 ratio. All replacement trees will be at least 24-inch-tall box trees and measure 1 inch or more in diameter, as measured from 1 foot above the base. Free-form trees with multiple stems will be permissible; the combined diameter of the two largest stems of such trees will measure a minimum of 1 inch in diameter, as measured from 1 foot above the base. Replacement trees will consist exclusively of indigenous oak trees and be certified as being grown from a seed source collected in LA County or Ventura County. In addition, the LA County Department of Regional Planning will be included on the list of regulatory agencies to consult for the 2:1 ratio replacement for the removal of 15 valley oak trees.

6.3 Cultural Resources

As discussed in Section 2.2.12 of the Final EIR, based on the results of the HRER (AECOM 2023e) and the HPSR (AECOM 2023f), eight built-environment resources were identified within the APE. Of these eight resources, three were previously determined ineligible for the NRHP (i.e., The Old Road over Santa Clara River Bridge [P-19-190315], The Old Road Bridge over the SPT Co. [CA53C0328], and the Route 5/SR-126 Separation Bridge [CA532928]), and four resources (P-19-186567, PD-1 concrete culvert, P-19-186541, Valencia Water Reclamation Plant) were determined ineligible for listing in the NRHP based on the current studies. One resource, the SPRR SBL/SPB is assumed eligible for the proposed project; however, the section of the SPRR SBL/SPB that is within the APE is not eligible as a contributing element. Therefore, no previously recorded historic properties will be affected by the proposed project.

The ASR (AECOM 2023g), XPI investigation (AECOM 2024c), and the Supplemental ASR/XPI (AECOM 2024a, 2024c) determined that the project area exhibits archaeological sensitivity, but the potential to encounter intact archaeological deposits would be low. With implementation of the AMMs discussed in Section 2.2.10, the impact on unanticipated discoveries would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

As discussed in Section 2.2.10, the ASR (AECOM 2023g) determined that no significant unique archaeological resources have been previously recorded in the APE. Although a low potential would exist to encounter previously unrecorded archaeological resources, implementation of AMMs CR-1, CR-2, and CR-3 would further reduce the potential for impacts on archaeological resources during construction. Therefore, the impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

The interested parties outreach conducted in 2018 and reported in the 2023 HPSR (AECOM 2023f) indicated that the possible remains of a 1928 St. Francis Dam Disaster victim were identified near the river in proximity to Castaic Junction. However, there are no formal

cemeteries or known burial sites in the proposed project area and the proposed project construction is not expected to disturb any human remains. AMM CR-3 would further reduce the potential for the disturbance of human remains and provides guidance in the event that any human remains are discovered during construction. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

6.3.1 Findings

LACPW finds that the following mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potentially significant cultural resources.

CR-1: All workers will participate in a Worker Environmental Awareness Program for cultural resources. Sign-in sheets will be maintained to document completion of the program by each worker. This training can be administered in-person by or under the supervision of, a Secretary of the Interior (SOI) qualified archaeologist or through screening of a video/slide presentation, prepared by an SOI-qualified archaeologist and overseen by an on-site manager. Contractor education will include the legal framework protecting cultural resources, typical kinds of cultural resources that may be found during project construction, artifacts that would be considered potentially significant, and proper procedures and notifications if cultural resources are discovered. The training will review types of cultural resources and artifacts that would be considered potentially significant to support operator recognition of these materials during construction. Native American tribe(s) traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area will be given the opportunity to participate in the cultural resource training, to provide project personnel with tribal perspectives on working in areas sensitive for tribal cultural resources.

CR-2: If cultural materials are discovered during construction, all earth-moving activity within 60 feet of the find will be diverted until an SOI-qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find and, if necessary, develop appropriate treatment measures.

CR-3: If human remains are discovered, Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code states that further disturbances and activities will cease in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains, and the County Coroner will be contacted. For the proposed project, work in the immediate vicinity (within a 100-foot buffer of the find) will cease in the event that human remains and/or funerary object(s) are encountered.

6.4 Geology and Soils (Paleontological Resources)

As discussed in Section 2.3.4 of the Final EIR/EA, no known recorded fossil locations are within 1 mile of the project area. However, project construction could have direct or indirect effects on paleontological resources, particularly at a depth where drilling or augering takes place, as well as from any ground disturbance in old terrace sediments that are mapped as Qog.

However, AMM PAL-1 would be implemented to reduce the impact, which would require implementation of a Paleontological Resources Monitoring and Mitigation Plan before construction-related excavations. In addition, in the event of an inadvertent discovery of paleontological resources, AMM PAL-2 would be implemented to reduce the potential for an

impact on unknown, buried paleontological resources. AMM PAL-2 would require appropriate training for on-site construction crews regarding discovery or observations of paleontological resources in locations where the potential exists for them. Therefore, the impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

6.4.1 Findings

LACPW finds that the following mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potentially significant geology and soils impacts related paleontological resources to a less than significant level.

PAL-1: Paleontological Resources Monitoring and Mitigation Plan: Before construction-related excavations, a qualified paleontologist meeting the 2010 Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards will be retained to develop a Paleontological Resources Monitoring and Mitigation Plan (PRIMMP). The plan will address qualifications of paleontological monitors and will stipulate that the qualified paleontologist and the paleontological resource monitors be empowered to stop excavation activity to investigate or safely remove possible fossils. The plan will incorporate the findings of the project's geotechnical report and construction plans to formulate what construction activities will be monitored, and the plan will include wet screening of boring or drilling spoils. Many paleontological mitigation efforts have recovered significant paleontological resources, especially microvertebrate fossils, from screening of such spoils. The plan also will address unexpected discoveries of paleontological resources.

PAL-2: Paleontological Monitoring and Mitigation of Impacts from Construction. A qualified paleontologist will attend the preconstruction meeting and present a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) to the project construction personnel. The Worker Environmental Awareness Program training will discuss the types of fossils that potentially may be uncovered during project excavations, laws protecting paleontological resources, and appropriate actions to be taken when fossils are discovered. A qualified paleontologist will oversee that the PRIMMP instructions are implemented. A qualified paleontologist will produce a final paleontological monitoring report that discusses the paleontological monitoring program, any paleontological discoveries, and the preparation, curation, and accessioning of any fossils into a suitable paleontological repository.

6.5 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

The proposed project would involve the transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials for construction of the proposed project (e.g., fuels, paints, asphalt, and lubricants). Per Section 2.3.5 of the Final EIR/EA, the proposed project would comply with all applicable federal, State, and local regulations, and this would reduce the potential for incidents involving hazardous materials. The project area is not in a location that is included on the list of hazardous materials sites, compiled pursuant to Section 65962 of the California Government Code. However, 24 accidental spills/incidents were identified along the project corridor, but they have not been identified as RECs. In addition, two plugged and abandoned oil/gas wells were identified in and adjacent to the project area, one of them being within the SB lanes of The Old Road. This well was plugged and abandoned in 1968 and was not identified in an April 2023 geophysical survey.

In addition, as noted in the Aerial Deposited Lead Survey (Leighton Consulting 2023) that was completed for the proposed project, no soils investigated during the survey were characterized as RCRA hazardous waste, with the exception of soil in the vicinity of borings B97 and B103. AMMs would be implemented for the excavation and transport of soils to an approved disposal facility, and the soil within the remainder of the phase 2 project limits would be considered nonhazardous/unrestricted or suitable for re-use onsite.

The recommendations outlined in the Initial Site Assessment (AECOM 2023g) would be followed to avoid and/or minimize impacts associated with hazardous materials, as listed as AMMs HAZ-1 through HAZ-15. Therefore, the impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

6.5.1 Findings

LACPW finds that the following mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potentially significant impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials to a less than significant level.

HAZ-1: If the plugged oil/gas well within the central portion of the project area is disturbed during project construction, it will be re-abandoned in accordance with current CalGEM regulations. In addition, because of the informal agreement between CalGEM and LACPW's Environmental Programs Division, a gas mitigation plan will be obtained and submitted to CalGEM..

HAZ-2: Crude oil/liquid petroleum pipelines run along The Old Road in the project area. If the pipelines are exposed and/or relocated, impacts on the subsurface may be encountered. Impacts on the subsurface that are discovered from these pipelines and any repairs to the pipelines will be the responsibility of the pipeline owner.

HAZ-3: The proposed project includes upgrades to traffic signal equipment and relocation/installation of traffic pole standards and traffic signal equipment as necessary because of new lane configurations, which may generate universal wastes and electronic wastes (E-wastes). Universal wastes and E-wastes generated as part of the proposed project will be disposed appropriately, in accordance with applicable regulations.

HAZ-4: Aerially deposited lea (ADL) may be present in the unpaved areas adjacent to roadways, which, if disturbed, will be evaluated to ensure worker safety. If excavated/excess soils are transported from the project area, they will be sampled and handled in accordance with applicable regulations to protect worker safety and for classification. The potential presence of ADL will be addressed during the Plan, Specifications, and Estimates phase and will be handled in accordance with LACPW Special Provisions. A Lead Compliance Plan under LACPW Special Provisions will be required during construction when handling lead-contaminated soils.

HAZ-5: The proposed project includes the replacement of two bridges (over Santa Clara River and the abandoned UPRR tracks). Demolition of the two existing bridges will be subject to the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants regulations. The regulations require notification to the delegated air district before demolition of concrete structures, regardless of whether asbestos is detected. The regulations require that an ACM Survey be conducted, and that the survey

report be part of the notification submittal to the regulatory agency. The ACM survey will be conducted by a Certified Asbestos Consultant (CAC), and samples will be collected from concrete, brown fibrous expansion joint fill material, and other materials that the CAC suspects to contain asbestos.

HAZ-6: Suspect lead-based paint associated with painted curbs, poles, protective bollards, and fire hydrants in the project area, including railings, fencing, metal beams, and other exposed metal elements associated with the bridges will be sampled and handled in accordance with applicable regulations to protect worker safety and for classification. The removal and testing of bridge paint and pavement markings, including painted curbs, will be managed during construction under specific LACPW Special Provisions. A Lead Compliance Plan under LACPW Special Provisions will be required during construction when removing lead-based paint, thermoplastics, painted traffic stripes, and/or pavement markings.

HAZ-7: Thermoplastic paint and yellow-painted traffic stripes/pavement markings, which typically contain lead chromate, have been used for marking in the project area (roadway and curbs), and these markings will require special removal, handling, and disposal. The removal and testing of all thermoplastic paint and pavement markings will be managed during construction in accordance with LACPW Special Provisions.

HAZ-8: Utility relocations will be performed at several intersections because of widening of The Old Road and for bridge improvements. Reconstruction of drainage facilities and catch basins and construction of new drainage facilities and catch basins will be conducted, as needed. Dewatering activities will not be part of the utility relocations in the project area.

HAZ-9: If soil in the area of the abandoned UPRR railroad tracks and Multi-Use Trail extension is excavated and off-site disposal is necessary, the soil will be sampled and analyzed for the potential presence of petroleum hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), metals, herbicides, and pesticides. During construction, soil excavations that are conducted on site will be monitored for visible soil staining and odor. Affected soil will be disposed off-site in accordance with applicable local, State, and federal regulatory guidelines.

HAZ-10: TWW (e.g., utility poles, roadside wooden signposts, metal-beam guardrail posts, former railroad ties) will be handled appropriately, in accordance with applicable regulations and may require special removal, handling, and disposal. All TWW will be managed during construction in accordance with LACPW Special Provisions if TWW is generated.

HAZ-11: When contractors are working in the project area and removing soil and/or groundwater, they will be trained to be aware of appropriate handling and disposal methods or options. Higher levels of potential contaminants may be present at some locations; therefore, material to be moved or removed may require individual or specific testing to verify that it is at levels below regulatory action limits.

HAZ-12: Construction of the bridge piles may encounter groundwater, based on the 1997 Seismic Hazard Report for the Newhall Quadrangle. Therefore, the slurry displacement method of construction will be used and will be specified in Section B of the bridge specifications. After groundwater is encountered, drilling slurry will be placed in the hole to an elevation of 10 feet above the groundwater. As drilling progresses, drilling slurry will be added to the hole to maintain the same elevation of 10 feet above the groundwater. The slurry displacement method will contain any debris with concrete barriers and plastic sheeting. Groundwater is not anticipated from the slurry displacement method of construction, and any debris will be placed into Baker tanks.

HAZ-13: Section 4216 of the California Government Code requires that any operator or excavator will call Underground Services Alert of California ("DigAlert") 2 working days before any planned excavation, by dialing 811. Delineation of the proposed excavation area will be mandatory. The area to be excavated will be marked with water-soluble or chalk-based white paint on paved surfaces, or with other suitable markings such as flags or stakes on unpaved areas, before calling DigAlert.

HAZ-14: A site-specific Health and Safety Plan will be prepared, consistent with LACPW Special Provisions requirements. The Health and Safety Plan will include identification of key personnel; a summary of risk assessment for workers, the community, and the environment; an air monitoring plan; and an emergency response plan.

HAZ-15: As is the case for any project that proposes excavation, the potential exists for unknown hazardous contamination to be revealed during project construction. For any previously unknown hazardous wastes/materials encountered during construction, the procedures outlined in LACPW Special Provisions and Procedures will be followed and implemented during construction activities, as well as SCAQMD Rule 1166 and SCAQMD Rule 1466.

HAZ-16: During construction activities, all relevant BMPs will be implemented, including temporary construction site BMPs and the regulatory permit compliance component for the State's Construction General Permit for applicability of an SWPPP (based in part on the disturbed soil areas, shown on the phased plans) and compliance with the County's MS4 NPDES permit as well as adherence to the County's Construction Site BMP Manual and SWPPP preparation manual.

6.6 Hydrology and Water Quality

The proposed project would have the potential to affect water quality during construction, through soil disturbance, exposing it to erosion and the release of pollutants, such as sediment/turbidity, metals, oil and grease, and debris. As discussed in Section 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 of the Final EIR/EA, with implementation of construction-phase BMPs in compliance with the Construction General Permit, the potential for degradation of surface or groundwater quality would be reduced.

The approximately 43.1-acre increase in impervious surface as part of the proposed project would not be anticipated to reduce groundwater recharge in the project area. The increase in

impervious surface area would be insignificant in comparison to the watershed area of the Santa Clara River at The Old Road Bridge crossing. In addition, implementation of design measures and BMPs (e.g., bioswales) would minimize potential effects from the increase in impervious surface.

The proposed project would not significantly impact existing drainage patterns or exceed the capacity of existing stormwater drainage systems. The proposed drainage system would connect to the existing drainage system and would improve stormwater drainage and runoff treatment. Compliance with the standard requirements of the Construction General Permit and LA County's Municipal Permit for potential short-term and long-term impacts would be required. AMMs WQ-1 and WQ-2 would be implemented to minimize impacts on hydrology and water quality. The impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

6.6.1 Findings

LACPW finds that the following mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potentially significant impacts related to hydrology and water quality to a less than significant level.

WQ-1: In accordance with the Construction General Permit, Order WQ 2022-0057-DWQ, NPDES NO. CAS000002, an SWPPP will be prepared and implemented to address all construction-related activities, equipment, and materials that will have the potential to affect water quality. The SWPPP will identify the sources of pollutants that may affect the quality of stormwater; include construction site BMPs to control pollutants and sediment; and provide for construction materials management and non-stormwater BMPs. All construction site BMPs will follow the latest edition of the LACPW Construction Site BMP Manual, to control and minimize the impacts of construction-related activities, materials, and pollutants on the watershed. These BMPs will include temporary sediment controls, temporary soil stabilization, scheduling management, waste management, materials handling, and other non-stormwater BMPs.

WQ-2: In compliance with Municipal Permit Order No. R4-2021-0105 requirements, a final project-specific Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan will be prepared.

Bioswales will be constructed in roadway medians to provide water quality treatment in addition to conveying stormwater runoff. The bioswales will provide pollutant removal through settling and filtration in the vegetation lining the channels, and they also will provide the opportunity for volume reduction through infiltration and evapotranspiration.

Disturbed soil areas, including slopes, will be reseeded using a California native plant seed blend. An erosion control seed mix (hydroseed) will be applied on all select material areas and slopes flatter than 1:1. Erosion control (bonded fiber matrix) will be applied on all cut slopes steeper than 1:1. As vegetation establishes in disturbed areas and cut slopes stabilize, the potential for suspended sediments coming from the project area into receiving waters gradually will be reduced.

6.7 Public Services (Fire and Police Protection)

During construction, temporary impacts on traffic are anticipated because of possible lane closures and detours. However, as discussed in Section 2.2.7, avoidance and minimization COM-2 through COM-4 would be implemented to reduce or eliminate temporary effects on emergency services. In addition, as stated in AMM COM-5, coordination would occur with utility service providers, and a public outreach program would be implemented to minimize impacts on surrounding communities. Thus, impacts on public services, including police and fire protection, would minimal. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause existing public services to provide additional services or create new associated facilities. The impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

6.7.1 Findings

LACPW finds that the following mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potentially significant public services resources impacts related to fire and police protection, a less than significant level.

COM-2: Provision will be made for motorist information (i.e., existing changeable message signs [CMSs], portable CMSs, stationary ground mounted signs).

COM-3: To the extent possible, incorporation of traffic circulation construction strategies will be implemented (i.e., lane closure restrictions during holidays and special local events, closure of secondary streets during construction to allow quick construction and reopening, lane modification to maintain the number of lanes needed, allowing night work and extended weekend work, maintaining business access, and maintaining pedestrian and bicycle access).

COM-4: Implementation of alternate and detour routes strategies, and street/intersection improvements will occur (e.g., widening, pavement rehabilitation, removal of median), to provide added capacity to handle detour traffic; signal improvements; make adjustments in signal timing, and/or signal coordination to increase vehicle throughput, improve traffic flow, and optimize intersection capacity; set restrictions at intersections and roadways necessary to reduce congestion and improve safety; and enforce parking restrictions on alternate and detour routes during work hours to increase capacity, reduce traffic conflicts, and improve access.

COM-5: Close coordination will occur with utility service providers and emergency service providers, and a public outreach program will be implemented to minimize impacts on surrounding communities.

6.8 Transportation (Emergency Access)

The proposed project would not alter the alignment of The Old Road or any other roadways. However, temporary impacts on traffic would occur during project construction. As discussed in Section 2.2.7, AMMs COM-2 through COM-4 would be implemented to reduce or eliminate the temporary effects on traffic and emergency services. Current traffic demand in the project area meets or exceeds roadway capacity for many arterial roadways. The Old Road and adjacent roadway system in the project area are used heavily and are characterized by roadway congestion. After it becomes operational, the proposed project would improve traffic flow, and

therefore would enhance emergency access in the area. Thus, the impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

6.8.1 Findings

LACPW finds that AMMs COM-2 through COM-4 mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potentially significant transportation impacts related to emergency access, to a less than significant level.

6.9 Tribal Cultural Resources

Tribal cultural resources may include, but are not limited to, archaeological resources. As discussed in Section 2.2.10 of the Final EIR, the ASR (AECOM 2023g) determined that no precontact archaeological resources have been recorded previously in the APE. In addition, the ASR (AECOM 2023g) and XPI investigation (AECOM 2023) determined that the proposed project does exhibit archaeological sensitivity and would have a low potential to encounter intact archaeological deposits. These findings were supported by the Supplemental ASR/XPI (AECOM 2024b, 2024c).

Based on AB 52 consultation results, the proposed project would have the potential to impact previously unknown tribal cultural resources. Implementation of AMMs TCR-1, TCR-2, TCR-3, and TCR-4, developed through AB 52 consultation, would reduce the potential for impacts on tribal cultural resources during project construction. In addition, TCR-4 would further reduce the potential for the disturbance of human remains and provides guidance in the event that any human remains are discovered during construction.

6.9.1 Findings

LACPW finds that the following mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potentially significant impacts related to tribal cultural resources to a less than significant level.

TCR-1: Any and all archaeological documents created as a part of the project (e.g., isolate records, site records, survey reports, testing reports, monitoring reports) shall be provided to consulting tribes upon request.

TCR-2: The project applicant shall retain a professional Tribal Monitor, procured by the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians to observe the following ground-disturbing activities from the project limits at Henry Mayo Drive to the northernmost drainage improvement: grading, excavating, digging, or similar activity. Tribal monitoring services will continue until confirmation is received from the project applicant, in writing, that all scheduled activities pertaining to Tribal Monitoring are complete. If the project's scheduled ground-disturbing activities require intermittent Tribal Monitoring, notification shall be submitted to the consulting Tribe in writing with 5 days' notice (if possible) prior to the start of scheduled ground disturbing activities. If TCRs are encountered, the Tribal Monitor will have the authority to request that ground-disturbing activities cease within 60 feet of the discovery, and an SOI-qualified archaeologist retained by the project applicant as well as the Tribal Monitor shall assess the find.

TCR-3: The Lead Agency and/or project applicant shall, in good faith, consult with consulting tribes on the disposition and treatment of any TCRs encountered during all ground-disturbing activities.

TCR-4: If human remains and/or funerary object(s) are encountered during any activities associated with the project, work in the immediate vicinity (within a 100-foot buffer of the find) shall cease and the County Coroner shall be contacted pursuant to Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, which shall be enforced for the duration of the project. In accordance with Public Resources Colde, Section 5097.98, the subsequent disposition of those discoveries shall be decided by the Most Likely Descendant, as determined by the NAHC, should those discoveries be determined as Native American in origin.

6.10 Wildfire (Evacuation Plans)

Current traffic demand in the project area meets or exceeds roadway capacity for many arterial roadways. The Old Road and adjacent roadway system in the project area is heavily used and characterized by roadway congestion. The proposed improvements would enhance safety and increase capacity on these roadways and would provide for emergency overflow.

The proposed project would not cause any permanent road closures but would cause temporary lane closures during construction. However, as discussed in Section 2.2.7 of the Final EIR/EA, AMMs COM-2 through COM-4 would be implemented to reduce or eliminate the temporary effects on traffic and emergency services. In addition, although the project area is susceptible to wildfire risks, standard construction practices and regulatory safety compliance measures would reduce the risks. The impact would be reduced to a less-than-significant level with mitigation incorporated.

6.10.1 Findings

LACPW finds that AMMs COM-2 through COM-4 mitigation measures shall be implemented to reduce potentially significant wild fire impacts related to evacuation plans, to a less than significant level.

Chapter 7 **Findings of Significant Environmental Effects**

There are no findings of significant environmental effects.

Chapter 8 **Findings of Mitigation Monitoring and Report Program**

Pursuant to Section 15091 (a)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines, LACPW finds that implementation of the avoidance, minimization, and/ or mitigation measures (AMMs) specified in the Final EIR/EA would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects resulting from the implementation of the Proposed Project. These AMMs have been required in or incorporated into the Proposed Project. In accordance with Section 15091 (d), and Section 15097 of the CEQA Guidelines, which require a public agency to adopt a program for reporting or monitoring required changes or conditions of approval to substantially lessen significant environmental effects, the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, or ECR (Appendix C) provided in the Final EIR/EA is hereby adopted as the mitigation monitoring and reporting program for this Proposed Project.

Chapter 9 Findings of Changes of the Draft EIR/EA and Recirculation

9.1 Changes to the Draft EIR

In response to comments from the public and other public agencies, the Proposed Project has incorporated changes subsequent to publication of the Draft EIR. All of the changes to the Draft EIR/EA are discussed in Appendix G, Clarifications and Modifications, in the Final EIR/EA.

9.2 Findings Regarding the Final EIR

Pursuant to CEQA, on the basis of the review and consideration of the Final EIR, LACPW finds:

1. Factual corrections and minor changes have been set forth as clarifications and modifications to the Draft EIR;

2. The factual corrections and minor changes to the Draft EIR are not substantial changes in the Draft EIR that would deprive the public of a meaningful opportunity to comment on a substantial adverse environmental effect of the Proposed Project, a feasible way to mitigate or avoid such an effect, or a feasible project alternative;

3. The factual corrections and minor changes to the Draft EIR will not result in new significant environmental effects or substantially increase the severity of the previously identified significant effects disclosed in the Draft EIR;

4. The factual corrections and minor changes in the Draft EIR will not involve mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the Draft EIR that would substantially reduce one or more significant effect on the environment; and

5. The factual corrections and minor changes to the Draft EIR do not render the Draft EIR so fundamentally inadequate and conclusory in nature that meaningful public review and comment would be precluded.

Thus, none of the conditions set forth in CEQA requiring recirculation of a Draft EIR/EA have been met. Incorporation of the factual corrections and minor changes to the Draft EIR/EA into the Final EIR/EA does not require the Final EIR/EA be circulated for public comment.

Chapter 10 Statement of Overriding Considerations

No statements of overriding consideration are necessary for this Project.