

# **Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project**

**Project Number C4-0065**

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA  
Federal Project No.: BRLS-5956 (231)  
Federal Br. No. 56C-0020

## **Final Initial Study with Negative Declaration**



**Prepared for:**  
**County of Riverside Transportation Department**  
**3525 14th Street**  
**Riverside, CA 92501**

**Prepared by:**  
**Dokken Engineering**  
**110 Blue Ravine Road, Suite 200**  
**Folsom, CA 95630**



**May 2023**

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, large print, on audiocassette, or computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to County of Riverside, Attn: David Castro, 3525 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Riverside, CA 92501, phone number (951) 955-9719.

## General Information about this Document

### What's in this document:

The County of Riverside Transportation Department (County) has prepared this Initial Study, which examines the potential environmental impacts of the Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement (Project) located in Riverside County, California. This IS/ND examines the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project located in the City of Coachella in eastern Coachella Valley, Riverside County. The County is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The document describes the Project being proposed, the existing environment that could be affected by the Project, the potential impacts from the Project, and the proposed avoidance and minimization measures.

The draft Initial Study with proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration was circulated for public review and comment from March 17, 2023 to April 17, 2023. A public workshop was held on March 29, 2023, at the John Kelley Elementary School in the community of Thermal, between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to discuss and answer any questions regarding the project. In addition to the public workshop, the public was offered the opportunity to request a public hearing regarding the project; however, a public hearing was not held as it was not requested during public circulation of the draft environmental document. Comment letters were received on the draft document. All comments and the responses to the comments received on the circulated document are shown in Appendix F, Response to Public Comments, which has been added since the draft. No significant changes were made since the draft document circulation.

### What happens next:

The proposed project has completed all required environmental compliance under CEQA with public circulation of this document and filing of the Notice of Determination with the Office of Planning and Research — State Clearinghouse. Once funding is appropriated, the County, in coordination with City of Coachella and Caltrans, can design and construct all or part of the project.

This document can also be accessed electronically at the following website:

- <https://rcprojects.org/airportboulevardbridgereplacement>

# Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project

Riverside County, California

## INITIAL STUDY with Negative Declaration

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

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE  
Transportation Department

5/30/23  
Date of Approval

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jan Bulinski  
Environmental Project Manager  
County of Riverside Transportation Department



## Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

<b>Project Proponent:</b>	County of Riverside Transportation Department 3525 14 <sup>th</sup> Street Riverside, CA 92501
<b>Project Title:</b>	Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement
<b>Project Location:</b>	The Airport Boulevard Bridge is located in the community of Thermal, in the County of Riverside, California. The Airport Boulevard Bridge is over the Whitewater River (Federal Br. No. 56C-0020).
<b>Project Description:</b>	The County of Riverside (County) in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and City of Coachella (City) proposes to replace the existing Airport Boulevard Bridge over the Whitewater River (Federal Br. No. 56C-0020) with a new, wider, 2 lane bridge and reconstruct the connecting approach roadways to meet current Caltrans seismic design codes. The project would raise the bridge profile by approximately 2-3 feet in order to maintain a minimum freeboard from the flood water. The project may also include minor retaining walls in order to maintain access to the existing mobile home community on the south side of Airport Boulevard. Roadway improvements also include transition pavement to the existing grade separation structure to the west and improvement of the intersection at Orange Street and Airport Boulevard. The project will also provide sidewalk improvements on the south side of the new bridge as well as accommodate future connectivity to the Coachella Valley Link Trail, which is anticipated to connect to Airport Boulevard along the unnamed local road in the northwestern quadrant of the project. Depending on the project design, utility relocations may be required.
<b>Findings:</b>	Pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County has determined that a Negative Declaration is the appropriate environmental document for the proposed Project. This Initial Study examines the environmental impacts of the Project. The Project will not result in any potentially significant impacts with the inclusion of the proposed avoidance and minimization measures, which reduce potential adverse impacts to less than significant levels. Therefore, the County has prepared a Negative Declaration with avoidance and minimization measures in accordance with the provisions of CEQA.
<b>Avoidance and Minimization Measures</b>	A list of all Avoidance and Minimization measures to be implemented for this project has been included below. These measures are also included in Sections I through XXI of this Initial Study, and in Appendix A (Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program). No Mitigation Measures are required to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant.

	<p><u>Avoidance and Minimization Measures</u></p> <p><b>VIS-1:</b> Lighting will be appropriately shielded. The Project’s lighting design must be consistent with the City of Coachella and Riverside County lighting guidelines and standards.</p> <p><b>VIS-2:</b> All disturbed areas including staging of vehicles and equipment will be restored to pre-construction contours and if applicable/appropriate, revegetated, either through hydroseeding or other means, with native species.</p> <p><b>VIS-3:</b> Concrete surfaces associated with the bridge will be heavily textured to discourage graffiti and minimize recurring maintenance activities associated with graffiti removal. Additionally, concrete surfaces will be aesthetically treated or stained natural colors to be more compatible with the surrounding environment.</p> <p><b>VIS-4:</b> As feasible the barrier/bridge rail fence shall be powder or vinyl color coated to meet aesthetic needs and to minimize glare.</p> <p><b>AQ-1:</b> The contractor shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations related to air quality, including air pollution control district and air quality management district regulations and local ordinances.</p> <p><b>AQ-2:</b> The contractor shall control dust by applying either water or dust palliative, or both.</p> <p><b>AQ-3:</b> The construction contractor shall implement control measures to reduce emissions of NO<sub>x</sub>, ROG, and PM<sub>10</sub>. The contractor shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize idling time to 5 minutes when construction equipment is not in use, unless per engine manufacturer’s specifications or for safety reasons more time is required.</li> <li>• To the extent practicable, manage operation of heavy-duty equipment to reduce emissions such as maintaining heavy-duty earthmoving, stationary and mobile equipment in optimum running conditions.</li> <li>• Use electric equipment when feasible.</li> <li>• Properly maintain equipment according to manufacturers’ specifications.</li> </ul> <p><b>AQ-4:</b> Implement dust suppression measures as applicable from South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rules and Regulations, Rule 403 Fugitive Dust and</p>
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	<p>Caltrans Standard Specifications for Construction, Sections 10 and 18 (Dust Control).</p> <p><b>BIO-1:</b> Project-related debris, spoils, and trash will be contained and removed to a proper waste disposal facility.</p> <p><b>BIO-2:</b> Equipment, vehicles, and materials staged and stored in right-of-way will be situated in previously paved or previously disturbed areas only.</p> <p><b>BIO-3:</b> If Project activities cannot be avoided during the bird breeding season (January 15th to September 30th), a preconstruction nesting bird clearance survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for avian species no more than three days prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities to determine the presence of nesting birds. The surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate time(s) of day. If an active avian nest is located, the bird shall be identified to species and a “no construction” buffer (up to 500 feet) shall be established in accordance with the guidelines provided in the CVMSHCP and the sensitivity of the species. The “no-construction” buffer shall remain in place until nesting has ceased or the young have fledged. The qualified biologist shall monitor the nest to ensure that impacts to nesting birds do not occur.</p> <p><b>CR-1:</b> If a significant archaeological resource(s) or tribal cultural resource is discovered on the property, ground disturbing activities shall be suspended 60 feet around the resource(s). An archaeologist, who meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for an archaeologist, shall assess the discovery, and if the discovery involves Native American resources a representative of the concerned tribe(s) shall be contracted to assess significance. The archaeologist, a representative of the appropriate Native American Tribe(s), and the County of Riverside shall confer regarding mitigation of the discovered resource(s). Work shall not resume in the area until mitigation has been completed or it has been determined that the archaeological resource(s) is not significant.</p> <p><b>CR-2:</b> Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code and Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code protect Native American burials, skeletal remains and grave goods, regardless of age and provide method and means for the appropriate handling of such remains. If human remains are encountered, work should halt in that vicinity and the county coroner should be notified immediately. At the same time, an archaeologist should be contacted to evaluate the situation. If the human remains are of Native American</p>
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	<p>origin, the coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours of such identification, which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). With the permission of the landowner or his/her authorized representative, the MLD may inspect the site of the discovery. The MLD shall complete the inspection within 48 hours of notification by the NAHC. The MLD may recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials. Further provisions of Public Resource Code (PRC) 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.</p> <p><b>GEO-1:</b> A pre-construction paleontological sensitivity training will be provided to construction personnel. This training will be based on the Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 14-7 "Paleontological Resources."</p> <p><b>GEO-2:</b> If any suspected paleontological resources (fossils) are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, the construction supervisor shall halt work within a 60-foot radius around the find and establish an exclusionary buffer. Construction personnel shall not collect or move any suspected paleontological materials or further disturb any soils within the exclusionary buffer, but construction activity may continue unimpeded on other portions of the project site. Construction activity shall not resume within the exclusionary buffer until a qualified paleontologist can assess the significance of the find. If the paleontologist determines the find is not a paleontological resource, no further evaluation is required and work can resume. However, if the paleontologist determines the find is a paleontological resource, construction activity shall not resume within the exclusionary buffer in order to assess its significance pursuant to CEQA. If the find is determined to be significant, it shall be collected from the field and the paleontologist shall make recommendations for monitoring, curation, and reporting.</p> <p><b>HAZ-1:</b> As is the case for any Project that proposes excavation, the potential exists for unknown hazardous contamination to be revealed during Project construction. Contaminated soils can be encountered at any depth of excavation. If soils contaminated by hazardous waste are discovered during construction, proper hazardous waste handling and emergency procedures under 40 CFR § 262 and Division 4.5 of Title 22 CA Code of Regulations shall be followed. The specific methods and protocol for determining if a soil is contaminated are contained in the Caltrans Hazardous Procedures for Construction.</p>
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	<p><b>HAZ-2:</b> Any leaking transformers observed during the course of the Project should be considered a potential polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) hazard. A detailed inspection of individual electrical transformers was not conducted for this Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. However, should leaks from electrical transformers (that will either remain within the construction limits or will require removal and/or relocation) be encountered during construction, the transformer fluid should be sampled and analyzed by qualified personnel for detectable levels of PCB's. Should PCBs be detected, the transformer should be removed and disposed of in accordance with Title 22, Division 4.5 of the California Code of Regulations and any other appropriate regulatory agency. Any stained soil encountered below electrical transformers with detectable levels of PCB's should also be handled and disposed of in accordance with Title 22, Division 4.5 of the California Code of Regulations and any other appropriate regulatory agency.</p> <p><b>HAZ-3:</b> Any chemically treated wood must be treated as Treated Wood Waste (TWW) and disposed of as hazardous waste. For the TWW, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) regulations §66261.9.5 provide alternative management standards (AMS) for TWW. Caltrans 2018 Special Standard Provision (SSP) for TWW, SSP 14-11.14, is based on DTSCs AMS regulations. This SSP directs the Contractor to follow the AMS including providing training to all personnel that may come in contact with TWW. This training must include, at a minimum, safe handling, sorting and segregating, storage, labeling (including date), and proper disposal methods.</p> <p><b>HAZ-4:</b> If no prior assessment of asbestos in the existing Airport Boulevard Bridge is conducted as part of the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) channel lining project, a Site Investigation is recommended for Asbestos Containing Material (ACMs) in the existing bridge that will be disturbed during construction. This investigation should be implemented before construction and documented as part of the Phase II ISA.</p> <p><b>WQ-1:</b> The proposed Project would require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit (CGP) for Discharges of storm water associated with construction activities (Construction General Permit 2012-0006-DWQ). The construction contractor shall adhere to the State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ NPDES Permit pursuant to Section 402 of the CWA. This permit authorizes storm water and authorized non-storm</p>
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	<p>water discharges from construction activities. As part of this Permit requirement, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be prepared prior to construction consistent with the requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). This SWPPP will incorporate all applicable Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure that adequate measures are taken during construction to minimize impacts to water quality.</p> <p><b>WQ-2:</b> To conform with water quality requirements in the CGP, the following will be implemented during construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicle maintenance, staging and storing equipment, materials, fuels, lubricants, solvents, and other possible contaminants must be a minimum of 50 feet from surface waters. Any necessary equipment washing must occur where the water cannot flow into surface waters.</li> <li>• The Project specifications will require the contractor to operate under an approved spill prevention and clean-up plan;</li> <li>• Construction equipment will not be operated in flowing water;</li> <li>• Raw cement, concrete or concrete washings, asphalt, paint or other coating material, oil or other petroleum products, or any other substances that could be hazardous to aquatic life must be prevented from contaminating the soil or entering surface waters;</li> <li>• Equipment used in and around surface waters must be in good working order and free of dripping or leaking contaminants; and,</li> <li>• Any concrete rubble, asphalt, or other debris from construction must be taken to an approved disposal site.</li> </ul> <p><b>WQ-3:</b> Prior to the start of construction activities, the Project limits in proximity to jurisdictional waters must be marked with high visibility Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) fencing or staking to ensure construction will not further encroach into jurisdictional waters.</p> <p><b>WQ-4:</b> Contract specifications will include the following BMPs, where applicable, to reduce erosion during construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing vegetation will be protected in place where feasible to provide an effective form of erosion and sediment control;</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a permanent BMP, slope roughening by equipment tracking will be implemented to create unevenness on bare soil. Surface roughening reduces erosion potential by decreasing runoff velocities, trapping sediment, and increasing water infiltration.</li> </ul> <p><b>TRA-1:</b> Temporary impacts to traffic flow as a result of construction activities would be minimized through construction phasing and signage and a traffic management plan.</p> <p><b>TRBL-1:</b> In the event that human remains are discovered during construction at any time all construction activity shall immediately be halted within 60 feet of the discovery until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.</p> <p><u>Mitigation Measures</u></p> <p>No significant impacts have been identified requiring mitigation; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.</p>
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A copy of the IS/ND is available at the County of Riverside Transportation Department website:

- <https://rcprojects.org/airportboulevardbridgereplacement>

*Jan Bulinski*  
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 Jan Bulinski  
 Environmental Project Manager  
 County of Riverside Transportation Department

5/30/23  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

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## List of Technical Studies (Bound Under Separate Cover)

Historic Property Survey Report/Archaeological Survey Report (Not For Public Distribution)  
 Initial Site Assessment for Hazardous Waste  
 Location Hydraulic Study  
 Natural Environment Study  
 Paleontological Memorandum  
 Visual Impact Assessment – Minor Level  
 Water Quality Assessment Report

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## **Project Description**

The County of Riverside (County) in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and City of Coachella (City) proposes to replace the existing Airport Boulevard Bridge over the Whitewater River (Federal Br. No. 56C-0020). The Airport Boulevard Bridge is located in the community of Thermal, in the County of Riverside, California. The Project Vicinity and Location are shown in Figures 1 and 2, respectively. The Project Features are shown in Figure 3.

The proposed bridge work is consistent with the 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) as published by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The Project is anticipated to utilize federal funds through the federal Highway Bridge Project (HBP), as such it requires compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Caltrans is the lead agency under NEPA and the County is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City is a responsible agency under CEQA as the bridge is partially owned by the City as it is partially within City limits and City sphere of influence.

The existing Airport Boulevard Bridge is a two-lane road approximately 366 feet long and 34 feet wide with thirteen spans over the Whitewater River. This road along with the bridge is classified as a “collector street” by the County of Riverside. The bridge was originally built in 1951 and sustained damage in the 1969 flood. Partial reconstruction of the bridge occurred in 1970, when the bents were retrofitted by placing in-fill walls between the bent columns and pile cap with additional steel piles driven at the two ends of the in-filled wall bents. In 2017 the bridge was rehabilitated to include a 5-foot sidewalk on the south side. Furthermore, this bridge also has scour issues that have exposed a portion of the existing steel-encased piles and is now classified as a “Scour Critical Bridge” as of September 2019 based on Caltrans’ inspection in August 2019.

The bridge is listed in the Federal Eligible Bridge List (EBL) with a Sufficiency Rating (SR) of 60 according to the Bridge Inspection Report prepared by Caltrans Structure Maintenance and Investigations (SM&I). Since the bridge has a SR lower than 80, the bridge is eligible for major rehabilitation in accordance with the Highway Bridge Program (HBP) guidelines.

Additionally, the FEMA Flood Plain Report indicated significant inundation for the Airport Boulevard Bridge in a 100 year flood event. The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) has proposed improvements of the channel at the bridge location, including lowering of the riverbed by 5 feet and installing concreting lining from bank to bank underneath the existing bridge. The purpose of the CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project is to restore channel flow conditions to convey the 100-year flood, provide requisite freeboard and to remove the existing threat of flooding during a 100-year storm event to the parcels within the area of benefit. CVWD’s project is currently underway, to counter the impact of lowering the channel, four of the bents/support required temporary retrofit, strengthening of these bents/support is also a part of the CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project.

It has been determined that a seismic structural retrofit would cost approximately \$1 million dollars more than replacement of the bridge, and with the significant hydraulic constraint cited above, the County proposes to replace Airport Boulevard Bridge with a new concrete structure. This Project proposes to replace the existing 2 lane Airport Boulevard Bridge over Whitewater River with a new, wider, 2 lane bridge and reconstruct the connecting approach roadways to meet current Caltrans seismic design codes. The new bridge would be widened to approximately 71 feet and include 6 foot wide sidewalks on both sides of the bridge, 8 foot wide shoulders, a 14 foot wide eastbound and westbound lane, and a 12 foot wide striped median/turn lane. The new bridge would have foundations placed below the potential scour plane. The Project would raise the

bridge profile by approximately 2-3 feet in order to maintain a minimum freeboard from the flood water. The reprofiling would extend into approximately 850 feet of approach roadway to the west that will also be reconstructed. See Figure 3 for project features.

The Project may also include minor retaining walls and offsite improvements in order to maintain access to the existing mobile home community on the south side of Airport Boulevard. Roadway improvements also include transition pavement to the existing grade separation structure to the west and improvement of the intersection at Orange Street and Airport Boulevard. The Project will also provide sidewalk improvements on the south side of the new bridge as well as accommodate future connectivity to the Coachella Valley Link Trail, which is anticipated to connect to Airport Boulevard along the unnamed local road in the northwestern quadrant of the Project.

Depending on the Project design, utility relocation may be required. Coordination with the following utilities to determine actions that may need to be taken once Project design is established include: Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial Irrigation District, Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, Level 3 Communications/CenturyLink, MCI (Verizon Business), So Cal Gas (Distribution - Palm Desert division), and Frontier. The new bridge will also be constructed to accommodate future utility lines within the bridge.

The new bridge will be constructed in two stages. Stage 1 is to construct the north half of the bridge along the north edge of the existing structure, while the traffic on Airport Boulevard would remain on the existing bridge in each direction, unless necessary to reduce traffic control to one-way traffic to temporarily accommodate construction vehicles. Once Stage 1 is constructed, two lanes of traffic will be shifted to the newly constructed bridge while the existing bridge is demolished in Stage 2. Upon completion of demolition, the remaining south half of the proposed bridge will be constructed and completed once joined to the north half of the bridge with a closure pour.

Sliver takes for right of way acquisition would be required, and the commercial land in the northeast quadrant adjacent to the Project area would potentially be considered as a staging area.

## **Purpose and Need**

The purpose of the proposed Project is to update the existing facility to meet seismic, scour, flood, and design standards.

The need for the Project is outlined below:

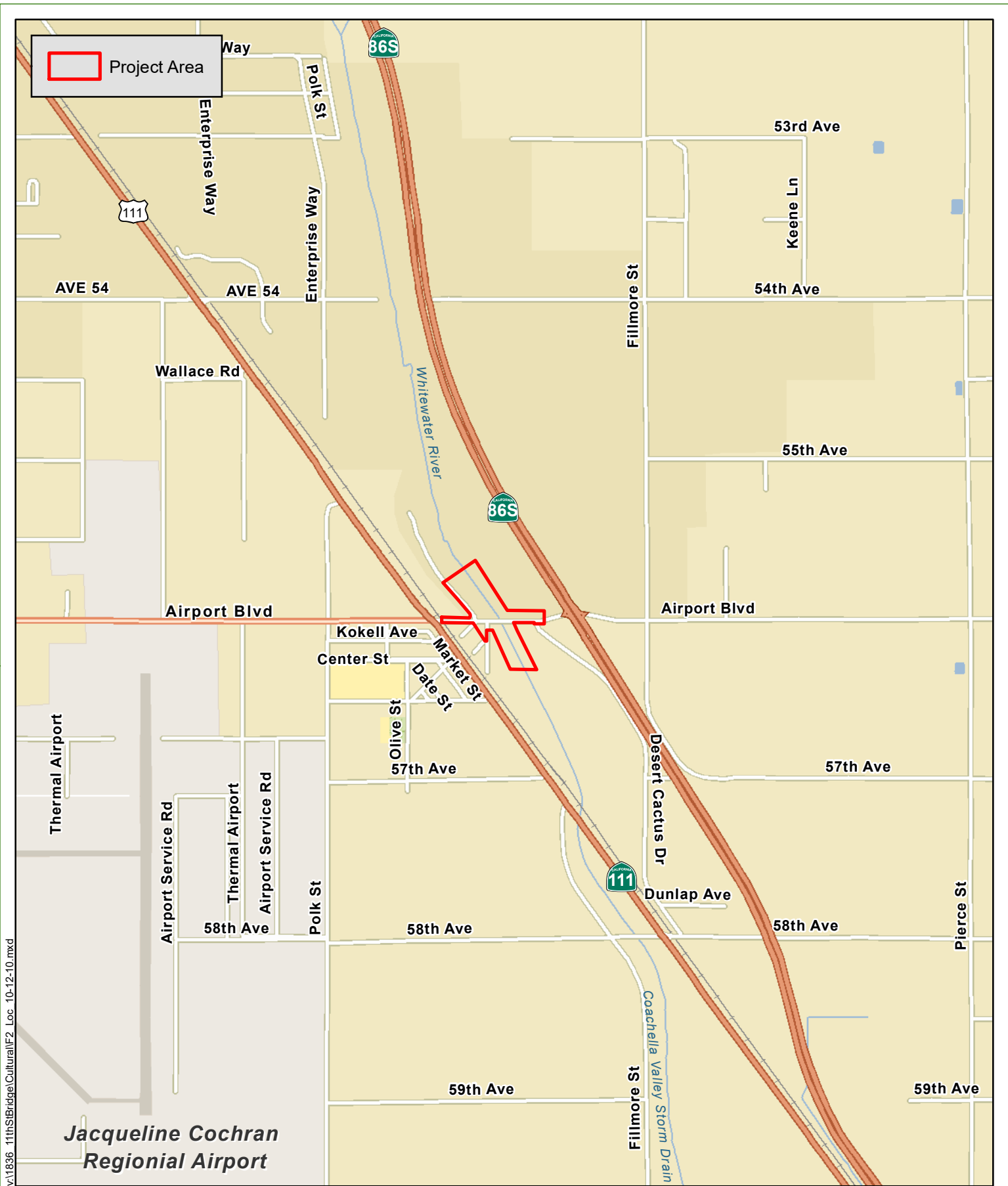
- The existing bridge has reached its useful design life. The bridge has inadequate shoulder width, lane width and is found to be structurally inadequate to meet the basic required strength and resistance.
- The existing Airport Boulevard Bridge over Whitewater River needs to be replaced with a new bridge that will meet the current seismic, service load design standards, and provide an adequate facility for emergency response and general access across the Whitewater River.

**Permits and Approvals Needed**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Permit/Approval</b>	<b>Status</b>
Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board	Section 401 Water Quality Certification	Will be obtained prior to construction
Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board	Section 402 National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit	Will be obtained prior to construction
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Nationwide Permit	Will be obtained prior to construction
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement	Will be obtained prior to construction

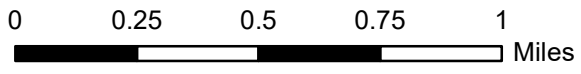
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





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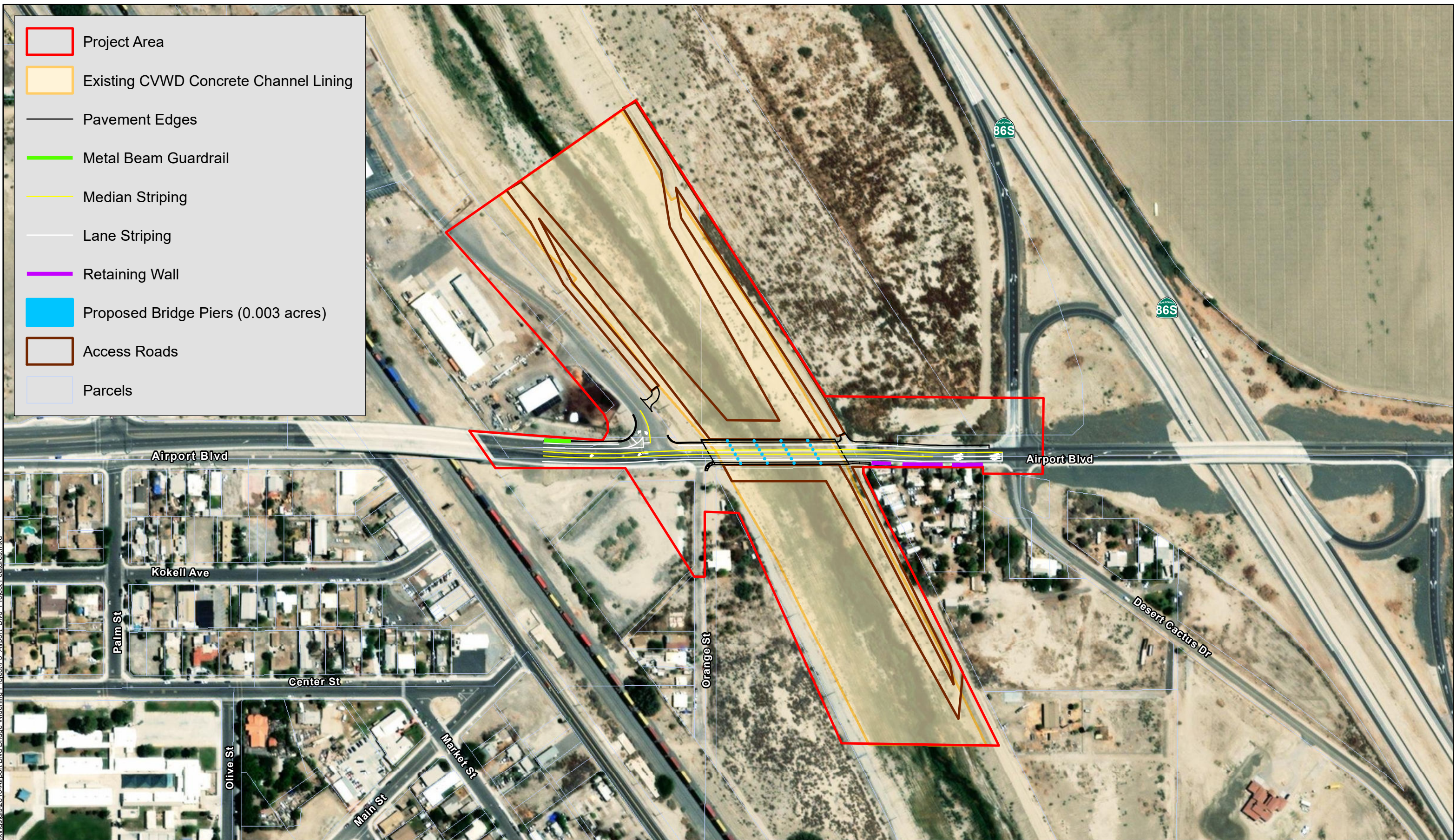


**FIGURE 2**  
**Project Location**

BRLS-5956(231)  
 Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project  
 Thermal, Riverside County, California

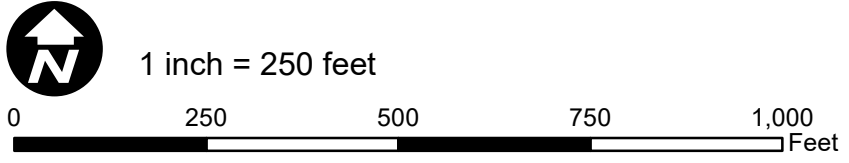


-  Project Area
-  Existing CVWD Concrete Channel Lining
-  Pavement Edges
-  Metal Beam Guardrail
-  Median Striping
-  Lane Striping
-  Retaining Wall
-  Proposed Bridge Piers (0.003 acres)
-  Access Roads
-  Parcels



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Source: ESRI Maps Online; Dokken Engineering 10/3/2022; Created By: zachl



**FIGURE 3**  
**Project Features**

BRLS-5956(231)  
Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project  
Thermal, Riverside County, California





**Environmental Factors Potentially Affected**

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this Project. Please see the checklist beginning on the next page for additional information.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture and Forestry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Air Quality
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Biological Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Energy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Geology/Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hazards and Hazardous Materials
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hydrology/Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	Land Use/Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mineral Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	Population/Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tribal Cultural Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Utilities/Service Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wildfire	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mandatory Findings of Significance

1. The proposed project would have no effect on: Agriculture and Forest Resources, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, and Wildfire.
2. In addition, the proposed project would have no significant effect on: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Transportation, Tribal Cultural Resources, Utilities and Service Systems, and Mandatory Findings of Significance.
3. The proposed project would not result in any impacts requiring mitigation to reduce the effects to less-than-significant. All avoidance and minimization measures are identified in Appendix A (Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program).

**CEQA Environmental Checklist**

This checklist identifies physical, biological, social and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with the projects indicate no impacts. A NO IMPACT answer in the last column reflects this determination. Where there is a need for clarifying discussion, the discussion is included either following the applicable section of the checklist or is within the body of the environmental document itself. The questions in this form are intended to encourage the thoughtful assessment of impacts and do not represent thresholds of significance.

<b>I. AESTHETICS:</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan (2015), City of Coachella General Plan 2035 (2015), and the Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project Visual Impact Assessment (2022).

**Findings of Fact:**

a, c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** According to the County of Riverside General Plan Multipurpose Open Space Element, scenic vistas consist of points accessible to the general public that may provide a view of hillsides, ridges, or other open space features. The City of Coachella Land Use and Community Character Element lists views of mountains and the rural, agricultural character of the area as contributing factors of the scenic quality in the City of Coachella.

The existing visual character of the Project area is a blend of open landscape and constructed elements. The open areas outside of the Project area includes surrounding mountains; Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains are located to the west. Existing visual quality of the Project area is low due to the uniformed, low vividness throughout most of the site. The vividness of the Project area is low as the Project area consists largely of flat developed lands within medium-density residential development to the west of the existing bridge and lacks distinctive or memorable features.

The proposed Project is anticipated to have a low visual impact within the Project area since all of the attributes that comprise the visual character and quality would not substantially be changed as a result of the proposed Project. While the bridge profile would be raised by approximately 2-3 feet in order to maintain a minimum freeboard from floodwater, the proposed bridge would be aesthetically similar to the current bridge and

view of the mountains in the background would be minimally affected. The pavement width would be wider but will be aesthetically treated. With implementation of measures **VIS-2** through **VIS-4**, there would be **Less than Significant**.

- b) **No Impact.** The Project area is not located immediately adjacent to any State scenic highway. The proposed Project will not have a significant impact upon a scenic highway corridor. **No impacts** to any state eligible scenic highways are anticipated.
- d) **Less than Significant.** The proposed Project may include the addition of lighting on the bridge and areas may also be lighted during construction. With implementation of measure **VIS-1**, impacts would be **Less than Significant**.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No significant impact related to Aesthetics which would require mitigation would occur. With implementation of the recommended Avoidance and Minimization Measures **VIS-1** through **VIS-4** below, as well as Avoidance and Minimization Measure **AQ-4** below and in Section III. Air Quality, impacts would remain less than significant.

#### Avoidance and Minimization Measures

- VIS-1:** Lighting will be appropriately shielded. The Project's lighting design must be consistent with the City of Coachella and Riverside County lighting guidelines and standards.
- VIS-2:** All disturbed areas including staging of vehicles and equipment will be restored to pre-construction contours and if applicable/appropriate, revegetated, either through hydroseeding or other means, with native species.
- VIS-3:** Concrete surfaces associated with the bridge will be heavily textured to discourage graffiti and minimize recurring maintenance activities associated with graffiti removal. Additionally, concrete surfaces will be aesthetically treated or stained natural colors to be more compatible with the surrounding environment.
- VIS-4:** As feasible the barrier/bridge rail fence shall be powder or vinyl color coated to meet aesthetic needs and to minimize glare.
- AQ-4:** Implement dust suppression measures as applicable from South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rules and Regulations, Rule 403 Fugitive Dust and Caltrans Standard Specifications for Construction, Sections 10 and 18 (Dust Control).

<p><b>II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES:</b> In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:</p>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** California Department of Conservation Important Farmland Finder (2022) and City of Coachella General Plan Map 2035.

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) **No Impact.** According to the California Department of Conservation Important Farmland Finder, the proposed Project area is primarily bordered by land identified as Urban and Built-Up Land. Land located between the Whitewater River and State Route 86S is identified as Farmland of Local Importance. According to the City of Coachella General Plan Land Use map, this area is designated as Light Industrial; therefore, this area is planned for urban development and not agricultural uses. There would be **No Impact**.
- b) **No Impact.** There are no Williamson Act contract lands or lands zoned for agricultural use within proximity to the Project site. There would be **No Impact**.
- c, d) **No Impact.** There are no forest lands or timberlands (or lands zoned as such) in the Project study area. The Project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. There would be **No Impact**.
- e) **No Impact.** The Project would have no impact to conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. The area designated as Farmland of Statewide Importance in the Project area is designated as Light Industrial by the City of Coachella and planned for urban development. No forest land is in the Project area. There would be **No Impact**.

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No impacts have been identified; therefore, no avoidance or minimization measures are required.

<b>III. AIR QUALITY:</b> Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** California Air Resources Board Maps of State Area Designations (October 2020), California Air Resources Board Maps of Federal Area Designations (October 2018), South Coast Air Quality Management District Air Quality Analysis Handbook / Air Quality Management Plan (2016) & Riverside County General Plan (2015).

**Findings of Fact:**

**Affected Environment**

The Project is located in the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB). The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) is the agency responsible for monitoring and regulating air pollutant emissions from stationary, area, and indirect sources within the SCAB. The District also has responsibility for monitoring air quality and setting and enforcing limits for source emissions. California Air Resources Board (CARB) is the agency with the legal responsibility for regulating mobile source emissions. The District is precluded from such activities under State law.

Existing air quality conditions in the Project area can be characterized in terms of the ambient air quality standards that the state of California (California Ambient Air Quality Standards [CAAQS]) and the Federal government National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) have established for several different pollutants. For some pollutants, separate standards have been set for different measurement periods. Most standards have been set to protect public health. Table 1 shows the State and Federal standards for a variety of pollutants. Ambient air pollutant concentrations are measured at 16 permanent monitoring stations throughout the Basin. The Federal and State governments have established ambient air quality standards for six criteria pollutants: ozone, CO, NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>), and lead. Within the SCAQMD, ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> are considered pollutants of concern.

Under NAAQS, the Project is located in an area that is in non-attainment for 8-hour ozone and PM<sub>10</sub>. It is in attainment or unclassified for other Federal criteria pollutants. Under CAAQS, the Project is located in an area that is in non-attainment for 8-hour ozone, 1-hour ozone, and PM<sub>10</sub>.

**Table 1. Ambient Air Quality Standards**



Ambient Air Quality Standards						
Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards <sup>1</sup>		National Standards <sup>2</sup>		
		Concentration <sup>3</sup>	Method <sup>4</sup>	Primary <sup>3,5</sup>	Secondary <sup>3,6</sup>	Method <sup>7</sup>
Ozone (O <sub>3</sub> ) <sup>8</sup>	1 Hour	0.09 ppm (180 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Ultraviolet Photometry	—	Same as Primary Standard	Ultraviolet Photometry
	8 Hour	0.070 ppm (137 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		0.070 ppm (137 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM <sub>10</sub> ) <sup>9</sup>	24 Hour	50 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Gravimetric or Beta Attenuation	150 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Same as Primary Standard	Inertial Separation and Gravimetric Analysis
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	20 µg/m <sup>3</sup>		—		
Fine Particulate Matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> ) <sup>9</sup>	24 Hour	—	—	35 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Same as Primary Standard	Inertial Separation and Gravimetric Analysis
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	12 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Gravimetric or Beta Attenuation	12.0 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	15 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	1 Hour	20 ppm (23 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Non-Dispersive Infrared Photometry (NDIR)	35 ppm (40 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	—	Non-Dispersive Infrared Photometry (NDIR)
	8 Hour	9.0 ppm (10 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )		9 ppm (10 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	—	
	8 Hour (Lake Tahoe)	6 ppm (7 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )		—	—	
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO <sub>2</sub> ) <sup>10</sup>	1 Hour	0.18 ppm (339 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Gas Phase Chemiluminescence	100 ppb (188 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	—	Gas Phase Chemiluminescence
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	0.030 ppm (57 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		0.053 ppm (100 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Same as Primary Standard	
Sulfur Dioxide (SO <sub>2</sub> ) <sup>11</sup>	1 Hour	0.25 ppm (655 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Ultraviolet Fluorescence	75 ppb (196 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	—	Ultraviolet Fluorescence; Spectrophotometry (Pararosaniline Method)
	3 Hour	—		—	0.5 ppm (1300 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	
	24 Hour	0.04 ppm (105 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )		0.14 ppm (for certain areas) <sup>11</sup>	—	
	Annual Arithmetic Mean	—		0.030 ppm (for certain areas) <sup>11</sup>	—	
Lead <sup>12,13</sup>	30 Day Average	1.5 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Atomic Absorption	—	—	High Volume Sampler and Atomic Absorption
	Calendar Quarter	—		1.5 µg/m <sup>3</sup> (for certain areas) <sup>12</sup>	Same as Primary Standard	
	Rolling 3-Month Average	—		0.15 µg/m <sup>3</sup>		
Visibility Reducing Particles <sup>14</sup>	8 Hour	See footnote 14	Beta Attenuation and Transmittance through Filter Tape	<b>No National Standards</b>		
Sulfates	24 Hour	25 µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Ion Chromatography			
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.03 ppm (42 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Ultraviolet Fluorescence			
Vinyl Chloride <sup>12</sup>	24 Hour	0.01 ppm (26 µg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Gas Chromatography			

See footnotes on next page ...

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California Air Resources Board (5/4/16)

(Table 1, continued)

1. California standards for ozone, carbon monoxide (except 8-hour Lake Tahoe), sulfur dioxide (1 and 24 hour), nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter (PM10, PM2.5, and visibility reducing particles), are values that are not to be exceeded. All others are not to be equaled or exceeded. California ambient air quality standards are listed in the Table of Standards in Section 70200 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations.
2. National standards (other than ozone, particulate matter, and those based on annual arithmetic mean) are not to be exceeded more than once a year. The ozone standard is attained when the fourth highest 8-hour concentration measured at each site in a year, averaged over three years, is equal to or less than the standard. For PM10, the 24 hour standard is attained when the expected number of days per calendar year with a 24-hour average concentration above  $150 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  is equal to or less than one. For PM2.5, the 24 hour standard is attained when 98 percent of the daily concentrations, averaged over three years, are equal to or less than the standard. Contact the U.S. EPA for further clarification and current national policies.
3. Concentration expressed first in units in which it was promulgated. Equivalent units given in parentheses are based upon a reference temperature of  $25^\circ\text{C}$  and a reference pressure of 760 torr. Most measurements of air quality are to be corrected to a reference temperature of  $25^\circ\text{C}$  and a reference pressure of 760 torr; ppm in this table refers to ppm by volume, or micromoles of pollutant per mole of gas.
4. Any equivalent measurement method which can be shown to the satisfaction of the ARB to give equivalent results at or near the level of the air quality standard may be used.
5. National Primary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary, with an adequate margin of safety to protect the public health.
6. National Secondary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects of a pollutant.
7. Reference method as described by the U.S. EPA. An "equivalent method" of measurement may be used but must have a "consistent relationship to the reference method" and must be approved by the U.S. EPA.
8. On October 1, 2015, the national 8-hour ozone primary and secondary standards were lowered from 0.075 to 0.070 ppm.
9. On December 14, 2012, the national annual PM2.5 primary standard was lowered from  $15 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  to  $12.0 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The existing national 24-hour PM2.5 standards (primary and secondary) were retained at  $35 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , as was the annual secondary standard of  $15 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The existing 24-hour PM10 standards (primary and secondary) of  $150 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  also were retained. The form of the annual primary and secondary standards is the annual mean, averaged over 3 years.
10. To attain the 1-hour national standard, the 3-year average of the annual 98th percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 100 ppb. Note that the national 1-hour standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the national 1-hour standard to the California standards the units can be converted from ppb to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 100 ppb is identical to 0.100 ppm.
11. On June 2, 2010, a new 1-hour  $\text{SO}_2$  standard was established and the existing 24-hour and annual primary standards were revoked. To attain the 1-hour national standard, the 3-year average of the annual 99th percentile of the 1-hour daily maximum concentrations at each site must not exceed 75 ppb. The 1971  $\text{SO}_2$  national standards (24-hour and annual) remain in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2010 standard, except that in areas designated nonattainment for the 1971 standards, the 1971 standards remain in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2010 standards are approved.  
 Note that the 1-hour national standard is in units of parts per billion (ppb). California standards are in units of parts per million (ppm). To directly compare the 1-hour national standard to the California standard the units can be converted to ppm. In this case, the national standard of 75 ppb is identical to 0.075 ppm.
12. The ARB has identified lead and vinyl chloride as 'toxic air contaminants' with no threshold level of exposure for adverse health effects determined. These actions allow for the implementation of control measures at levels below the ambient concentrations specified for these pollutants.
13. The national standard for lead was revised on October 15, 2008 to a rolling 3-month average. The 1978 lead standard ( $1.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  as a quarterly average) remains in effect until one year after an area is designated for the 2008 standard, except that in areas designated nonattainment for the 1978 standard, the 1978 standard remains in effect until implementation plans to attain or maintain the 2008 standard are approved.
14. In 1989, the ARB converted both the general statewide 10-mile visibility standard and the Lake Tahoe 30-mile visibility standard to instrumental equivalents, which are "extinction of 0.23 per kilometer" and "extinction of 0.07 per kilometer" for the statewide and Lake Tahoe Air Basin standards, respectively.

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It is in attainment or unclassified for other State criteria pollutants. Table 2 summarizes the ambient air quality classifications for the Project location.

**Table 2. Attainment for the South Coast Air Basin**

Pollutant	Attainment Status	
	Federal	State
O <sub>3</sub> –8-hour	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
O <sub>3</sub> –1-hour	Attainment	Nonattainment
PM <sub>10</sub>	Nonattainment	Attainment
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
CO	Unclassifiable/Attainment	Attainment
NO <sub>2</sub>	Unclassifiable/Attainment	Attainment
SO <sub>2</sub>	Unclassifiable/Attainment	Attainment
Sulfates	No Federal Standard	Attainment
Lead	Unclassifiable/Attainment	Attainment
Hydrogen Sulfide	No Federal Standard	Unclassified
Sources: CARB Maps of State Area Designations, October 2020, and CARB Maps of Federal Area Designations, October 2018		

The State CEQA Guidelines further state that the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied on to make the determinations below. The SCAQMD has specified significance thresholds (SCAQMD 2019) to determine whether mitigation is needed for Project-related air quality impacts. The SCAQMD’s thresholds of significance for construction- and operation-related emissions are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. South Coast Air Quality Management District Thresholds of Significance**

Thresholds of Significance		
Pollutant	Construction (pounds per day)	Operation (pounds per day)
NO <sub>x</sub>	100 lbs/day	55 lbs/day (0.0275 tons/day)
VOC	75 lbs/day	55 lbs/day (0.0275 tons/day)
PM <sub>10</sub>	150 lbs/day	150 lbs/day (0.075 tons/day)
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	55 lbs/day	55 lbs/day (0.0275 tons/day)
SO <sub>x</sub>	150 lbs/day	150 lbs/day (0.075 tons/day)
CO	550 lbs/day	550 lbs/day (0.275 tons/day)
Lead	3 lbs/day	3 lbs/day (0.001 tons/day)

Source: SCAQMD 2019

### Environmental Consequences

- a) **No Impact.** The SCAQMD is required to produce air quality management plans directing how the SCAB’s air quality will be brought into attainment with the national and state ambient air quality standards. The most recent air quality management plan is the *2016 Air Quality Management Plan*. The purpose of the *2016 Air Quality Management Plan* is to achieve and maintain both the national and state ambient air quality standards described above.

In order to determine if a project is consistent with the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan, the SCAQMD has established consistency criterion which are defined in Chapter 12, Sections 12.2 and 12.3 of the SCAQMD's CEQA Air Quality Handbook and are discussed below.

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**Consistency Criterion No. 1:** *The proposed project will not result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations or cause or contribute to new violations, or delay the timely attainment of air quality standards or the interim emissions reductions specified in the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan.*

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Consistency Criterion No. 1 refers to violations of the CAAQS and NAAQS. As evaluated under response (b) below, the Project would not exceed regional or localized significance thresholds for any criteria pollutant during construction or during long-term operation. Accordingly, the Project's regional and localized emissions would not contribute substantially to an existing or potential future air quality violation or delay the attainment of air quality standards.

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**Consistency Criterion No. 2:** *The proposed project will not exceed the assumptions in the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan.*

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The 2016 Air Quality Management Plan demonstrates that the applicable ambient air quality standards can be achieved within the timeframes required under federal law. Growth projections from local general plans adopted by cities in the district are provided to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), which develops regional growth forecasts, which are then used to develop future air quality forecasts for the AQMP.

The Air Quality Elements of the County of Riverside General Plan emphasize several approaches for improving air quality within the County. The proposed Project is intended to replace the existing facility to meet seismic, scour, flood, and design standards. As the Project would not add additional travel lanes, the proposed Project would not increase emissions nor would the proposed Project prevent the goals outlined in the County's General Plan from being reached. It is determined that the Project is consistent with the AQMP; therefore, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the AQMP. There would be **No Impact**.

**b - c) Less Than Significant Impact.**

Construction Emissions

During construction, short-term degradation of air quality may occur due to the release of particulate emissions (airborne dust) generated by excavation, grading, hauling, and various other activities. Emissions from construction equipment also are anticipated and would include CO, NO<sub>x</sub>, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), directly-emitted particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>), and toxic air contaminants such as diesel exhaust particulate matter. Ozone is a regional pollutant that is derived from NO<sub>x</sub> and VOCs in the presence of sunlight and heat.

Construction-related effects on air quality would be greatest during the site preparation phase because most engine emissions are associated with the excavation, handling, and transport of materials and equipment to and from the site. If not properly controlled, these activities would temporarily generate PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and small amounts of CO, SO<sub>2</sub>,

NO<sub>x</sub>, and VOCs. Sources of fugitive dust would include disturbed soils at the construction site and trucks carrying uncovered loads of soils. Unless properly controlled, vehicles leaving the site would deposit mud on local streets, which could be an additional source of airborne dust after it dries. PM<sub>10</sub> emissions would vary from day to day, depending on the nature and magnitude of construction activity and local weather conditions. PM<sub>10</sub> emissions would depend on soil moisture, silt content of soil, wind speed, and the amount of equipment operating. Larger dust particles would settle near the source, while fine particles would be dispersed over greater distances from the construction site.

Construction air quality impacts are generally attributable to dust generated by equipment and vehicles. Fugitive dust is emitted both during construction activity and as a result of wind erosion over exposed earth surfaces. Clearing and earth moving activities do comprise major sources of construction dust emissions, but traffic and general disturbances of soil surfaces also generate significant dust emissions. Further, dust generation is dependent on soil type and soil moisture.

Adverse effects of construction activities include increased dust-fall and locally elevated levels of total suspended particulate. Dust-fall can be a nuisance to neighboring properties or previously completed developments surrounding or within the Project area and may require frequent washing during the construction period. Further, asphalt-paving materials used during construction will present temporary, minor sources of hydrocarbons that are precursors of ozone.

Construction of the proposed Project is anticipated to take 24 months. The Project's construction emissions were estimated using the Roadway Construction Emissions Model by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD 2018). As summarized in Table 4, construction activities associated with the proposed Project would not exceed emission thresholds established by the SCAQMD.

**Table 4. Road Construction Emissions Model Compared to Thresholds of Significance**

Thresholds of Significance		
Pollutant	Road Construction Emissions Model Estimates	SCAQMD Threshold (pounds per day)
NO <sub>x</sub>	15.16 lbs/day	100 lbs/day
VOC	8.23 lbs/day	75 lbs/day
PM <sub>10</sub>	0.72 lbs/day	150 lbs/day
PM <sub>2.5</sub>	0.58 lbs/day	55 lbs/day
SO <sub>x</sub>	0.16 lbs/day	150 lbs/day
CO	12.10 lbs/day	550 lbs/day
Lead	0 lbs/day	3 lbs/day

Source: Modeling using the Roadway Construction Emissions Model 9.0.0 (Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District 2018).

As shown in Table 4, construction of the proposed Project would not result in exceedance of SCAQMD thresholds of significance. Furthermore, implementation of measures **AQ-1** through **AQ-4** are required to ensure construction activities would be conducted in accordance with SCAQMD Rules 402, 403, and 431.2, which require implementation of standard control measures for fugitive dust, diesel equipment emissions, and limiting vehicle idling to five minutes or less.

### Operational Emissions

Long-term air pollutant emissions are typically associated with emissions from stationary, energy, and mobile sources. As the Project would not increase capacity of the bridge, operation of the proposed Project would result in similar pollutant emissions if the Project was not construction.

As neither construction nor operation of the proposed Project would result in significant pollutant emissions, the proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of any applicable air quality management plan, contribute to a substantial increase in regional air emissions, or expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Adherence to the measures **AQ-1** through **AQ-4** would ensure impacts related to construction emissions are **Less than Significant Impact**.

- d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project would have a less than significant impact related to exposing sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations and creating objectionable odors. Some phases of construction, particularly asphalt paving, would result in short-term odors in the immediate area of each paving site(s). Such odors would be quickly dispersed below detectable thresholds as distance from the site(s) increases. With implementation of measures **AQ-1** through **AQ-4**, impacts related to other emissions such as nuisance odors are **Less than Significant Impact**.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

All of the construction impacts to air quality are short-term in duration and, therefore, will not result in adverse or long-term impacts. Implementation of the following Avoidance and Minimization Measures will reduce any air quality impacts resulting from construction activities to less than significant:

#### Avoidance and Minimization Measures

- AQ-1:** The contractor shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations related to air quality, including air pollution control district and air quality management district regulations and local ordinances.
- AQ-2:** The contractor shall control dust by applying either water or dust palliative, or both.
- AQ-3:** The construction contractor shall implement control measures to reduce emissions of NO<sub>x</sub>, ROG, and PM<sub>10</sub>. The contractor shall:
- Minimize idling time to 5 minutes when construction equipment is not in use, unless per engine manufacturer's specifications or for safety reasons more time is required.
  - To the extent practicable, manage operation of heavy-duty equipment to reduce emissions such as maintaining heavy-duty earthmoving, stationary and mobile equipment in optimum running conditions.
  - Use electric equipment when feasible.
  - Properly maintain equipment according to manufacturers' specifications.

**AQ-4:** Implement dust suppression measures as applicable from South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rules and Regulations, Rule 403 Fugitive Dust and Caltrans Standard Specifications for Construction, Sections 10 and 18 (Dust Control).

<b>IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project Natural Environment Study (December 2022)

**Findings of Fact:**

**Regulatory Setting**

This section describes the federal, state, and local plans, policies, and laws that are relevant to biological resources within the Biological Study Area (BSA) described in detail in the Affected Environment section below. "Special status species" include any species that has been afforded



special recognition by federal, state or local resources agencies (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS], California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW], etc.), and/or resource conservation organizations (e.g., California Native Plant Society [CNPS]). The term “special-status species” excludes those avian species solely identified under Section 10 of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) for federal protection. MBTA Section 10 protected species are afforded avoidance and minimization measures per state and federal requirements.

### **Federal Regulations**

This section describes the Federal regulations that are applicable to the proposed project including: the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) of 1973 (16 U.S.C. Section 1531 et seq.), Clean Water Act (CWA), Executive Order (EO) 13112 (Prevention and Control of Invasive Species) and EO 13186 (Migratory Bird Treaty Act).

#### Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA)

FESA provides for the conservation of endangered and threatened species listed pursuant to Section 4 of the Act (16 U.S.C. Section 1533) and the ecosystems upon which they depend. These species and resources have been identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

#### Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act (CWA) was enacted as an amendment to the Federal Water Pollutant Control Act of 1972, which outlined the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants to Waters of the U.S. (WOUS). The CWA serves as the primary Federal law protecting the quality of the nation’s surface waters, including lakes, rivers, and coastal wetlands. The CWA empowers the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set national water quality standards and effluent limitations, and includes programs addressing both point-source and non-point-source pollution. Point-source pollution originates or enters surface waters at a single, discrete location, such as an outfall structure or an excavation or construction site. Non-point-source pollution originates over a broader area and includes urban contaminants in stormwater runoff and sediment loading from upstream areas. The CWA operates on the principle that all discharges into the nation’s waters are unlawful unless they are specifically authorized by a permit; permit review is the CWA’s primary regulatory tool.

##### Section 303(d)

Under the mandate of Section 303(d) of the CWA, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is required to formulate a list of surface water bodies that exceed applicable water quality standards. Subsequently, the RWQCB is required to describe the impairment sources and prioritize these water bodies to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). The current list was updated in 2016. Whitewater River is included as a 303(d)-listed water with TMDLs required (State Water Resources Control Board [SWRCB] 2016).

##### Section 304 (a)

Section 304(a)(1) of the CWA requires EPA to develop and publish, and from time to time revise, recommended criteria for the protection of water quality that accurately reflect the latest scientific knowledge. EPA’s recommended section 304(a) criteria provide technical information for states and authorized tribes to consider and use in adopting water quality standards that ultimately provide the basis for assessing water body health and controlling discharges of pollutants into waters of the United States.

Section 401

The RWQCB has jurisdiction under Section 401 of the CWA and regulates any activity which may result in a discharge to surface waters. Typically, the areas subject to jurisdiction of the RWQCB coincide with those of USACE (i.e., WOUS including wetlands). The RWQCB also asserts authority over Waters of the State (WOS) under waste discharge requirements pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. The proposed Project is located within the jurisdiction of the Colorado River RWQCB.

Section 402

Section 402 establishes a permit under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program for discharges of storm water resulting from ground disturbing construction activities such as grading. For ground disturbing construction activities of more than one acre, a NPDES Phase II permit from the RWQCB is required. The preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is a requirement of the NPDES Phase II permit.

Section 404

Section 404 establishes a permit program administered by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) which regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. (including wetlands). USACE has jurisdiction over fill materials in essentially all water bodies, including wetlands. All federal agencies are to avoid impacts to wetlands whenever there is a practicable alternative.

Executive Order 13112: Prevention and Control of Invasive Species

EO 13112 (signed February 3, 1999) directs all federal agencies to prevent and control introductions of invasive species in a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner. The EO requires consideration of invasive species in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses, including their identification and distribution, their potential impacts, and measures to prevent or eradicate them.

Executive Order 13186: Migratory Bird Treaty Act

EO 13186 (signed January 10, 2001) directs each federal agency taking actions that could adversely affect migratory bird populations to work with USFWS to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will promote the conservation of migratory bird populations. Protocols developed under the MOU will include the following agency responsibilities:

- avoid and minimize, to the maximum extent practicable, adverse impacts on migratory bird resources when conducting agency actions;
- restore and enhance habitat of migratory birds, as practicable; and
- prevent or abate the pollution or detrimental alteration of the environment for the benefit of migratory birds, as practicable.

The EO is designed to assist federal agencies in their efforts to comply with the MBTA (50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 10 and 21) and does not constitute any legal authorization to take migratory birds. Take is defined under the MBTA as “the action of or attempt to pursue, hunt, shoot, capture, collect, or kill” (50 CFR 10.12) and includes intentional take (i.e., take that is the purpose of the activity in question) and unintentional take (i.e., take that results from, but is not the purpose of, the activity in question).

## **State Regulations**

This section describes the State of California regulations that are applicable to the proposed Project including: CEQA (California Public Resources Code, Sections 21000 – 21178, and Title 14 CCR, Section 753, and Chapter 3, Sections 15000 – 15387), the California Endangered Species Act (CESA; Fish and Game Code (CFG Code) Sections 2050-2116), California Fish and Game Code (CFG Code) Section 3503 and 3503.5, and CFG Code Section 3513.

### California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA is a California state law created to inform governmental decision-makers and the public about the potential, significant environmental effects of proposed activities and to work to reduce these negative environmental impacts. The County is the CEQA lead agency for this Project.

### California Endangered Species Act

The CESA (CFG Code Section 2050 et seq.) requires CDFW to establish a list of endangered and threatened species (Section 2070) and to prohibit the incidental taking of any such listed species except as allowed by CESA (Sections 2080-2089). In addition, CESA prohibits take of candidate species (under consideration for listing).

CESA also requires the CDFW to comply with the CEQA (Pub. Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) when evaluating incidental take permit applications (CFG Code Section 2081(b) and California Code Regulations, Title 14, section 783.0 et seq.), and the potential impacts the project or activity for which the application was submitted may have on the environment. The CDFW's CEQA obligations include consultation with other public agencies which have jurisdiction over the project or activity (California Code Regulations, Title 14, Section 783.5(d)(3)). CDFW cannot issue an incidental take permit if issuance would jeopardize the continued existence of the species (CFG Code Section 2081(c); California Code Regulations, Title 14, Section 783.4(b)).

### Sections 3503 and 3503.5: Birds and Raptors

CFG Code Section 3503 prohibits the destruction of bird nests and Section 3503.5 prohibits the killing of raptor species and destruction of raptor nests. Trees and shrubs are present in and adjacent to the study area and could provide potential nesting habitat for birds and raptors.

### Section 3513: Migratory Birds

CFG Code Section 3513 prohibits the take or possession of any migratory non-game bird as designated in the MBTA or any part of such migratory non-game bird except as provided by rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the MBTA.

## **Local Regulations**

This section describes the local County and City regulations that are applicable to the proposed Project.

### Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP)

The CVMSHCP aims to conserve over 240,000 acres of open space and protect 27 plant and animal species. By providing comprehensive compliance with federal and state endangered species laws, the Plan not only safeguards the desert's natural heritage for future generations, but it also allows for more timely construction of roads and other infrastructure that is essential to improving quality of life in the Coachella Valley.

### Riverside County General Plan

The Project occurs within the jurisdiction of the Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan, a component of the County of Riverside 2015 General Plan. This Project has been designed to be consistent with the County of Riverside 2015 General Plan. Impacts to biological resources will be avoided and minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Coordination with appropriate regulatory agencies including CVAG (Coachella Valley Association of Governments), CDFW, USFWS, and USACE will ensure impacts to sensitive resources are minimized or mitigated for, as appropriate. The County of Riverside will incorporate specific requirements of the CVMSHCP into design plans. With the implementation of Project measures, Caltrans Standard Best Management Practices (BMPs), permit conditions, and Project design, the Project is in conformance with the following Policies and Codes: Circulation Element Policy 20.7 (Environmental Considerations), Land Use Element Policy 4.1 (Project Design), Multipurpose Open Space Element Policy 9.3 (Vegetation), Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan Policy 4.1 (Light Pollution).

### City of Coachella General Plan

A portion of the Project area is within the City of Coachella. The City of Coachella General Plan Sustainability and Natural Environment Element establishes the City's long-term goals and policies for managing and protecting its natural resources and open spaces. The following are related to biological resources:

Goal 9. Plant and Wildlife Habitat Areas: Protected plant and wildlife habitat areas that are protected, productive, viable natural resources and exist harmoniously with adjacent development.

#### *Policies*

9.1 Buffers from new development. Require new developments adjacent to identified plant and wildlife habitat areas to maintain a protective buffer.

9.2 Agriculture and natural habitat. Promote the creation and maintenance of natural habitat and wildlife corridors on agricultural lands through wildlife-compatible farm management practices.

9.3 Wildlife corridors. Support the creation of local and regional conservation and preservation easements that protect habitat areas, serve as wildlife corridors and help protect sensitive biological resources.

9.4 Conservation and preservation easements. Develop a program to facilitate the creation of conservation and preservation easements that identifies key habitat areas, habitat corridors and sensitive biological resources and:

- Establishes a simple process for land owners to grant easements, including identifying organizations or agencies capable of holding the easements; and
- Provides information to the landowners of identified properties about the benefits of conservation and preservation easements.

9.5 Multiple species habitat conservation plan. Support and adhere to the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.

9.6 Native habitat management. Develop a program to restore native habitat on undeveloped portions of City-owned properties, where feasible, and remove invasive species where they occur.

9.7 Landscape design. Encourage new developments to incorporate native vegetation materials into landscape plans and prohibit the use of species known to be invasive according to the California Invasive Plant Inventory.

9.8 Sensitive species. Require projects proposing to develop in subareas 5, 6, and 7 to conduct surveys to determine if there is occurrence of sensitive species within the Project area. If sensitive species are present, projects must implement mitigation measures necessary as prescribed by a qualified biologist and approved by any applicable resource agency in order to receive necessary City permits.

## Affected Environment

The Project area was defined as the area required for Project activities including staging, access, and construction. The BSA is located both within the city limits of Coachella and unincorporated lands in the community of Thermal, Riverside County, California. The approximately 25-acre Project area is approximately 366 feet long and 34 feet wide and entirely within the BSA. The Project area extends from approximately 4400 feet north of Avenue 54 downstream (south) to approximately 4500 feet north of Avenue 58 in Thermal. The existing BSA is bounded by earthen flood control levees, although concrete wall reinforcement is present in the northern Project area and near bridges. Land surrounding the BSA within two miles consists of desert scrub, desert riparian, undeveloped grazing land, orchards, agricultural facilities, a few rural residences, a patchwork of commercial buildings and single-family rural residential dwellings, a sheriff's station, and natural lands (undeveloped, some of which have been previously disturbed).

The BSA contains a 3,040 linear foot segment of the excavated drainage for the Whitewater River. This drainage is highly disturbed under normal conditions. The surveys were conducted by Bargas Biologists Dennis Peterson and Jane Gao on June 18 and July 1, 2021, to determine whether any special-status plant or wildlife species, or their habitat, or sensitive habitats, occur within the BSA that could pose a constraint to implementation of the proposed Project. Biological communities found within the BSA include Common and Giant Reed Marsh, Salt Grass Flats, and Iodine Bush Scrub. Biological communities are shown on **Figure 4. Biological Communities Map**. Common and Giant Reed Marsh, Salt Grass Flats, and Iodine Bush Scrub communities have since been removed and replaced with concrete as part of the CVWD project.

## Environmental Consequences

a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Field assessments for biological resources on the proposed Project site were conducted on 18 June 2021, and 01 July 2021.

A total of fourteen (14) special status plant species and nineteen (19) special status animal species were identified during the California Native Plant Society California (CNPS) Rare Plant Inventory, California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), and IPaC records search as potentially occurring within the BSA. Special status animal species include burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax taillii extimus*), western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*), prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), Palm Springs pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris bangsi*), flat-tailed horned lizard (*Phrynosoma mcallii*), black-tailed gnatcatcher (*Polioptila melanura*), vermilion flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*), Yuma Ridgway's rail (*Rallus obsoletus yumanensis*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), Crissal thrasher (*Toxostoma crissale*), LeConte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*),

Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard (*Uma inornata*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus tereticaudus chlorus*).

Rare plant species include chaparral sand-verbena (*Abronia villosa* var. *aurita*), singlewhorl burrobush (*Ambrosia monogyra*), Coachella Valley milk-vetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *coachellae*), Lancaster milk-vetch (*Astragalus preussii* var. *laxiflorus*), gravel milk-vetch (*Astragalus sabulonum*), little-leaf elephant tree (*Bursera microphylla*), glandular ditaxis (*Ditaxis claryana*), Santa Rosa mountains leptosiphon (*Leptosiphon floribundus* ssp. *Hallii*), slender cottonheads (*Nemacaulis denudata* var. *gracilis*), narrow-leaf sandpaper plant (*Petalonyx linearis*), slender-stem bean (*Phaseolus filiformis*), Cove's cassia (*Senna covesii*), jackass-clover (*Wislizenia refracta* ssp. *refracta*), and Mecca aster (*Xylorhiza cognata*).

The field assessments did not observe any sensitive species within the Project area and determined that due to lack of suitable habitat within the BSA, none of the nineteen special status animal species are expected to occur within the BSA and are presumed absent. Thus, no direct impacts to special status animal species are anticipated to occur because of the proposed Project. **Appendix C** summarizes conclusions from analysis and field surveys regarding the potential occurrence of listed and special status animal species within the BSA.

Marginally suitable habitat for one (1) special status plant species, Coachella Valley milk-vetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *coachellae*) occurred within the BSA in the form of the creosote bush scrub habitat, based on the field survey and CNDDDB, CNPS, and IPaC records search. However, no special status plant species were observed within the BSA during field analysis. Although the field surveys were not completed during the blooming period for Coachella Valley milk-vetch (February – May), the degraded and highly maintained nature of the creosote bush scrub habitat provided extremely marginal habitat for Coachella Valley milk-vetch. None of the regionally occurring special status plant species were expected to occur within the BSA prior to the concrete lining activities associated with the CVWD project and are presumed absent.

No special status plant species are expected to occur within the BSA and are presumed absent because of the lack of suitable habitat within the BSA. Thus, no direct impacts to special status plant species are anticipated to occur because of the proposed Project. The proposed Project development does have the potential to result in indirect impacts to special status plant species that may occur within habitats surrounding the BSA, such as fugitive dust and non-native seed dispersal.

With implementation of avoidance and minimization measures **BIO-1** and **BIO-2**, impacts would remain **Less Than Significant**.

- b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Based on literature and field research, the only natural community of special concern identified within the BSA are jurisdictional waters, which are described in question c) below. **Less Than Significant Impacts** are anticipated.
- c) **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project will impact the Whitewater River, considered a jurisdictional water under the jurisdiction of USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW. At the time of the survey efforts, one wetland riverine (Whitewater River) feature encompassing 4.22 acres was identified. **Figure 5. Aquatic Resource Delineation**

provides a labeled view of the wetland riverine feature. However, since the surveys and subsequent delineation was completed, the CVWD project has removed all vegetation and constructed a concrete lined channel within the Project area.

Based on a review of current design plans for the proposed Project and the ongoing CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project, 50 2.5-foot diameter supporting columns and two piers will be removed, resulting in 0.57 acre of temporary impact to USACE/RWQCB jurisdictional areas and 2.26 acres of temporary impact to CDFW jurisdictional areas. Twenty-four (24) 2.5-foot diameter supporting columns will be installed, resulting in approximately 0.003 acres of permanent impact to USACE, RWQCB and CDFW jurisdictional areas.

Both permanent and temporary impacts to CDFW jurisdiction have recently occurred as a result of the CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project, permanently removing vegetated habitat within the proposed Project footprint. Figure 5 shows recent channel impact areas from CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project concrete-lining activities and Figure 6 shows temporary and permanent impact to jurisdictional areas.

Despite recent concrete-lining activities as part of the CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project, a USACE Section 404 Nationwide Permit (NWP) 14, a RWQCB Section 401 Water Quality Certification, and a CDFW Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement are anticipated to be required prior to the Project implementation. A segment of the Whitewater River was identified within the Project site. The river met all three criteria to be considered a jurisdictional wetland where hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology were present. Although the recent lining of the channel with concrete associated with CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project has altered plant communities significantly, it is anticipated that the Whitewater River would still be considered a Water of the US in the form of an "other water".

Impacts to wetlands and aquatic resources would be avoided and minimized with implementation of **BIO-1** and **BIO-2**. Further measures are not applicable since the ongoing CVWD project as permanently removed vegetated habitat. Impacts would be **Less than Significant Impact**.

- d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project does have the potential to result in indirect impacts to nesting birds that may occur within habitats surrounding the BSA.

Vegetation within and surrounding the BSA has the potential to provide refuge cover from predators, perching sites, and favorable conditions for avian nesting that could be directly and indirectly impacted by construction activities associated with the proposed Project. Disturbances associated with the proposed Project, including noise, vibration, and dust may result in indirect impacts to avian species if Project activities occur during active nesting efforts.

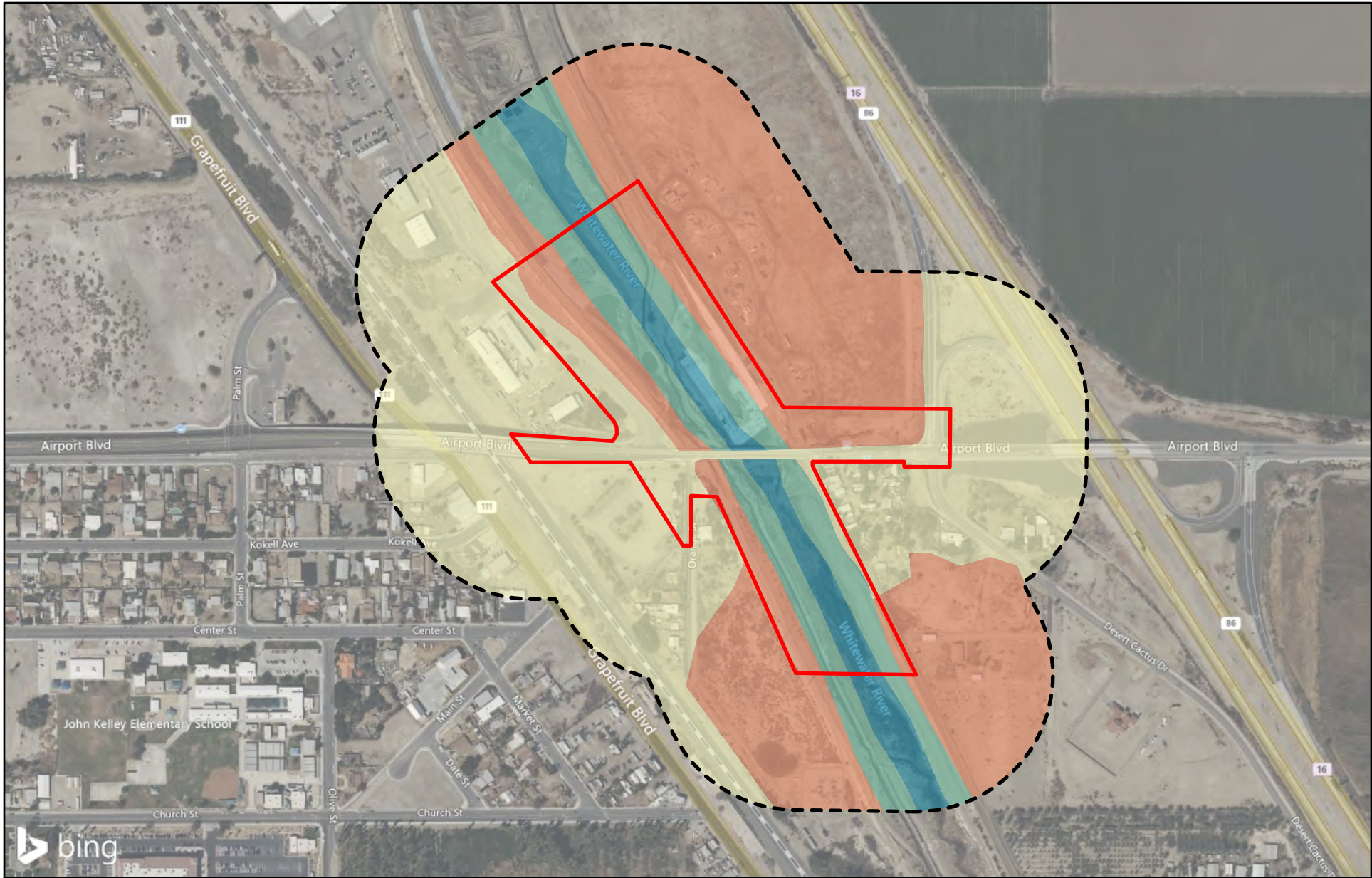
If construction can occur outside of the bird nesting season (February 1st to August 31st) no direct impacts to nesting birds would occur. Preconstruction surveys for nesting birds (including swallows) and avoidance measures (if needed) will help to ensure that direct mortality would not occur, should construction occur during the nesting season. Construction-related noise or visual disturbances during the nesting bird breeding season may result in temporary impacts on individuals that may be attempting to incubate eggs or raise young within proximity to the BSA. Construction-related noise or visual

disturbances may disrupt nesting activities or may cause birds to leave the area until construction is completed. In cases of extreme disturbance, nesting efforts may be abandoned, resulting in taking of young or eggs.

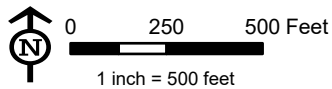
Fish species are presumed absent in the BSA. Interference with the movement of migratory fish would not occur.

Impacts to nesting birds would be avoided and minimized with implementation of **BIO-3**. Impacts would be **Less Than Significant**.






Source: Bing Maps Hybrid





 Biological Study Area

 Project Footprint

 Common and Giant Reed Marsh/Wetland Riverine (4.0 Acres)

 Disturbed Area (5.7 Acres)

 Iodine Bush Scrub (8.5 Acres)

 Salt Grass Flats (7.5 Acres)

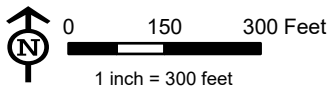
**Figure 4**  
**Biological Communities Map**

*Airport Blvd Bridge Replacement Project*





Source: Bing Maps Hybrid



Surveyor Name: Dennis Peterson  
 Map Date: 9/5/2021  
 Map Author: Coral Fenech  
 Date Revised: N/A  
 Aerial Source: Bing Maps Hybrid  
 Coordinate System:  
 NAD 1983 State Plane Zone 6 (US Feet)

- Project Boundary
- Wetland Riverine
- Sample Point

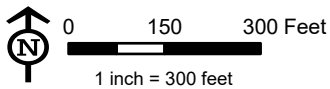
**Figure 5**  
**Aquatic Resource Delineation**

*Airport Blvd Bridge  
Replacement Project*





Source: Bing Maps Hybrid



Surveyor Name: Dennis Peterson  
 Map Date: 9/5/2021  
 Map Author: Coral Fenech  
 Date Revised: N/A  
 Aerial Source: Bing Maps Hybrid  
 Coordinate System:  
 NAD 1983 State Plane  
 Zone 6 (US Feet)

- Project Footprint
- Project Staging/Access
- 50-ft Temporary Impact Area

**Permanent Impacts**

- USACE (0.002 Acre)
- CDFW (0.001 Acre)

**Temporary Impacts**

- USACE (0.57 Acre)
- CDFW (2.26 Acre)

**Figure 6**  
**Project Impacts**

*Airport Blvd Bridge Replacement Project*

- e) **No Impact.** There are no oak trees or other trees of special concern within the Project; therefore, the Riverside County's Oak Tree Management Guidelines, County Ordinance No. 559, and General Plan Policies OS 9.3 and 9.4 which regulate tree removal are not applicable. General Plan Policies OS 9.3 also aims to maintain and conserve natural vegetation and other features for ecosystem, aesthetic, and water conservation purposes. The Project area is already greatly disturbed by the ongoing CVWD project; however, with implementation of **BIO-1** through **BIO-3** to protect remaining biological resources in the area, the Project will comply with the County General Plan Policies for protection of biological resources.

Additionally, the proposed Project is located entirely within the CVMSHCP area and is required to comply with requirements set forth in the Plan. Implementation of **BIO-1** through **BIO-3** will ensure the project is compliant with the applicable requirements of the CVMSHCP. Further discussion on the Project's compliance with the CVMSHCP is located in question f) below. The Project will comply with the CVMSHCP for protection of biological resources, and all other guidelines and regulations applicable to the project site by abiding to the required CVMSHCP measures and biological measures for this Project. There would be **No Impact**.

- f) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project is located entirely within the CVMSHCP area; therefore, the Project is required to comply with the requirements set forth in the Plan. The proposed Project was analyzed for its consistency with the CVMSHCP. The proposed Project is located within the CVMSHCP boundaries; however, it is not located within any CVMSHCP identified Conservation Areas. Thus, the proposed Project is not subject to the Joint Project Review process as specified in *Section 6.6.1.1* of the CVMSHCP. The project is not adjacent to a Conservation Area, and it is not subject to Land Use Adjacency Guidelines under Section 4.5 of the CVMSHCP. The Project is identified as a "Covered Activity" under the CVMSHCP Section 7.2.3 (Regional Road Projects), Table 7-3 (CVAG Regional Road Projects). The proposed Project is specifically designated in CVMSHCP Table 7-3 as the "AVENUE 56 / AIRPORT BLVD" Street under the "SPRR to East side of Bridge over Coachella Valley Storm Channel" segment. According to CVMSHCP Section 7.0 (Take Authorization for Covered Activities and Term of Permit), Covered Activities are not likely to result in "Take" of "Covered Species" as long as applicable avoidance and minimization measures described in the CVMSHCP are implemented. However, as none of the resources covered by the CVMSHCP were determined to be present or likely to occur, the Project is not subject to these specific measures. Additionally, the Project fulfills mitigation requirements per CVMSHCP Section 5.2.1.3 (Regional Road Projects Mitigation) and Section 6.6.1 (Obligations of Local Permittees). These sections describe obligations of the local permittees for mitigation for regional road projects and projects outside of Conservation Areas. Per Section 5.2.1.3, mitigation for the proposed Project as a Covered Activity per Section 7.2.3, is covered through the Riverside County Measure A half-cent sales tax. Section 6.6.1 requires public projects to be consistent with Section 4.4 mitigation measures, and overall CVMSHCP compliance for public projects. As discussed previously in this portion of this report, the proposed Project is consistent with CVMSHCP requirements for public projects. Thus, the proposed Project is consistent with the biological resource goals and objectives of the CVMSHCP and **Less Than Significant Impacts** are anticipated.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No significant impacts to biological resources requiring mitigation would occur. With implementation of avoidance and minimization measures **BIO-1** through **BIO-3**, impacts would remain less than significant.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

- BIO-1:** Project-related debris, spoils, and trash will be contained and removed to a proper waste disposal facility.
- BIO-2:** Equipment, vehicles, and materials staged and stored in right-of-way will be situated in previously paved or previously disturbed areas only.
- BIO-3:** Prior to vegetation removal or initial ground disturbance during the nesting bird season (February 1st through August 31st) a pre-construction nesting bird survey must be conducted by a Project biologist prior to the start of work. The nesting bird survey must include the Project area plus a 300-foot buffer. Within 2 weeks of the nesting bird survey, all areas surveyed by the biologist must be cleared by the contractor or a supplemental nesting bird survey is required. A minimum 300-foot no work buffer will be established around any active nests of a raptor species. A 100-foot no work buffer will be established around any active nests for other migratory birds. If an active nest is discovered during construction, the contractor must immediately stop work in the nesting area until the appropriate buffer is established. The contractor is prohibited from conducting work that could disturb the birds (as determined by a project biologist and in coordination with wildlife agencies) in the buffer area until a qualified biologist determines the young have fledged. A reduced buffer can be established if determined appropriate by a project biologist and approved by CDFW.



<b>V. CULTURAL RESOURCES:</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project Archaeological Survey Report (July 2022) and Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project Historic Property Survey Report (July 2022).

**Findings of Fact:**

**Regulatory Setting**

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a), and the PRC 5024(a)(b) and (d) require consideration of potential project impacts to "unique" archaeological sites that do not qualify as historical resources. The statutory requirements for unique archaeological sites that do not qualify as historical resources are established in PRC Section 21083.2. These two PRC sections operate independently to ensure that significant potential impacts on historical and archaeological resources are considered as part of a CEQA project’s environmental analysis. Historical resources, as defined in the CEQA regulations, include:

- 1) Cultural resources listed in or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register);
- 2) Cultural resources included in a local register of historical resources;
- 3) Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in one of several historic themes important to California history and development.

Under CEQA, a project may have a significant effect on the environment if the project could result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, meaning the physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource would be materially impaired. This would include any action that would demolish or adversely alter the physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historic significance and qualify it for inclusion in the California Register or in a local register or survey that meets the requirements of PRC Section 5020.1(l) and 5024.1(g). PRC Section 5024 also requires state agencies to identify and protect state-owned resources that meet National Register of Historic Place (National Register) listing criteria. Sections 5024(f) and 5024.5 require state agencies to provide notice to and consult with the SHPO before altering, transferring, relocation, or demolishing state-owned historical resources

that are listed on or are eligible for inclusion in the National Register or are registered or eligible for registration as California Historical Landmarks. Also, CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines also recommend provisions be made for the accidental discovery of archaeological sites, historical resources, or Native American human remains during construction (PRC Section 21083.2(i) CCR Section 15064.5[d and f]).

### **Affected Environment**

The Project Area of Potential Effects (APE) consists of approximately 25.89 acres. The APE extends 0.4 miles (2,112 ft.) northwest and southeast along the Whitewater River and 0.320 miles (1,689 ft.) east-west along Airport Boulevard (**Figure 7. APE**). The APE was established as the area of direct and indirect effects and includes all grading activities, vegetation clearing and grubbing, fill slopes, utility relocations, equipment/materials staging area, sidewalk improvements, minor retaining walls, and utility relocation. Most ground disturbance within the APE will occur along the bridge for the abutments and piles, roadways, driveway, and utility relocation. It should be noted that a separate CVWD project involves lowering the bed of the Whitewater River about 5 feet to install concrete lining throughout the entire riverbed and embankments. This work is currently occurring within the proposed Project's footprint.

The vertical APE is anticipated to extend approximately 10-15 feet below existing ground surface for each bridge abutment foundation. The Project would raise the bridge profile by approximately 2-3 feet to maintain a minimum freeboard from the flood water. The vertical height will extend to a height of 35.5 feet, to account for 4 feet of concrete for the bridge deck, and 7 feet of steel railing. Utility relocations will have a depth of up to 8 feet. There will also be piles driven to a depth of approximately 60 feet to support the bridge abutment foundations.

- a) **No Impact.** Efforts to identify potential historical resources in the APE include background research, a search of site records and survey reports on file at the Eastern Information Center (EIC), efforts to coordinate with Native American representatives, and a pedestrian ground surface inventory. A records search of the APE and a one-mile study area buffer was obtained from the EIC on May 19, 2021. No previously recorded cultural resources have been identified within the APE.

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted with a request for a Sacred Lands File Search on May 19, 2021. The request to the NAHC seeks to identify any Native American cultural resources within or adjacent to the Project area. Negative results were returned on June 4, 2021. Historic resources were not identified during Native American consultation. Further discussion regarding Native American consultation is included in Section XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources.

A pedestrian field survey was conducted on September 1, 2021 by archaeologist Michelle Campbell for the purposes of identifying and recording archaeological resources. The surface survey was conducted via controlled transects spaced at no greater than 10-meter (32 foot) intervals where conditions allowed. Special attention was paid to all observed surface exposures and the banks of the Whitewater River, which were inspected for the presence of archaeological deposits, including prehistoric and historic artifacts, archaeological features and/or anthropogenic soils. All field conditions and observances were documented in the field notes and photographs.

The pedestrian survey did not identify any archaeological resources within the APE. One built environment historic-era resource is present within the APE, which consists solely of the existing Airport Boulevard Bridge.

The Airport Boulevard Bridge (Federal Br. No. 56C-0020) was originally built in 1951 and sustained damage in the 1969 flood. Partial reconstruction of the bridge occurred in 1970 when the bents were retrofitted by placing in-fill walls between the bent columns and pile cap with additional steel piles driven at the two ends of the in-filled wall bents. In 2017 the bridge was rehabilitated to include a 5-foot sidewalk on the south side. This bridge was listed as a Category 5 bridge type on the Caltrans Historic Bridge Inventory and is therefore not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Project would have no adverse effect on historical resources as defined by §15064.5. **No impact** would occur.


- b) **Less Than Significant.** To identify archaeological resources that might be affected by Project activities, efforts included background research, a search of site records and survey reports on file at the EIC, efforts to coordinate with Native American representatives, and a pedestrian ground surface inventory. A record search conducted at the EIC indicated that there were no previously recorded resources within the APE. During the pedestrian survey in 2021, no archaeological resources were identified within or adjacent to the APE. Additionally, archaeological resources were not identified during Native American consultation. Further discussion regarding Native American consultation is included in Section XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources.

A review of local geological formations, relevant landforms, soils, and historic map/aerial imagery was completed to determine the likelihood for the APE to contain archaeological resources (both buried and surface manifestations). This review revealed that the APE has been subject to extensive and repetitive ground disturbances due to roadway construction and reconfiguration; bridge construction; utility installation; agricultural land leveling and crop harvesting; vegetation control (via discing); land leveling for mobile home development; sidewalk and retaining wall installation; Whitewater River flood events; Whitewater River flood control management and maintenance; and most recently, due to the CVWD project lowering the bed of the Whitewater River by 5 feet, recontouring the levees, and concrete lining the entire Whitewater River corridor. The combined and repetitive ground disturbance associated with all these activities suggests that the APE has a *very low* potential to contain intact prehistoric and historic archaeological sites.

With any Project requiring ground disturbance, there is always the possibility that unmarked burials may be unearthed during construction. Implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measures **CR-1** and **CR-2** would ensure impacts remain **Less Than Significant**.

- c) **Less Than Significant.** As stated above, given the overall disturbance with the APE, disturbance to human remains including those interred outside of formal cemeteries is not anticipated. Furthermore, implementation of Measure **CR-2** would ensure impacts to undiscovered human remains remain **Less Than Significant**.

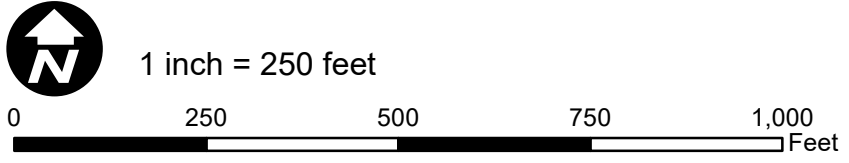


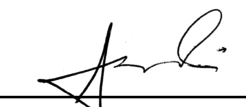

-  Area of Potential Effects
-  Existing CVWD Concrete Channel Lining
-  Pavement Edges
-  Metal Beam Guardrail
-  Median Striping
-  Lane Striping
-  Retaining Wall
-  Access Roads
-  Bridge Piers
-  Parcels



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Source: ESRI Maps Online; Dokken Engineering 4/29/2022; Created By: zachl



<b>Area of Potential Effects</b>			
 CALTRANS District 8 DLAE	06/13/2022 Date	 CALTRANS District 8 PQS	6/9/22 Date

**FIGURE 7**  
**Area of Potential Effects**

BRLS-5956(231)  
Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project  
Thermal, Riverside County, California





## **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

Potentially significant impacts related to Cultural Resources require the implementation of the Avoidance and Minimization Measures **CR-1** and **CR-2** listed below. With implementation of these measures, impacts would be less than significant.

### Avoidance and Minimization Measures

**CR-1:** If a significant archaeological resource(s) or tribal cultural resource is discovered on the property, ground disturbing activities shall be suspended 60 feet around the resource(s). An archaeologist, who meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for an archaeologist, shall assess the discovery, and if the discovery involves Native American resources a representative of the concerned tribe(s) shall be contracted to assess significance. The archaeologist, a representative of the appropriate Native American Tribe(s), and the County of Riverside shall confer regarding mitigation of the discovered resource(s). Work shall not resume in the area until mitigation has been completed or it has been determined that the archaeological resource(s) is not significant.

**CR-2:** Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code and Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code protect Native American burials, skeletal remains and grave goods, regardless of age and provide method and means for the appropriate handling of such remains. If human remains are encountered, work should halt within 60 feet of the discovery and the county coroner should be notified immediately. At the same time, an archaeologist should be contacted to evaluate the situation. If the human remains are of Native American origin, the coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours of such identification, which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). With the permission of the landowner or his/her authorized representative, the MLD may inspect the site of the discovery. The MLD shall complete the inspection within 48 hours of notification by the NAHC. The MLD may recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

<b>VI. ENERGY</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan (2015), City of Coachella General Plan 2035 (2015), and Roadway Construction Emissions Model 9.0.0 (2018).

**Findings of Fact:**

**Affected Environment**

Energy consumption can be measured in direct and indirect energy use. Direct energy use is the energy consumed in the actual propulsion of a vehicle using the facility. It can be measured in terms of the thermal value of the fuel [usually measured in British thermal units (BTUs) or Joules], the costs of the fuel, or the quantity of electricity used in the engine or motor. Indirect energy is defined as all the remaining energy consumed to run a transportation system, including construction energy, maintenance energy, and any substantial impacts to energy consumption related to Project induced land use changes and mode shifts, and any substantial changes in energy associated with vehicle operation, manufacturing or maintenance due to increased automobile use.

- a) Less than Significant Impact.

Construction

Energy use associated with the proposed Project would primarily be associated with the consumption of fuel through operation of heavy-duty construction equipment, material deliveries, and debris hauling. Fuel consumption was calculated by inputting emissions results from the SMAQMD Roadway Construction Emissions Model into the U.S. EPA Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator (<https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>), and converting the results into fuel and energy equivalence consumed. Table 5 below shows the estimated annual fuel consumption needed to construct the proposed Project.

**Table 5. Annual Fuel Consumption**

CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from Construction in 2044 (Metric Tons)	Annual Fuel Consumption	
	Diesel (gallons)	Total Energy (BTU)
2,566	252,105	3.46344E+10

As indicated in Table 5, energy use associated with proposed Project construction is estimated to result in the short-term consumption of 252,105 gallons of diesel fuel, which is equivalent to approximately 3.46344E+10 BTUs consumed during construction. This represents a small demand on local and regional fuel supplies that would be easily accommodated, and this demand would cease once construction is complete. Moreover, construction-related energy consumption would be temporary and not present a permanent source of energy demand, and demand for fuel would have no noticeable effect on peak or baseline demands for energy. Construction activities would be required to adhere to Title 13 California Code of Regulations Section 2499, which requires that nonessential idling of construction equipment be restricted to five minutes or less. Therefore, construction of the Project would not result in an inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy. There would be **Less Than Significant Impacts**.

#### Operational

Operation of the proposed bridge is not anticipated to impact long-term energy use as no lighting is proposed along the bridge. If lighting is incorporated into the Project, lighting will be appropriately shielded and would be consistent with the City of Coachella and Riverside County lighting guidelines and standards requiring low energy use LED lighting to be incorporated per measure **VIS-1** below. Further, as the bridge will continue to operate as a two-lane bridge, operation of the Project would not result in an inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy. As the Project would not contribute to an increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the proposed Project would be in compliance with SB 743 as well as the goals and policies of the County of Riverside Climate Action Plan. The Project will also provide sidewalks on both sides of the bridge and accommodate access to the future CV Link trail. These alternative transportation options for people to utilize in place of driving a vehicle are consistent with goals set fourth in the Riverside County Climate Action Plan. Operation of the proposed bridge would have no impacts related to GHG emissions as no lighting is currently proposed along the bridge. If lighting is incorporated into the Project, measure **VIS-1** will be implemented to further reduce any potential GHG emissions and potential climate change impacts from the Project.

Operation of the Project would also not obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. There would be **Less Than Significant Impacts**.

- b) **No Impact.** The Project would have no potential to obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency as operation of the Project would not result in an inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy. There would be **No Impact**.

#### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No significant impact related to Energy which would require mitigation would occur. With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measure **VIS-1** below, and in Section I, Aesthetics, impacts would remain less than significant.

#### Avoidance and Minimization Measure

**VIS-1:** Lighting will be appropriately shielded. The Project's lighting design must be consistent with the City of Coachella and Riverside County lighting guidelines and standards.

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

**Source(s):** Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project Paleontological Memorandum (June 2022), Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan (2021), City of Coachella General Plan 2035 (2015), California Department of Conservation Earthquake Hazards Zone Application EQ Zapp (2022) and Riverside County General Plan Environmental Impact Report (2003).

**Findings of Fact:**

## Affected Environment

The proposed Project occurs within the USGS Indio, California 7.5-minute Quadrangle Map. The proposed Project site is situated in a valley and is approximately 125 to 135 feet above mean sea level. Topographical features in the Project vicinity include the Santa Ana Mountains approximately 7.5 miles to the west, Mecca Hills 4.5 miles east, and the Salton Sea 10 miles southeast.

The soils present on the proposed Project site, as mapped by the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) include the following (NRCS 2021):

- Fluvents
  - Gilman fine sandy loam, wet, 0 to 2 percent slopes
  - Indio very fine sandy loam, wet
- a (i) **No Impact.** Based on the California Department of Conservation Earthquake Hazards Zone Application EQ Zapp, the Project site is not within an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone. **No Impact** related to fault rupture would result from the proposed Project.
- a (ii) **Less than Significant Impact.** Like all of Southern California, Riverside County has and will continue to be subject to ground shaking resulting from activity on local and regional faults. However, the proposed replacement bridge would be required to be constructed in accordance with the seismic design parameters from the California Building Code as well as the Riverside County General Plan Safety Element. With adherence to all applicable design and construction standards, impacts related to seismic ground shaking would be **Less than Significant.**
- a (iii) **Less than Significant Impact.** The Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan and City of Coachella General Plan identifies the risk of liquefaction at the Project site as high. The proposed replacement bridge would be required to be constructed in accordance with the seismic design parameters from the California Building Code as well as both the Riverside County and City of Coachella General Plan Safety Elements. With adherence to all applicable design and construction standards, impacts related to liquefaction would be **Less than Significant.**
- a (iv) **No Impact.** The proposed Project is not within an area potentially subject to earthquake-induced landslides. Therefore, there would be **No Impact.**
- b) **Less than Significant Impact.** Excavation and drilling during construction would result in soil disturbance, rendering surface soils susceptible to erosion and sedimentation. However, this impact would be avoided and minimized through implementation of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) (measure **WQ-1**) which would require incorporation of BMPs and erosion control methods. With adherence to state and federal requirements, impacts related to soil erosion or loss of topsoil would ensure impacts would be **Less than Significant.**
- c, d) **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project would not include the construction of any occupied buildings subject to the Uniform Building Code. Prior to construction, a site-specific geotechnical investigation of the soils in the Whitewater River would occur at

each bridge support location. The geotechnical investigation will ensure that compressible soils beneath the bridge footings/foundations have been sufficiently densified. With adherence to all applicable design and construction standards, impacts related to unstable geologic units, soils, or soil expansion would be **Less than Significant**.

- e) **No Impact.** The Project does not include septic tanks or an alternative wastewater disposal system on the site. There would be **No Impact**.
- f) **Less than Significant.** According to the Riverside County General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the proposed Project is in an area of high paleontological sensitivity. A Paleontological Memorandum was prepared to assess the potential of the Project to impact fossil resources. In order to assess potential, background research, a records search and a survey was completed.

The Project is mapped as Holocene (<11,700 years ago) alluvial sand and gravel of Whitewater River, and Holocene alluvial sand and clay of valley areas/clay of playa lakes. Artificial fill was noted within the Project area during the survey.

Paleontologist Santiago Hernandez of Cogstone performed a paleontological field survey of the Project area on April 14, 2022. All undeveloped and potentially native ground surface areas within the ground disturbance portion of the Project area were examined when it was safe to do so; known areas of fill were not examined. When such were present, existing ground disturbances (e.g., cutbanks, ditches, animal burrows, etc.) were visually inspected. Observable native sediments consisted of slightly to moderately sorted, brown to gray silts with some area containing sands and larger cobble sized clasts, consistent with geologic mapping. No fossil resources were observed during the survey.

In assessing the sediments potential to produce fossils, artificial fill is assigned no potential. Locally, Pleistocene fossils typically begin appearing about eight to ten feet deep in the valleys, although rarely fossils occur at shallower depths. Shallower sediments in the valleys usually do not contain the remains of extinct animals, although Holocene (less than 11,700 years old) remains may be present. Project sediments fit all three points for low potential sediments as per Caltrans paleontological sensitivity rankings. Low potential includes all sediments that 1) are potentially fossiliferous but that have not yielded significant fossils in the past; 2) have not yet yielded fossils but possess a potential for containing fossil remains; or 3) contain common and/or widespread invertebrate fossils if the taxonomy, phylogeny, and ecology of the species contained in the rock are well understood.

Typically, geological units less than 11,700 years old (Holocene) are given a low sensitivity as they are too young to contain the remains of extinct animals. A study of Lake Cahuilla beds in La Quinta produced radiometric ages of charcoal between 5,890 + 60 and 1,080 + 80 years old from depths of 10.5 feet and 3.3 feet respectively. No fossils of extinct animals were recovered from the 7,050 pounds of sediment.

Because of these factors, the Holocene sediments of the Project are assigned a low potential for scientifically significant fossils. No Paleontological Mitigation Plan is required. Project specific paleontological impacts requiring mitigation measures are not required. Avoidance and minimization measures **GEO-1** and **GEO-2** will be implemented to ensure impacts would remain **Less Than Significant**.



### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No significant impact related to Geology and Soils that would require mitigation would occur. With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measures **GEO-1** and **GEO-2** listed below and **WQ-1** listed below and in Section X, Hydrology and Water Quality, impacts would remain Less than Significant.

#### Avoidance and Minimization Measures

**GEO-1:** A pre-construction paleontological sensitivity training will be provided to construction personnel. This training will be based on the Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 14-7 “Paleontological Resources.”

**GEO-2:** If any suspected paleontological resources (fossils) are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, the construction supervisor shall halt work within a 60-foot radius around the find and establish an exclusionary buffer. Construction personnel shall not collect or move any suspected paleontological materials or further disturb any soils within the exclusionary buffer, but construction activity may continue unimpeded on other portions of the project site. Construction activity shall not resume within the exclusionary buffer until a qualified paleontologist can assess the significance of the find. If the paleontologist determines the find is not a paleontological resource, no further evaluation is required and work can resume. However, if the paleontologist determines the find is a paleontological resource, construction activity shall not resume within the exclusionary buffer in order to assess its significance pursuant to CEQA. If the find is determined to be significant, it shall be collected from the field and the paleontologist shall make recommendations for monitoring, curation, and reporting.

**WQ-1:** The proposed Project would require a NPDES CGP for Discharges of storm water associated with construction activities (Construction General Permit 2012-0006-DWQ) or current permit. The construction contractor shall adhere to the SWRCB Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ NPDES Permit pursuant to Section 402 of the CWA. This permit authorizes storm water and authorized non-storm water discharges from construction activities. As part of this Permit requirement, a SWPPP shall be prepared prior to construction consistent with the requirements of the RWQCB. This SWPPP will incorporate all applicable BMPs to ensure that adequate measures are taken during construction to minimize impacts to water quality.

<b>VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS:</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan (2015), Riverside County Climate Action Plan (2019) and South Coast Air Quality Management District Air Quality Management Plan (2016).

**Findings of Fact:**

**Regulatory Background**

Riverside County 2019 Climate Action Plan Update

The County updated its Climate Action Plan (CAP) on December 17, 2019 to integrate its past and current efforts with future efforts to reduce GHG emissions and promote sustainability in its operations and growth. The 2019 CAP Update includes an update to the County’s GHG inventory for the year 2018 and sets a target to reduce community-wide GHG emissions by 15 percent from 2008 baseline levels by 2020, 49 percent by 2030, and 83 percent by 2050. GHG reduction measures prescribed in the 2019 CAP Update build upon those adopted under the County’s 2015 CAP to ensure that the County meets the reduction targets established pursuant to SB 32.

Riverside County Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Screening Tables

In the County’s guidance document titled “Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Screening Tables, County of Riverside, California,” the County determined the size of development that is too small to be able to provide the level of GHG emission reductions expected from the Screening Tables or alternate emissions analysis method. The County’s analysis determined that the 3,000 metric ton (MT) of carbon dioxide equivalent gases (CO<sub>2e</sub>) per year value be used in defining small projects that, when combined with modest energy efficiency measures shown in the bullet points below, are considered less than significant and do not need to use the Screening Tables or alternative calculations. The efficiency measures required of small projects are:

- Energy efficiency matching or exceeding the Title 24 requirements in effect as of January 2017; and
- Water conservation measures that match the California Green Building Standards Code in effect as of January 2017.

a) **Less than Significant Impact.** GHG emissions can be divided into those produced during construction and those produced during operations. Construction GHG emissions include emissions produced as a result of material processing, emissions produced by onsite construction equipment, and emissions arising from traffic delays due to construction. These emissions will be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations

in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases. In addition, with innovations such as longer pavement lives, improved traffic management plans, and changes in materials, the GHG emissions produced during construction can be mitigated to some degree by longer intervals between maintenance and rehabilitation events. As discussed in Section III, Air Quality, construction of the Project would be in compliance with applicable air quality rules.

Construction Emissions

Construction of the proposed Project is anticipated to take 24 months. The Project’s construction emissions were estimated using the Roadway Construction Emissions Model by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD 2014). As summarized in Table 6, the on-site construction equipment for the proposed Project is anticipated to emit 2,566 metric tons of GHG during construction.

**Table 6. Construction CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions Compared to Threshold of Significance**

Greenhouse Gas	Road Construction Emissions Model Estimates (metric tons/year)	Riverside County Screening Threshold (metric tons/year)
CO <sub>2</sub>	2,566 total for the proposed Project	3,000

Source: Modeling using the *Roadway Construction Emissions Model 9.0.0* (Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District 2017).

Operational Emissions

GHG emissions produced during operations are typically associated with increased traffic volumes or changes in automobile speeds. The proposed Project would not increase the number of automobiles in the traffic system; therefore, operation of the new bridge would not increase GHG emissions. Further, the Project will provide sidewalk on both sides of the new bridge and accommodate connectivity to the future CV Link trail. The Project will be in compliance with the Riverside County Climate Action Plan, adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.

Although the proposed Project will not exceed any thresholds, Riverside County is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the Riverside County Climate Action Plan. As demonstrated above, the Project will be in compliance with goals set fourth in the Riverside County Climate Action Plan by providing an alternative transportation option for people to utilize in place of driving a vehicle. Operation of the proposed bridge would have no impacts related to GHG emissions as no lighting is currently proposed along the bridge. If lighting is incorporated into the Project, measure **VIS-1** will be implemented to further reduce any potential GHG emissions and potential climate change impacts from the Project.

Impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions or climate change from construction and operation of the proposed Project would be **Less than Significant**.

- b) **No Impact.** GHG emissions from construction activity would be temporary and intermittent and would not exceed the Riverside County Screening Threshold for small projects. Operation of the proposed Project would not result in any significant GHG emissions. As demonstrated above, the Project will be in compliance with goals set fourth in the Riverside County Climate Action Plan. Therefore, the proposed Project would not conflict with any

applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. **No impacts** are anticipated.

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No significant impact related to Greenhouse Gas Emissions which would require mitigation would occur. With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measure **VIS-1**, shown below and in Section I, Aesthetics, impacts would remain less than significant.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

**VIS-1:** Lighting will be appropriately shielded. The Project's lighting design must be consistent with the City of Coachella and Riverside County lighting guidelines and standards.

<b>IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment (June 2022) and Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan (2021).

**Findings of Fact:**

**Regulatory Setting**

Hazardous materials and hazardous wastes are regulated by many State and Federal laws. These include not only specific statutes governing hazardous waste, but also a variety of laws regulating air and water quality, human health and land use.

Hazardous waste in California is regulated primarily under the authority of the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, and the California Health and Safety Code. Other California laws that affect hazardous waste are specific to handling, storage, transportation, disposal, treatment, reduction, cleanup and emergency planning.

Worker health and safety and public safety are key issues when dealing with hazardous materials that may affect human health and the environment. Proper disposal of hazardous material is vital if it is disturbed during Project construction.

- a) **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project will update the existing facility to meet seismic, scour, flood, and design standards. No additional transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials is anticipated as a result of the Project.

During construction of the proposed Project, the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials will be conducted pursuant to all applicable local, State and Federal laws, and in cooperation with the Riverside County Fire Department Office of Emergency Services (OES), Riverside County Department of Environmental Health Hazardous Materials Division (DEH) Environmental Protection and Oversight Division, and California Occupational Safety and Health Administration, ensuring impacts would be **Less than Significant**.

- b) **Less than Significant Impact.** Based on the Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment (ISA) (September 2022) for the proposed Project and visual site surveys, **Table 7** below describes evidence of the potential Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) on the properties assessed for this ISA (Subject Properties).

Upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment would be **Less Than Significant** based on background research of hazardous materials in the Project vicinity and implementation of avoidance and minimization measures **HAZ-1** through **HAZ-4**.

**Table 7. REC Evidence**

Location	Description of REC Evidence Found
Airport Boulevard Bridge	The structural elements of bridges, including concrete, were potentially formed with asbestos containing material, if they were constructed before 1975. As the structure within the Project area predates 1975, any structural concrete to be disturbed by the Project may require testing for asbestos containing materials. The CVWD project is currently lining the Whitewater River with concrete. Retrofitting the Airport Boulevard Bridge requires the contractor to sample for asbestos containing material prior to bridge work. The results of this survey, once conducted, will be used to determine if any asbestos containing material is within the structural concrete in the bridge. If the results of the asbestos containing material site investigation is not obtained, a site investigation is warranted for asbestos containing materials; however, the level of risk to the project is low. The sidewalks and handrails were recently constructed in 2021 as part of the adjacent railroad grade separation project and no asbestos or lead is anticipated to be

Location	Description of REC Evidence Found
	contained in the concrete or handrails. No site investigation is warranted for the sidewalks or handrails and there is no level of risk to the project.
Treated Wood Debris	The Project Area contains treated wood utility poles which could potentially be disturbed during construction. Any treated wood encountered would be required to be disposed of as a hazardous waste. No site investigation is warranted for treated wood and the level of risk to the project is low.
Various pole- mounted electrical transformers within or immediately adjacent to the Project boundaries.	Potential PCB's in pole-mounted electrical transformers. As of the date of this ISA, the existence and/or levels of PCB's associated with the pole- or pad-mounted electrical transformers, which may be encountered within the planned construction area, had not been determined. No site investigation is warranted for treated wood and the level of risk to the project is low.

- c) **Less than Significant Impact.** The John Kelley Elementary and John Kelley Headstart Schools are approximately a ¼ mile from the Project site. During the construction of the proposed Project, the transport, use, and storage of hazardous materials will be conducted pursuant to all applicable local, State and Federal laws, and in cooperation with the Riverside County Fire Department OES, Riverside County DEH Environmental Protection and Oversight Division, and California Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Additionally, the potential to encounter unforeseen hazardous materials does exist. With implementation of measures **HAZ-1** through **HAZ-4**, impacts would remain **Less Than Significant**.
- d) **No Impact.** A summary of the published lists of known hazardous substance sites was provided by Environmental Data Resources (EDR). EDR reviewed standard federal, state, and local listings of known sites and identified 8 sites within the Project area and 28 within one mile of the Project area (see **Figure 8. Known Hazardous Waste Sites**). Site 3 is the CVWD Project currently undergoing construction and the remaining 7 sites do not contain sufficient information or have been cleaned up and closed for decades. The hazardous waste sites outside of the Project area will not be impacted by the Project. Additionally, the proposed Project area does not encompass a site included in the list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, which is also known as the Cortese List. There would be **No Impact**.
- e) **No Impact.** The proposed Project area is within the Jacqueline Cochran Airport Influence Area and is classified as Compatibility Zone D. Within this zone, it is prohibited to have highly sensitive outdoor nonresidential uses and hazards to flight. Examples of highly noise-sensitive outdoor nonresidential uses that should be prohibited include amphitheatres and drive-in theaters. Hazards to flight include physical (e.g., tall objects), visual, and electronic forms of interference with the safety of aircraft operations. The proposed Project would replace the existing Airport Boulevard Bridge and does not fit these classifications. Since the Project area would not construct a structure that would be considered highly sensitive outdoor nonresidential use and a hazard to flight, there would be **No Impact**.

- f) **Less Than Significant Impact.** During construction, lane closures at night may be required but it is anticipated that these would be short in duration, would not be full roadway closures, and would not require any detour routes. The existing access roads to the north and south of the existing bridge would be utilized for false work. Avoidance and Minimization measure **TRA-1** would be implemented to minimize any potential impacts to emergency service access. Mitigation measures are not required to reduce impacts. Impacts would be **Less Than Significant**.
  
- g) **No Impact.** The Project would not cause people or structures to be exposed to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. There would be **No Impact**.

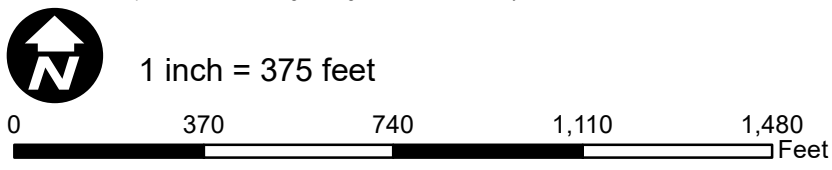


Project Area  
 Parcels within Project Area  
# EDR Radius Report Site ID



V:\2810-Airport Blvd Bridge Widening Project\HazWaste\F4\_DocumentedHazSites.mxd

Source: ESRI Maps Online; Dokken Engineering 4/26/2022; Created By: ahale



**FIGURE 8**  
**Documented Hazardous Waste Sites**

BRLS-5956(231)  
 Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project  
 Thermal, Riverside County, California





## **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No significant impact related to Hazards and Hazardous Materials which would require mitigation would occur. With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measures **HAZ-1** through **HAZ-4** listed below and **TRA-1** listed below and in Section XVII. Transportation, impacts would remain less than significant.

### Avoidance and Minimization Measures

- HAZ-1:** As is the case for any Project that proposes excavation, the potential exists for unknown hazardous contamination to be revealed during Project construction. Contaminated soils can be encountered at any depth of excavation. If soils contaminated by hazardous waste are discovered during construction, proper hazardous waste handling and emergency procedures under 40 CFR § 262 and Division 4.5 of Title 22 CA Code of Regs shall be followed. The specific methods and protocol for determining if a soil is contaminated are contained in the Caltrans Hazardous Procedures for Construction.
- HAZ-2:** Any leaking transformers observed during the course of the Project should be considered a potential polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) hazard. A detailed inspection of individual electrical transformers was not conducted for this Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. However, should leaks from electrical transformers (that will either remain within the construction limits or will require removal and/or relocation) be encountered during construction, the transformer fluid should be sampled and analyzed by qualified personnel for detectable levels of PCB's. Should PCBs be detected, the transformer should be removed and disposed of in accordance with Title 22, Division 4.5 of the California Code of Regulations and any other appropriate regulatory agency. Any stained soil encountered below electrical transformers with detectable levels of PCB's should also be handled and disposed of in accordance with Title 22, Division 4.5 of the California Code of Regulations and any other appropriate regulatory agency.
- HAZ-3:** Any chemically treated wood must be treated as Treated Wood Waste (TWW) and disposed of as hazardous waste. For the TWW, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) regulations §66261.9.5 provide alternative management standards (AMS) for TWW. Caltrans 2018 Special Standard Provision (SSP) for TWW, SSP 14-11.14, is based on DTSC's AMS regulations. This SSP directs the Contractor to follow the AMS including providing training to all personnel that may come in contact with TWW. This training must include, at a minimum, safe handling, sorting and segregating, storage, labeling (including date), and proper disposal methods.
- HAZ-4:** If no prior assessment of asbestos in the existing Airport Boulevard Bridge is conducted as part of the CVWD project, a Site Investigation is recommended for Asbestos Containing Material (ACMs) in the existing bridge that will be disturbed during construction. This investigation should be implemented before construction and documented as part of the Phase II ISA.
- TRA-1:** Temporary impacts to traffic flow as a result of construction activities would be minimized through construction phasing and signage and a traffic management plan.

<b>X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY:</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i. result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project Water Quality Assessment Report (May 2022) and Location Hydraulic Study (January 2023).

**Findings of Fact:**

**Regulatory Setting**

Section 401 of the CWA requires water quality certification from RWQCB when a project requires a CWA Section 404 permit. Section 404 of the CWA requires a permit from the USACE to discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States.

Along with CWA Section 401, CWA Section 402 establishes the NPDES permit for the discharge of any pollutant into waters of the U.S. The EPA has delegated administration of the NPDES program to the SWRCB and nine RWQCBs. The SWRCB and RWQCB also regulate other waste

discharges to land within California through the issuance of waste discharge requirements under authority of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act.

The SWRCB has developed and issued a statewide NPDES permit to regulate storm water discharges from all Caltrans activities on its highways and facilities. Caltrans construction projects are regulated under the Statewide permit, and projects performed by other entities on Caltrans right-of-way (encroachments) are regulated by the SWRCB's Statewide General Construction Permit. All construction projects over 1 acre require a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to be prepared and implemented during construction. Caltrans activities less than 1 acre require a Water Pollution Control Program.

The Whitewater River Region Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) describes those activities and programs implemented by the Permittees to manage Urban Runoff to comply with the requirements of the NPDES municipal separate storm sewer system MS4 permit for the Whitewater River Region. Led by the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and Riverside County, the SWMP was developed in collaboration with the Cities of Banning, Cathedral City, Coachella, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, Indio, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage, as well as the Coachella Valley Water District. The primary purpose of the SWMP is to provide watershed-based planning throughout the Whitewater River Region SWMP planning area.

### **Affected Environment**

The Whitewater River is the primary drainage course in the area, spanning the length of the Coachella Valley. There is a perennial flow in the mountains, but because of diversions and percolation into the basin, the river becomes dry further downstream. The Whitewater River serves as a drainage way for irrigation return flows, treated community wastewater, and storm runoff (Colorado River Basin Plan). Whitewater River originates approximately 20 miles northeast of the Project, at a slightly higher elevation in the foothills to the east. The Whitewater River runs for approximately 10 miles from the Project area into the Salton Sea.

The FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) designates the Project area as Zone AE. Zone X indicates a high-risk area, also known as the special flood hazard area (**See Figure 9, FEMA Map**). A FIRMette map displays FEMA Flood Zone classifications and flood extents for the proposed Project area.

#### **a) Less Than Significant.**

##### Short-term Water Quality Impacts

Construction activities associated with the Project would include disturbances to the ground surface from earthwork, grading, excavation for foundation installation, and rock slope protection to prevent erosion. These activities could potentially increase the amount of sediment entering Whitewater River. Runoff during the winter season is of greater concern due to the potential erosion of unprotected or graded surfaces during rain events. Sediment could potentially harm aquatic resources and water quality. Oil and other petroleum products used to maintain and operate construction equipment could be accidentally released. Additionally, increased noise, dust, and trash, could impact the quality of aquatic habitat within the Project area during construction. Potential temporary impacts would be avoided and minimized through standard BMPs that avoid or minimize the release of pollutants, including chemical toxins, into the environment during

construction. Construction areas would be protected to prevent items from entering the waterway.

Long-term Water Quality Impacts

The Project would result in an increase of approximately 0.34 acre of impervious surface area, which would contribute to an increase in the volume of storm water runoff from the bridge surface that could enter the drainage system and eventually the waterways within the Project area. The Project will utilize existing inlets, culverts and stormdrain features on the south side of the existing east and west bridge approaches; however, existing inlets on the north side of the approaches will be relocated to the widened pavement limits. Additional inlets may be constructed on the bridge and connect to existing culverts and stormdrain features on the approaches as the bridge currently outfalls stormwater directly into the Whitewater River channel below. This stormwater would be captured and redirected to existing facilities. Based on the existing impervious surface and the minimal additional amount of impervious surface proposed with the Project, it is anticipated the sizing of existing culverts and stormdrain features is sufficient to collect and direct future flows; however, relocated inlets may be upsized during final design. Through the development and implementation of BMPs and avoidance and minimization measures, the proposed Project is not anticipated to result in long term water quality impacts.

Project specific water quality impacts requiring mitigation are not required. With implementation of avoidance and minimization measures **WQ-1** through **WQ-4**, impacts would remain **Less Than Significant**.

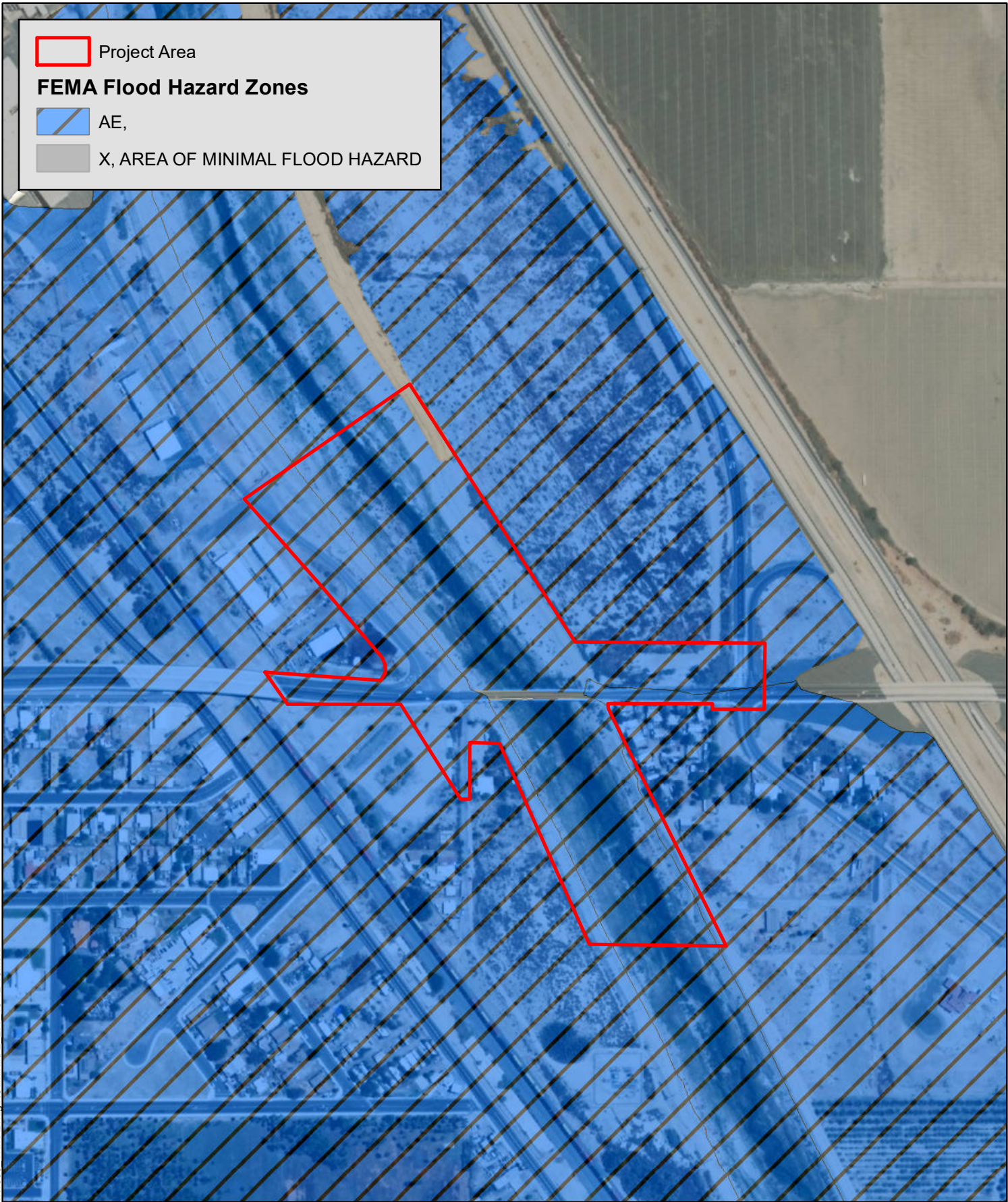
- b) **No Impact.** Although the Project would require a geotechnical investigation prior to construction that would involve four soil borings up to depths of 100 to 130 feet, this would not be anticipated to deplete groundwater or interfere with groundwater recharge. There would be **No Impact**.
- c (i-iv) **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed Project would slightly modify existing drainage patterns due to the proposed bridge widening. However, there will be an increase of approximately 0.34 acre of impervious surface and no regional drainage facilities are anticipated to be impacted and no significant new drainage facilities are expected to be constructed. The Project will utilize existing drainage facilities on the south side of the existing east and west bridge approaches; however, existing inlets on the north side of the approaches will be relocated to the widened pavement limits. Additional inlets may be constructed on the bridge and connect to existing drainage facilities on the approaches as the bridge currently outfalls stormwater directly into the Whitewater River channel below. This stormwater would be captured and redirected to existing drainage facilities. Based on the existing impervious surface and the minimal additional amount of impervious surface proposed with the Project, it is anticipated the sizing of existing drainage facilities is sufficient to collect and direct future flows; however, relocated inlets may be upsized during final design. Existing drainage patterns will remain the same as the bridge location is not changing and drainage patterns would not be substantially altered by the proposed Project.




The ongoing CVWD project that is occurring within the Project area is also modifying current drainage patterns in the Project vicinity. The CVWD project involves improvements to existing channel facilities and is required to: 1) restore channel flow conditions to convey the 100-year flood and provide requisite freeboard, and 2) remove the existing threat of

flooding during a 100-year storm event to the parcels within the area of benefit. The proposed CVWD project includes continuous channel side slope concrete-lining from Avenue 54 downstream a point approximately 300 feet downstream of the existing Thermal Drop Structure. CVWD project improvements will also include channel bottom concrete-lining under and in proximity to the four bridges that cross the subject reach of the channel. According to the Environmental Impact Report prepared, the CVWD project will have a less than significant impact on drainage patterns.

Since the proposed Project and the ongoing CVWD project will not substantially alter the existing drainage patterns in the area, impacts to on- or off-site erosion, flooding, runoff water/ polluted runoff water would be **Less Than Significant**.

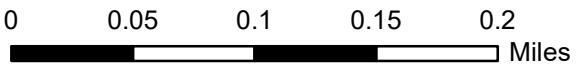




 Project Area  
**FEMA Flood Hazard Zones**  
 AE,  
 X, AREA OF MINIMAL FLOOD HAZARD

v:\1836 - 11thSt\Bridges\Cultural\F2\_Loc\_10-12-10.mxd

Source: ESRI World Street Maps Online; Dokken Engineering 4/26/2022; Created By: ahale



**FIGURE 9  
FEMA Map**

BRLS-5956(231)  
 Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project  
 Thermal, Riverside County, California



- d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The Project area is within FEMA Zone AE (**Figure 9. FEMA FIRMette Map**). Zone AE are high risk areas that have at least a 1% annual chance of flooding. Implementation of avoidance and minimization measures **WQ-2** through **WQ-3** will reduce the risk of pollutants being released during construction if inundation does occur. Mitigation measures are not required to reduce impacts. Impacts would be **Less Than Significant**.

Furthermore, the Project area is located approximately 10 miles northwest of the Salton Sea, and is approximately 85 miles east of the ocean. As a result, the Project site is not subject to seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

- e) **No Impact.** As discussed above in question (b), the Project is not anticipated to deplete groundwater or interfere with groundwater recharge. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. There would be **No Impact**.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No significant impact related to Hydrology and Water Quality which would require mitigation would occur. With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measures **WQ-1** through **WQ-4** listed below, impacts would remain less than significant.

#### Avoidance and Minimization Measures

**WQ-1:** The proposed Project would require a NPDES CGP for Discharges of storm water associated with construction activities (Construction General Permit 2012-0006-DWQ) or current permit. The construction contractor shall adhere to the SWRCB Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ NPDES Permit pursuant to Section 402 of the CWA. This permit authorizes storm water and authorized non-storm water discharges from construction activities. As part of this Permit requirement, a SWPPP shall be prepared prior to construction consistent with the requirements of the RWQCB. This SWPPP will incorporate all applicable BMPs to ensure that adequate measures are taken during construction to minimize impacts to water quality.

**WQ-2:** To conform with water quality requirements in the CGP, the following will be implemented during construction:

- Vehicle maintenance, staging and storing equipment, materials, fuels, lubricants, solvents, and other possible contaminants must be a minimum of 50 feet from surface waters. Any necessary equipment washing must occur where the water cannot flow into surface waters.
- The Project specifications will require the contractor to operate under an approved spill prevention and clean-up plan;
- Construction equipment will not be operated in flowing water;
- Raw cement, concrete or concrete washings, asphalt, paint or other coating material, oil or other petroleum products, or any other substances that could be hazardous to aquatic life must be prevented from contaminating the soil or entering surface waters;

- Equipment used in and around surface waters must be in good working order and free of dripping or leaking contaminants; and,
- Any concrete rubble, asphalt, or other debris from construction must be taken to an approved disposal site.

**WQ-3:** Prior to the start of construction activities, the Project limits in proximity to jurisdictional waters must be marked with high visibility Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) fencing or staking to ensure construction will not further encroach into jurisdictional waters.

**WQ-4:** Contract specifications will include the following BMPs, where applicable, to reduce erosion during construction:

- Existing vegetation will be protected in place where feasible to provide an effective form of erosion and sediment control;
- As a permanent BMP, slope roughening by equipment tracking will be implemented to create unevenness on bare soil. Surface roughening reduces erosion potential by decreasing runoff velocities, trapping sediment, and increasing water infiltration.

<b>XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING:</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan (2021) and City of Coachella General Plan (2021).

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) **No Impact.** The Project would not divide an established community. As a bridge replacement project, the Project would provide improved emergency response and general access within the Thermal Community. There would be **No Impact**.
  
- b) **No Impact.** The proposed Project is located entirely within the CVMSHCP area; therefore, the Project is required to comply with the requirements set forth in the Plan. The proposed Project was analyzed for its consistency with the CVMSHCP. The proposed Project is located within the CVMSHCP boundaries; however, it is not located within any CVMSHCP identified Conservation Areas. Thus, the proposed Project is not subject to the Joint Project Review process as specified in Section 6.6.1.1. of the CVMSHCP. The project is not adjacent to a Conservation Area, and it is not subject to Land Use Adjacency Guidelines under Section 4.5 of the CVMSHCP. The Project is identified as a “Covered Activity” under the CVMSHCP Section 7.2.3 (Regional Road Projects), Table 7-3 (CVAG Regional Road Projects). The proposed Project is specifically designated in CVMSHCP Table 7-3 as the “AVENUE 56 / AIRPORT BLVD” Street under the “SPRR to East side of Bridge over Coachella Valley Storm Channel” segment. According to CVMSHCP Section 7.0 (Take Authorization for Covered Activities and Term of Permit), Covered Activities are not likely to result in “Take” of “Covered Species” as long as applicable avoidance and minimization measures described in the CVMSHCP are implemented. However, as none of the resources covered by the CVMSHCP were determined to be present or likely to occur, the Project is not subject to these specific measures. Additionally, the Project fulfills mitigation requirements per CVMSHCP Section 5.2.1.3 (Regional Road Projects Mitigation) and Section 6.6.1 (Obligations of Local Permittees).. These sections describe obligations of the local permittees for mitigation for regional road projects and projects outside of Conservation Areas. Per Section 5.2.1.3, mitigation for the proposed Project as a Covered Activity per Section 7.2.3, is covered through the Riverside County Measure A half-cent sales tax. Section 6.6.1 requires public projects to be consistent with Section 4.4 mitigation measures, and overall CVMSHCP compliance for public projects. As discussed previously in this portion of this report, the proposed Project is consistent with CVMSHCP requirements for public projects. Thus, the proposed Project is consistent with the biological resource goals and objectives of the CVMSHCP and **No Impacts** are anticipated.

Furthermore, the proposed Project is consistent with the Riverside County Circulation Element and the City of Coachella Mobility Element by providing an adequate facility for emergency response and increased access across the Whitewater River.

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No impacts have been identified; therefore, no avoidance or minimization measures are required.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES: Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** City of Coachella General Plan 2035 Environmental Impact Report (2012) and Riverside County General Plan EIR (2002).

**Findings of Fact:**

a & b) **No Impact.** There are no known mineral resources or locally important resources at the Project site. The City of Coachella General Plan EIR indicates the Project site is located in USGS Mineral Resource Zone 1 (MRZ-1), which consist of “areas where available geological information indicates that little likelihood exists for presence of significant mineral resources.” The Riverside County General Plan EIR indicates the Project site is in MRZ-3, which consists of “areas where the available geologic information indicates that mineral deposits exist, however, the significance of the deposit is undetermined” and “areas where the available geologic information indicates that mineral deposits are likely to exist, however, the significance of the deposit is undetermined”. Although the Riverside County EIR indicates a degree of uncertainty regarding presence of mineral resources, the Project site has no potential to be mined in the future because it is surrounded by adjacent and proximal industrial and residential uses and is not considered a state-designated mineral resource extraction zone. There would be **No Impact**.

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No impacts have been identified; therefore, no avoidance or minimization measures are required.

<b>XIII. NOISE:</b> Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan (2015) and Federal Highway Administration Construction Noise Handbook (2017).

**Findings of Fact:**

**Regulatory Setting**

Riverside County has established noise-level performance standards for projects affected by non-transportation sources and transportation sources. Noise is generally characterized as an equivalent continuous sound level (Leq) averaged over time, day-night average sound level (Ldn), or CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent Level). The Noise Element of the Riverside County General Plan outlines noise policy with respect to CEQA.

For residences and retail commercial locations exposed to noise from transportation noise sources, the County has established a criterion of 55 dBA between 7:00AM and 10:00PM, and 45 dBA between 10:00PM and 7:00AM (2007); however, construction activities carried out for capital improvement projects by governmental agencies are exempt from the County Noise Control Ordinance due to County Ordinance No. 847.

**Figure 10. Noise Levels of Common Activities**

Common Outdoor Activities	Noise Level (dBA)	Common Indoor Activities
Jet Fly-over at 300m (1000 ft)	110	Rock Band
Gas Lawn Mower at 1 m (3 ft)	100	
Diesel Truck at 15 m (50 ft), at 80 km (50 mph)	90	Food Blender at 1 m (3 ft)
Noisy Urban Area, Daytime	80	Garbage Disposal at 1 m (3 ft)
Gas Lawn Mower, 30 m (100 ft)	70	Vacuum Cleaner at 3 m (10 ft)
Commercial Area		Normal Speech at 1 m (3 ft)
Heavy Traffic at 90 m (300 ft)	60	Large Business Office
Quiet Urban Daytime	50	Dishwasher Next Room
Quiet Urban Nighttime	40	Theater, Large Conference Room (Background)
Quiet Suburban Nighttime		Library
Quiet Rural Nighttime	30	Bedroom at Night, Concert Hall (Background)
	20	Broadcast/Recording Studio
	10	
Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing	0	Lowest Threshold of Human Hearing

**Affected Environment**

The noise environment near the proposed Project is dominated by traffic sources. Background noise levels are primarily influenced by adjacent roadways including Airport Boulevard and Highway 86. Traffic remains the dominant noise source at the Project site. As a way to characterize noise levels, Table 8 summarizes typical ambient noise levels based on population density.

**Table 8. Population Density and Associated Ambient Noise Levels**

Population Density	dBA, Ldn
Rural Suburban	40–50
Quiet suburban residential or small town	45–50
Normal suburban residential urban	50–55
Normal urban residential	60
Noisy urban residential	65
Very noisy urban residential	70
Downtown, major metropolis	75–80
Under flight path at major airport, 0.5 to 1 mile from runway	78–85
Adjoining freeway or near a major airport	80–90
Sources: Cowan 1984, Hoover and Keith 1996	

The vicinity of the Project area is most similar to that of “rural suburban”. Rural suburban areas have a typical noise level of 40-50 dBA (2015).

Noise sensitive receptors include the surrounding residences located adjacently to the southeast and southwest of Airport Boulevard, the closest within approximately 100 feet away.

Table 9 summarizes noise levels produced by commonly used construction equipment. Individual types of construction equipment are expected to generate noise levels ranging from 74 to 89 dBA at a distance of 50 feet. The construction noise level at a given location depends on the type of construction activity, the noise level generated by that activity, and the distance and shielding between the activity and noise receivers.

**Table 9. Construction Equipment Noise Emission Levels**

Equipment	Typical Noise Level (dBA) 50 feet from Source
Augur Drill Rig	85
Grader	85
Bulldozers	85
Truck	88
Loader	85
Roller	74
Air Compressor	81
Backhoe	80
Pneumatic Tool	85
Concrete Pump	82

Source: Federal Transit Administration, 1995

Generally, noise levels at construction sites can vary from 55 dBA to a maximum of nearly 96 dBA when heavy equipment is used. Construction noise of this Project would be intermittent, and noise levels would vary depending on the type of construction activity. For the proposed Project, the lowest construction equipment-related noise levels would be 55 dBA at a distance of 50 ft for sound from a pick-up truck. The highest noise levels would be up to 85 dBA (at a distance of 50 ft) for excavation and drilling as part of the installation of each of the proposed bridge piers and footings.



a) **Less Than Significant Impact.**

The Project would have less than significant impact on exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards due to County’s Ordinance No. 847.

Construction Impacts

During construction of the Project, noise from construction activities may intermittently dominate the noise environment in the immediate area of construction.

Per the County’s Ordinance No.847, capital improvement projects of a governmental agency are exempt from noise regulation. Construction activity could result in noise that exceeds the 50-dBA daytime or 45-dBA nighttime average ambient noise levels. Other construction activities associated with the proposed Project may cause a small amount of ground-borne vibration; however vibration from these activities would be short-term and intermittent. Although temporary construction noise for capital improvement projects is exempt from local noise ordinances, the Project would include construction methods, structure designs, and operational methods that would reduce the potential noise and vibration impacts to less than significant levels, and work activities would not exceed 86 dBA Lmax at 50 feet between the hours of 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. for the duration of construction. Therefore, impacts would be **Less than Significant**.

Operational Impacts

Operational noise associated with the proposed Project would remain the same as the existing bridge as no new travel lanes are proposed with the Project. The proposed Project would not result in any substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels. Therefore, impacts would be **Less than Significant**.

b) **Less Than Significant Impact.**

Construction Impacts

Construction of the proposed Project could potentially increase ground-borne vibration or noise in the Project area. Table 10 provides an estimate of vibration levels associated with construction activities for each piece of equipment. These are based on a wide range of soil conditions.

**Table 10. Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment**

Equipment	PPV at 25 ft (in/sec)
Pile Driver (impact)	1.518
Pile Drive (sonic)	0.734
Vibratory Roller	0.210
Hoe Ram	0.089
Large Bulldozer	0.089
Caisson drilling	0.089
Loaded trucks	0.076
Jackhammer	0.035
Small bulldozer	0.003

Source: Federal Transit Administration, 2006. See also:

[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/construction\\_noise/handbook/handbook09.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/construction_noise/handbook/handbook09.cfm)

During construction, the equipment with the greatest potential for vibration impacts would be generated by drilling activity during the geotechnical investigations and installation of bridge piers. Based on the information shown in Table 11, drilling could cause continuous vibration levels up to 0.089 PPV to buildings 25 feet away.

To assess the damage potential to nearby structures from ground vibration induced by construction equipment, the following criteria to evaluate the potential for damage was used:

**Table 11. Guideline Vibration Damage Potential Threshold Criteria**

Structure and Condition	Maximum PPV (in/sec)	
	Transient Sources	Continuous/Frequent Intermittent Sources
Extremely fragile historic buildings, ruins, ancient monuments	0.12	0.08
Fragile buildings	0.2	0.1
Historic and some old buildings	0.5	0.25
Older residential structures	0.5	0.3
New residential structures	1.0	0.5
Modern industrial/commercial buildings	2.0	0.5

*Note:* Transient sources create a single isolated vibration event, such as blasting or drop balls. Continuous/frequent intermittent sources include impact pile drivers, pogo-stick compactors, crack-and-seat equipment, vibratory pile drivers, and vibratory compaction equipment.

*Source:* Caltrans Transportation- and Construction-Induced Vibration Guidance Manual, June 2004

The nearest building, a mobile home located southeast of the Project, is over 150 feet away from the closest of the three bridge pier sites where drilling would occur. Therefore, there are no buildings that would be exposed to potentially damaging construction vibration levels exceeding the thresholds shown in Table 11. Impacts would be **Less than Significant**.

Operational Impacts

Operation of the proposed Project would not perceptibly increase ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise on the proposed Project because operation of the proposed Project would not involve vibration creating activities.

- c) **No Impact.** The closest airport to the Project site is the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport, which is located approximately 1.5 miles southwest. The Project site is located beyond the existing and future 55 dBA CNEL impact zone from Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport. Furthermore, the proposed Project would not result in the construction of structures to be occupied by residents or employees, therefore there would be **No Impact**.

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No impacts have been identified; therefore, no avoidance or minimization measures are required.

<b>XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING:</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan (2021) and City of Coachella General Plan (2021).

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) **No Impact.** The Project would have **No Impact** on population growth since it does not propose new homes. The Project will replace the existing bridge with a wider 2 lane bridge and would not induce population growth.
- b) **No Impact.** The Project would only require sliver takes for right of way acquisition and would not displace people or housing. **No Impact** would occur to people or housing such that replacement housing would be required.

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No impacts have been identified; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i. Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii. Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
v. Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan (2015) and City of Coachella General Plan (2021).

**Findings of Fact:**

- a(i) **No Impact.** The Project does not propose new housing or commercial development that would generate population growth or require additional fire services. Measure **TRA-1** would be implemented to avoid temporary impacts to fire protection response times as a result of construction activities. As the proposed bridge would be widened, it would provide additional space for vehicles to yield when emergency vehicles have their sirens or lights on. Therefore, response times will be improved after construction. There would be **No Impact** to fire protection.
- a(ii) **No Impact.** The Project does not propose new housing or commercial development that would generate population growth or require additional police services. Measure **TRA-1** would be implemented to reduce temporary impacts to police response times as a result of construction activities. As the proposed bridge would be widened, it would provide additional space for vehicles to yield when emergency vehicles have their sirens or lights on. Therefore, response times will be improved after construction. There would be **No Impact** to police protection.
- a(iii) **No Impact.** The Project does not include a residential component; therefore, no direct increase in population would occur requiring additional school facilities. There would be **No Impact** to schools.
- a(iv) **No Impact.** There are no parks within the Project area. There would be **No Impacts**.

- a(v) **No Impact.** There is a future plan to construct the Coachella Valley (CV) Link Trail along the western levee of the Whitewater River channel. The CV Link Trail will be a 50-mile, alternative transportation corridor for bicycles, pedestrians, and low-speed (up to 25 mph) electric vehicles along the Whitewater River and Tahquitz Creek that will stretch from Palm Springs to Coachella. The proposed CV Link Trail will provide recreational opportunities throughout the Coachella Valley and is a publicly owned facility managed by the Coachella Valley Association of Governments. The future CV Link Trail connection within the Project area would not be changed or altered in any way, therefore, there would be **No Impact** to other public facilities.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No significant impact related to Public Services which would require mitigation would occur. With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measure **TRA-1** listed below and in Section XVII. Transportation, impacts would remain less than significant.

#### Avoidance and Minimization Measure

**TRA-1:** Temporary impacts to traffic flow as a result of construction activities would be minimized through construction phasing and signage and a traffic management plan.

<b>XVI. RECREATION:</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan (2015) and City of Coachella General Plan (2021).

**Findings of Fact:**

- a, b) **No Impact.** The Project will construct sidewalk improvements on both sides of the new bridge as well as accommodate future connectivity to the CV Link Trail. The CV Link Trail is anticipated to be constructed along CVWD levees from Palm Springs to Thermal and connect to Airport Boulevard along the unnamed local road in the northwestern quadrant of the Project. The replacement bridge is anticipated to improve access to the future CV Link Trail; however, it would not be to the extent such that substantial physical deterioration would occur or be accelerated once the trail is constructed. Additionally, the Project would not require the construction or expansion of additional recreational facilities. There would be **No Impact**.

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No impacts have been identified; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

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

**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan (2021), City of Coachella General Plan (2021) and Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Levels of Service and Vehicles Miles Traveled (2020).

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) **No Impact.** The Project falls within both the County of Riverside General Plan and City of Coachella General Plan Area. The City of Coachella General Plan identifies Airport Boulevard as a Major Arterial with Bicycle Facility. Major arterials are defined as having six lanes. The County of Riverside General Plan identifies Airport Boulevard as an Urban Arterial. An urban arterial is defined by the County as having six to eight lanes. The County’s General Plan also identifies a Class I bike lane along Airport Boulevard. The proposed Project is being constructed as a two-lane facility, which is supported by the current traffic projections. It does not preclude future widening along Airport Boulevard. The recently constructed projects to the east and west of the Airport Boulevard Bridge (i.e., the grade separation to the west and the interchange to the east) do not include bike lanes. However, the proposed bridge would include shoulders that could be designated as Class II bicycle lanes in the future, if appropriate. The Project does not preclude the future construction of Class I bike lanes. Therefore, the Project as proposed is not in conflict with the City of Coachella and Riverside County General Plans. There would be **No Impacts.**
  
- b) **No Impact.** CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b) requires projects to analyze changes in vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The Riverside County Transportation Analysis Guidelines for Levels of Service and Vehicles Miles Traveled lists examples of projects that qualify as a non-significant transportation impacts. The document lists the “Rehabilitation, maintenance, replacement, safety, and repair projects designed to improve the condition of existing transportation assets” as a non-significant transportation impact. The proposed Project would replace the existing 2 lane Airport Boulevard Bridge with a new, wider, 2 lane bridge that meets current seismic and design standards and



would provide an adequate facility for emergency response and general access. Therefore, the Project qualifies as a non-significant transportation impact and there will be no changes to VMT. The Project would not be in conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b). There would be **No Impacts**.

- c) **No Impact.** As the Project would replace an existing bridge with the same lane capacity and complete roadway improvements, the Project would not increase hazards due to a permanent design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment). There would be **No Impact**.
- d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** During construction, some lane closures may be required but it is anticipated that these would be short in duration, would not be full roadway closures, and would not require any detour routes. Construction of the bridge is anticipated to be staged to allow for minimal lane closures and emergency access would remain adequate throughout construction. To ensure no impacts would occur during construction, **TRA-1** would be implemented to avoid any potential impacts to emergency service access. There would be a **Less than Significant impact**. Upon completion, the wider replacement bridge will improve emergency access.

#### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No significant impact related to Transportation which would require mitigation would occur. With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measure **TRA-1** listed below, impacts would remain less than significant.

#### Avoidance and Minimization Measure

**TRA-1:** Temporary impacts to traffic flow as a result of construction activities would be minimized through construction phasing and signage and a traffic management plan.

<b>XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES:</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project Archaeological Survey Report (July 2022) and Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project Historic Property Survey Report (July 2022). AB 52 Native American Correspondence Log (2022).

**Findings of Fact:**

**Regulatory Background**

Effective July 1, 2015, CEQA was revised to include early consultation with California Native American tribes and consideration of tribal cultural resources (TCRs). These changes were enacted through Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52). By including TCRs early in the CEQA process, AB 52 intends to ensure that local and Tribal governments, public agencies, and project proponents would have information available, early in the project planning process, to identify and address potential adverse impacts to TCRs. CEQA now establishes that a “project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment” (PRC § 21084.2).

To help determine whether a project may have such an adverse effect, the PRC requires a lead agency to consult with any California Native American tribe that requests consultation and is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project. That consultation must take place prior to the determination of whether a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or environmental impact report is required for a project (PRC § 21080.3.1). Consultation must consist of the lead agency providing formal notification, in writing, to the tribes that have requested notification or proposed projects within their traditionally and culturally affiliated area. AB 52 stipulates that the NAHC shall assist the lead agency in identifying the California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated within the project area. If the tribe wishes to engage in consultation on the project, the tribe must respond to the lead agency within 30 days of receipt of the formal notification. Once the lead agency receives the tribe's request to consult, the lead agency must then begin the consultation process within 30 days. If a lead agency determines that a project may cause a substantial adverse change to TCRs, the lead agency must consider measures to mitigate that impact. Consultation concludes when either: 1) the parties agree to measures to mitigate or avoid a significant effect, if a significant effect exists, on a TCR, or 2) a party, acting in good faith and after reasonable effort, concludes that mutual agreement cannot be reached (PRC § 21080.3.2). Under existing law, environmental documents must not include information about the locations of an archaeological site or sacred lands or any other information that is exempt from public disclosure pursuant to the Public Records act. TCRs are also exempt from disclosure. The term "tribal cultural resource" refers to sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that are either of the following:

- Included or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources
- Included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of California PRC Section 5020.1
- A resource determined by a California lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of the PRC Section 5024.1.

## **Affected Environment**

Initial consultation letters were sent on January 12, 2022:

- *Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Pattie Garcia-Plotkin, THPO*
- *Augustine Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians, Amanda Vance, Chairperson*
- *Cabazon Band of Mission Indians, Doug Welmas, Chairperson*
- *Cahuilla Band of Indians, Anthony Madrigal, Sr., THPO*
- *Colorado River Indian Tribes, Brian Etsitty, THPO*
- *Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians, Andrew Salas, Chairperson*
- *Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Ann Brierty, THPO*
- *Pala Band of Mission Indians, Shasta C. Gaughen, THPO*
- *Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation, Jill McCormick, THPO*
- *Ramona Band of Cahuilla, Joseph D. Hamilton, Chairperson*
- *Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians, Cheryl Madrigal, Cultural Resources Manager*
- *San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, Anthony Morales, Chairperson*
- *San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Ryan Nordness, Cultural Director*
- *Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, Isaiah Vivanco, Chairperson*

- *Temecula Band of Luiseno Indians (Pechanga), Ebru Ozdil, Cultural Analyst*
- *Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, Thomas Tortez, Chairperson*
- *Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, Darrel Mike, Chairperson*

The letters provided a summary of the Project and requested information regarding comments or concerns the Native American community might have about the Project and whether any traditional cultural properties, TCRs, or other resources of significance would be affected by implementation of the Project. The letters also stated that if the tribes would like to consult under AB 52, they would have to respond within 30 days, pursuant to PRC 21080.3.1(d). Below is a list of the current status of all the tribal representatives contacted:

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. The tribe responded on 2/17/2022 requesting to initiate consultation and to obtain the cultural resource inventory, record search results, and cultural resource documentation. On 3/10/22 the tribe was informed that the cultural report would be provided once approved and that the record search and pedestrian survey were negative. The tribe was also informed of the CVWD project being constructed which will concrete line the entire channel of the Whitewater River. On 7/19/2022, the requested information including Project design, record search results, cultural report, and shapefiles were provided to the tribe by the County. Tribe emailed a letter on 8/26/22 requesting implementation of a measure in the event human remains are discovered. This measure has been included as **TRBL-1** below to comply with the request from the tribe. Close-out letter sent October 3, 2022. No response and consultation is considered complete.

Augustine Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up email sent 3/4/22. No response. Close-out letter sent August 10, 2022. No response and consultation is considered complete.

Cabazon Band of Mission Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up email sent 3/4/22. No response. Close-out letter emailed on August 10, 2022. No response and consultation is considered complete.

Cahuilla Band of Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up letter sent 6/2/22. No response. Close-out letter emailed on July 26, 2022. No response and considered complete.

Colorado River Indian Tribes

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up letter sent 6/2/22. No response. Close-out letter emailed on July 26, 2022. No response and considered complete.

Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up letter sent 6/2/22. No response. Close-out letter emailed on July 26, 2022. No response and consultation is considered complete.

Morongo Band of Mission Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up letter sent 6/2/22. The tribe responded on 7/5/2022 requesting to initiate consultation and to obtain the Project design, record search results, cultural report, shapefiles, and geotechnical report. On 7/19/2022, the requested information including the Project design, record search results, cultural report, and shapefiles were provided

to the tribe by the County. Follow up emails were sent 8/23/22 and 9/6/22. No response. Close-out letter sent September 30, 2022. No response and consultation is considered complete.

Pala Band of Mission Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up letter sent 6/2/22. No response. Close-out letter emailed on July 26, 2022. No response and consultation is considered complete.

Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. The tribe replied via email and stated that the tribe has no comments on the Project. No response and consultation is considered complete.

Ramona Band of Cahuilla

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up letter sent 6/2/22. No response. Close-out letter emailed on July 26, 2022. No response and consultation is considered complete.

Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. The tribe replied via email and stated that the Project is not within the tribe's area of historic information and recommended contacting a tribe closer to the Project. Consultation is considered complete.

San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up letter sent 6/2/22. No response. Close-out letter emailed on July 26, 2022. Consultation is considered complete.

San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up letter sent 6/2/22. No response. Close-out letter emailed on July 26, 2022. No response and consultation is considered complete.

Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up email sent 3/4/22. No response. Follow-up letter emailed on June 22, 2022. No response. Close-out letter emailed on August 10, 2022. No response and consultation is considered complete.

Temecula Band of Luiseno Indians (Pechanga)

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up letter sent 6/2/22. No response. Close-out letter emailed on July 26, 2022. No response and consultation is considered complete.

Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up email sent 3/4/22. Mr. Gary Wayne Resvaloso Jr. responded on March 8, 2022 indicating the Project area is located in the Tribe's ancestral territory and requested a meeting. From the meeting on March 31, 2022 and correspondence from April 1 and 11, 2022, the Tribe identified adjacent village sites and requested Phase II testing in undisturbed soils. County provided evidence for disturbance throughout the Project area and the Tribe agreed that no testing was needed but requested monitoring due to previous identification of resources during construction within Tribal areas. Close-out letter was mailed to the tribe on July 26, 2022, concluding consultation with the tribe and welcoming the tribe to review the CEQA IS/ND when available for public review.

Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians

Initial letter sent 1/12/22. No response. 1<sup>st</sup> follow up email sent 3/4/22. No response. Follow-up letter emailed on June 22, 2022. No response. Close-out letter emailed on August 10, 2022. No response and consultation is considered complete.

See **Appendix D** for complete Native American Consultation Log.

- a-i) **Less Than Significant.** To identify TCR's that might be affected by Project activities, a pedestrian survey, background research, and Native American consultation were conducted. During the cultural visual survey, one built environment historic-era resource was present within the APE, which consists solely of the existing Airport Boulevard Bridge. The Airport Boulevard Bridge (Federal Br. No. 56C-0020) was listed as a Category 5 on the Caltrans Historic Bridge Inventory. The pedestrian survey and background research did not identify TCR's within the APE.

During Native American consultation, a majority of tribes did not respond to initial and follow-up letters or simply stated they had no interest in the Project. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, and Torres- Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians all requested consultation. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and Morongo Band of Mission Indians requested record search information, copies of cultural documents, and Project information. Follow up correspondence with these two tribes was not needed. The Torres- Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians requested a meeting, identified adjacent village sites, and requested Phase II testing in undisturbed soils. The County provided evidence for disturbance throughout the Project area and the Tribe agreed that no testing was needed but requested monitoring due to previous identification of resources during construction within Tribal areas. The adjacent village sites discussed during the meeting were included in the Project's cultural reports. Native American consultation did not identify TCR's within the APE.

The Project is not anticipated to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a TCR listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historic resources as defined by the Public Resource Code section 5020.1 subdivision (k) criteria. However, with any Project involving ground disturbance, there is a possibility that cultural resources may be unearthed during construction. Implementation of measures **TRBL-1**, **CR-1** and **CR-2** would reduce this impact to a **Less Than Significant**. Refer to **Appendix D** for a summary of consultation efforts with the Native American community under AB 52.

- a-ii) **Less Than Significant.** The Project is not anticipated to cause adverse impact to any resources considered significant to a California Native American tribe or other resources in the California Register that meet the Public Resource Code Section 5024.1 subdivision (c) criteria. During the cultural visual survey, one built environment historic-era resource was present within the APE, which consists solely of the existing Airport Boulevard Bridge. The Airport Boulevard Bridge (State Br. No. 56C-0020) was listed as a Category 5 on the Caltrans Historic Bridge Inventory. The cultural records search and Native American consultation did not identify cultural resources within the APE.

With any Project involving ground disturbance, there is a possibility that a TCR may be unearthed during construction. Implementation of measures **TRBL-1** and **CR-1** through **CR-2** would reduce this impact to a **Less Than Significant**.



## **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No significant impact related to Tribal Cultural Resources which would require mitigation would occur. With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measures **TRBL-1** as well as **CR-1** through **CR-2** listed below and in Section V, Cultural Resources, impacts would remain Less than Significant.

### Avoidance and Minimization Measures

**TRBL-1:** In the event that human remains are discovered during construction at any time all construction activity shall immediately be halted within 60 feet of the discovery until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

**CR-1:** If a significant archaeological resource(s) or tribal cultural resource is discovered on the property, ground disturbing activities shall be suspended 60 feet around the resource(s). An archaeologist, who meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for an archaeologist, shall assess the discovery, and if the discovery involves Native American resources a representative of the concerned tribe(s) shall be contracted to assess significance. The archaeologist, a representative of the appropriate Native American Tribe(s), and the County of Riverside shall confer regarding mitigation of the discovered resource(s). Work shall not resume in the area until mitigation has been completed or it has been determined that the archaeological resource(s) is not significant.

**CR-2:** Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code and Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code protect Native American burials, skeletal remains and grave goods, regardless of age and provide method and means for the appropriate handling of such remains. If human remains are encountered, work should halt in that vicinity and the county coroner should be notified immediately. At the same time, an archaeologist should be contacted to evaluate the situation. If the human remains are of Native American origin, the coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours of such identification, which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). With the permission of the landowner or his/her authorized representative, the MLD may inspect the site of the discovery. The MLD shall complete the inspection within 48 hours of notification by the NAHC. The MLD may recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

<b>XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS:</b> Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a determination by the waste water treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Riverside County General Plan (2021) and City of Coachella General Plan (2021).

**Findings of Fact:**

- a) **Less Than Significant.** Depending on the Project design, utility relocation may be required. Utility relocations would be conducted with close coordination and would be designed to ensure that no new environmental impacts not already discussed in this document would occur. Coordination with the following utilities to determine actions that may need to be taken once Project design is established include: Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial Irrigation District, Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, Level 3 Communications/CenturyLink, MCI (Verizon Business), So Cal Gas (Distribution - Palm Desert division), and Frontier. The new bridge will also be constructed to accommodate future utility lines within the bridge.

Furthermore, the Project would not include the construction of any uses that would increase demand on wastewater, stormwater facilities, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. No new utilities would be required and the potential relocation of utilities would have a **Less than Significant Impact**.

- b) **No Impact.** As a bridge replacement Project, there would be no need for new or expanded water supplies. **No Impact** would result from development of the Project.
- c) **No Impact.** The Project would replace an existing bridge and would not involve the construction of any wastewater-generating uses. The Project would not increase population in the Project vicinity, and there would be no additional wastewater flows as a result of Project development; therefore, the Project would not result in the need for new or expanded wastewater facilities. **No Impact** would occur.
- d) **No Impact.** As a transportation project, the Project would not generate substantial solid waste during operation. During construction, solid waste may be generated from modification of currently paved portions, however, the amount is not expected to exceed landfill capacities. There would be **No Impact**.
- e) **No Impact.** The proposed Project would comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste. There would be **No Impact**.

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No impacts have been identified; therefore, no avoidance or minimization measures are required.

<b>XX. WILDFIRE:</b> If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Source(s):** Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan (2021), City of Coachella Technical Background Report to the Safety Element (2014) and CALFIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps (2022).

**Findings of Fact:**

a-d) **No Impact.** The Project site is not located within or adjacent to a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ), as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE). The nearest VHFHSZ is located approximately 15 miles to the south from the Project site.

According to the Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan and the City of Coachella Technical Background Report to the Safety Element, wildfire susceptibility is low in developed areas in the valley.

**Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

No impacts have been identified; therefore, no avoidance or minimization measures are required.

<b>XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Findings of Fact:**

a) **Less Than Significant.** As discussed in Section IV Biological Resources, less than significant impacts are anticipated with inclusion of appropriate avoidance and minimization measures, **BIO-1 to BIO-3**. Inclusion of these measures would ensure that the Project would not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animals. Based on results of the HPSR/ASR (July 2022) performed for the Project, the Project would not eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

b) **Less Than Significant.** This Project would replace the existing 2 lane Airport Boulevard Bridge over Whitewater River with a new, wider, 2 lane bridge and reconstruct the connecting approach roadways to meet current Caltrans seismic design codes. The proposed Project would not have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable. A discussion of key affected resource areas follow:

**Aesthetics:** Cumulatively considerable impacts would not result. The Project would have a low visual impact within the Project area and implement aesthetics described in

Avoidance and Minimization Measures **VIS-1** through **VIS-5** to harmonize with the surroundings.

**Agriculture and Forest Resources:** Cumulatively considerable impacts would not result on agriculture and forest resources. There are no farmlands located within the Project vicinity.

**Air Quality:** There would be no adverse cumulatively considerable impacts to air quality.

**Biological Resources:** Although the Project will have some incremental effects to the surrounding landscape, the cumulative effects of this Project and other current and future regional development covered by the CVMSHCP have been accounted for and mitigated by the establishment of a comprehensive reserve system. It has been concluded that the Project is not subject to CVMSHCP specific measures as none of the resources in the CVMSHCP were determined to be present or likely to occur. However, the Project shall be required to implement Avoidance and Minimization Measures **BIO-1** through **BIO-3**, which would further reduce cumulatively considerable impacts to biological resources.

**Cultural Resources:** The Project is not anticipated to impact cultural resources due to the negative survey results, negative record search results, and combined and repetitive ground disturbance associated with nearby activities. The Project has a very low potential to contain intact prehistoric and historic archaeological sites; however, with any project requiring ground disturbance, there is always the possibility that archaeological resources, unmarked burials, or undiscovered human remains may be unearthed during construction. Implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measures **CR-1** and **CR-2** would ensure impacts remain Less Than Significant.

**Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Cumulatively considerable impacts are not anticipated. As a bridge replacement project, the Project does not consist of increased hazardous materials-related land uses. No long-term impacts are anticipated.

**Hydrology and Water Quality:** Cumulatively considerable impacts to water quality would not result. The Project will result in an approximate 0.34 acre increase to the paved surface area, which will increase the volume of storm water runoff from the roadways surface. Implementation of standard BMPs and Avoidance and Minimization Measures **WQ-1** through **WQ-4** would ensure no cumulative considerable impacts to water quality would occur.

**Land Use and Planning and Population and Housing:** No land use changes in vicinity of the proposed Project are anticipated as a result of the proposed Project.

**Noise:** Cumulatively considerable impacts are not anticipated. Noise impacts as a result of construction would be temporary and intermittent.

**Transportation/Traffic:** Cumulatively considerable impacts are not anticipated. As the Project would not result in changes to roadway intersections or traffic volume increases, it is not expected that the Project would substantially contribute to cumulative effects to transportation or traffic. To ensure no impacts would occur during construction, Avoidance and Minimization Measure **TRA-1** would be implemented to avoid any potential impacts



to emergency service access. Upon completion, the wider replacement bridge will improve emergency access. No additional cumulative impacts are anticipated.

**Utilities and Service Systems:** Cumulatively considerable impacts to utilities and service systems are not anticipated. The Project would not include the construction of any uses that would increase demand on wastewater, stormwater facilities, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. No new utilities would be required, and the potential relocation of utilities would have a Less than Significant Impact.

- c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** No substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly, are anticipated. Construction noise would be minimized through timing restrictions.

### **Avoidance and Minimization Measures**

Please see individual sections for related avoidance and minimization measures.

# List of Preparers

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The following is a list of persons who participated in the Initial Study or prepared technical studies for this Project.

## **County of Riverside**

Umer Ahmed, Project Manager, Transportation Department

Frances Segovia, Senior Transportation Planner, Transportation Department

David Castro, Associate Transportation Planner, Transportation Department

## **Dokken Engineering**

Zach Liptak, Associate Environmental Planner. B.S. in Environmental Science; 12 years environmental planning experience. Contribution: Environmental Lead.

Amy Dunay, Senior Environmental Planner. M.A. in Archaeology; 19 years environmental planning experience. Contribution: Cultural Resources and Native American Consultation.

Ken Chen, Associate Environmental Planner. B.S. in Community Development and Regional Development; 8 years environmental planning experience. Contribution: Environmental Document

Aliana Hale, Environmental Planner. B.S. in Environmental Geoscience; 2 years environmental planning experience. Contribution: Environmental Document

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# Appendix A      Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan

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**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

<b>Avoidance and Minimization Measures</b>	<b>Reporting Milestone</b>	<b>Reporting / Responsible Party</b>	<b>VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE</b>	
			<b>Initials</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>AESTHETICS</b>				
<b>VIS-1:</b> Lighting will be appropriately shielded. The Project's lighting design must be consistent with the City of Coachella and Riverside County lighting guidelines and standards.	Final Design and During Construction	Engineers, County of Riverside, and Contractor		
<b>VIS-2:</b> All disturbed areas including staging of vehicles and equipment will be restored to pre-construction contours and if applicable/appropriate, revegetated, either through hydroseeding or other means, with native species.	During Construction	County of Riverside and Contractor		
<b>VIS-3:</b> Concrete surfaces associated with the bridge will be heavily textured to discourage graffiti and minimize recurring maintenance activities associated with graffiti removal. Additionally, concrete surfaces will be aesthetically treated or stained natural colors to be more compatible with the surrounding environment.	Final Design and During Construction	Engineers, County of Riverside, and Contractor		
<b>VIS-4:</b> As feasible the barrier/bridge rail fence shall be powder or vinyl color coated to meet aesthetic needs and to minimize glare.	Final Design and During Construction	Engineers, County of Riverside, and Contractor		
<b>AIR QUALITY</b>				
<b>AQ-1:</b> The contractor shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations related to air quality, including air pollution control district and air quality management district regulations and local ordinances.	During Construction	County of Riverside and Contractor		
<b>AQ-2:</b> The contractor shall control dust by applying either water or dust palliative, or both.	During Construction	County of Riverside and Contractor		
<b>AQ-3:</b> The construction contractor shall implement control measures to reduce emissions of NO <sub>x</sub> , ROG, and PM <sub>10</sub> . The contractor shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Minimize idling time to 5 minutes when construction equipment is not in use, unless per engine manufacturer's specifications or for safety reasons more time is required.</li> <li>○ To the extent practicable, manage operation of heavy-duty equipment to reduce emissions such as maintaining heavy-duty earthmoving, stationary and mobile equipment in optimum running conditions.</li> <li>○ Use electric equipment when feasible.</li> <li>○ Properly maintain equipment according to manufacturers' specifications.</li> </ul>	During Construction	County of Riverside and Contractor		

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

<b>Avoidance and Minimization Measures</b>	<b>Reporting Milestone</b>	<b>Reporting / Responsible Party</b>	<b>VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE</b>	
			<b>Initials</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>AQ-4:</b> Implement dust suppression measures as applicable from South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rules and Regulations, Rule 403 Fugitive Dust and Caltrans Standard Specifications for Construction, Sections 10 and 18 (Dust Control).	During Construction	County of Riverside and Contractor		
<b>BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</b>				
<b>BIO-1:</b> Project-related debris, spoils, and trash will be contained and removed to a proper waste disposal facility.	During Construction	Contractor		
<b>BIO-2:</b> Equipment, vehicles, and materials staged and stored in right-of-way will be situated in previously paved or previously disturbed areas only.	Prior to and During Construction	Contractor		
<b>BIO-3:</b> If Project activities cannot be avoided during the bird breeding season (January 15th to September 30th), a preconstruction nesting bird clearance survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist for avian species no more than three days prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities to determine the presence of nesting birds. The surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate time(s) of day. If an active avian nest is located, the bird shall be identified to species and a “no construction” buffer (up to 500 feet) shall be established in accordance with the guidelines provided in the CVMSHCP and the sensitivity of the species. The “no-construction” buffer shall remain in place until nesting has ceased or the young have fledged. The qualified biologist shall monitor the nest to ensure that impacts to nesting birds do not occur.	Prior to and During Construction	Contractor and County of Riverside		
<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>				
<b>CR-1:</b> If a significant archaeological resource(s) or tribal cultural resource is discovered on the property, ground disturbing activities shall be suspended 60 feet around the resource(s). An archaeologist, who meets the Secretary of Interior Standards for an archaeologist, shall assess the discovery, and if the discovery involves Native American resources a representative of the concerned tribe(s) shall be contracted to assess significance. The archaeologist, a representative of the appropriate Native American Tribe(s), and the County of Riverside shall confer regarding mitigation of the discovered resource(s). Work shall not resume in the area until mitigation has been completed or it has been determined that the archaeological resource(s) is not significant.	During Construction	Contractor and County of Riverside		
<b>CR-2:</b> Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code and Section 7050.5 of the California Health and Safety Code protect Native American burials, skeletal	During Construction	Contractor and County of		

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

<b>Avoidance and Minimization Measures</b>	<b>Reporting Milestone</b>	<b>Reporting / Responsible Party</b>	<b>VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE</b>	
			<b>Initials</b>	<b>Date</b>
remains and grave goods, regardless of age and provide method and means for the appropriate handling of such remains. If human remains are encountered, work should halt in that vicinity and the county coroner should be notified immediately. At the same time, an archaeologist should be contacted to evaluate the situation. If the human remains are of Native American origin, the coroner must notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours of such identification, which will determine and notify a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). With the permission of the landowner or his/her authorized representative, the MLD may inspect the site of the discovery. The MLD shall complete the inspection within 48 hours of notification by the NAHC. The MLD may recommend scientific removal and nondestructive analysis of human remains and items associated with Native American burials. Further provisions of Public Resource Code (PRC) 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.		Riverside		
<b>GEOLOGY AND SOILS</b>				
<b>GEO-1:</b> A pre-construction paleontological sensitivity training will be provided to construction personnel. This training will be based on the Caltrans Standard Specifications, Section 14-7 "Paleontological Resources."	Prior to and During Construction	Contractor and County of Riverside		
<b>GEO-2:</b> If any suspected paleontological resources (fossils) are discovered during ground-disturbing activities, the construction supervisor shall halt work within a 60-foot radius around the find and establish an exclusionary buffer. Construction personnel shall not collect or move any suspected paleontological materials or further disturb any soils within the exclusionary buffer, but construction activity may continue unimpeded on other portions of the project site. Construction activity shall not resume within the exclusionary buffer until a qualified paleontologist can assess the significance of the find. If the paleontologist determines the find is not a paleontological resource, no further evaluation is required and work can resume. However, if the paleontologist determines the find is a paleontological resource, construction activity shall not resume within the exclusionary buffer in order to assess its significance pursuant to CEQA. If the find is determined to be significant, it shall be collected from the field and the paleontologist shall make recommendations for monitoring, curation, and reporting.	During Construction	Contractor and County of Riverside		
<b>HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS WASTE</b>				
<b>HAZ-1:</b> As is the case for any Project that proposes excavation, the potential exists for unknown hazardous contamination to be revealed during Project construction.	During Construction	County of Riverside and		

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

Avoidance and Minimization Measures	Reporting Milestone	Reporting / Responsible Party	VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE	
			Initials	Date
Contaminated soils can be encountered at any depth of excavation. If soils contaminated by hazardous waste are discovered during construction, proper hazardous waste handling and emergency procedures under 40 CFR § 262 and Division 4.5 of Title 22 CA Code of Regulations shall be followed. The specific methods and protocol for determining if a soil is contaminated are contained in the Caltrans Hazardous Procedures for Construction.		Contractor		
<b>HAZ-2:</b> Any leaking transformers observed during the course of the Project should be considered a potential polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) hazard. A detailed inspection of individual electrical transformers was not conducted for this Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. However, should leaks from electrical transformers (that will either remain within the construction limits or will require removal and/or relocation) be encountered during construction, the transformer fluid should be sampled and analyzed by qualified personnel for detectable levels of PCB's. Should PCBs be detected, the transformer should be removed and disposed of in accordance with Title 22, Division 4.5 of the California Code of Regulations and any other appropriate regulatory agency. Any stained soil encountered below electrical transformers with detectable levels of PCB's should also be handled and disposed of in accordance with Title 22, Division 4.5 of the California Code of Regulations and any other appropriate regulatory agency.	During Construction	County of Riverside and Contractor		
<b>HAZ-3:</b> Any chemically treated wood must be treated as Treated Wood Waste (TWW) and disposed of as hazardous waste. For the TWW, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) regulations §66261.9.5 provide alternative management standards (AMS) for TWW. Caltrans 2018 Special Standard Provision (SSP) for TWW, SSP 14-11.14, is based on DTSCs AMS regulations. This SSP directs the Contractor to follow the AMS including providing training to all personnel that may come in contact with TWW. This training must include, at a minimum, safe handling, sorting and segregating, storage, labeling (including date), and proper disposal methods.	During Construction	County of Riverside and Contractor		
<b>HAZ-4:</b> If no prior assessment of asbestos in the existing Airport Boulevard Bridge is conducted as part of the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) channel lining project, a Site Investigation is recommended for Asbestos Containing Material (ACMs) in the existing bridge that will be disturbed during construction. This investigation should be implemented before construction and documented as part of the Phase II ISA.	Prior to Construction	County of Riverside		

**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

<b>Avoidance and Minimization Measures</b>	<b>Reporting Milestone</b>	<b>Reporting / Responsible Party</b>	<b>VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE</b>	
			<b>Initials</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY</b>				
<p><b>WQ-1:</b> The proposed Project would require a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit (CGP) for Discharges of storm water associated with construction activities (Construction General Permit 2012-0006-DWQ). The construction contractor shall adhere to the State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ NPDES Permit pursuant to Section 402 of the CWA. This permit authorizes storm water and authorized non-storm water discharges from construction activities. As part of this Permit requirement, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be prepared prior to construction consistent with the requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). This SWPPP will incorporate all applicable Best Management Practices (BMPs) to ensure that adequate measures are taken during construction to minimize impacts to water quality.</p>	Prior to and During Construction	Contractor and County of Riverside		
<p><b>WQ-2:</b> To conform with water quality requirements in the CGP, the following will be implemented during construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Vehicle maintenance, staging and storing equipment, materials, fuels, lubricants, solvents, and other possible contaminants must be a minimum of 50 feet from surface waters. Any necessary equipment washing must occur where the water cannot flow into surface waters.</li> <li>○ The Project specifications will require the contractor to operate under an approved spill prevention and clean-up plan;</li> <li>○ Construction equipment will not be operated in flowing water;</li> <li>○ Raw cement, concrete or concrete washings, asphalt, paint or other coating material, oil or other petroleum products, or any other substances that could be hazardous to aquatic life must be prevented from contaminating the soil or entering surface waters;</li> <li>○ Equipment used in and around surface waters must be in good working order and free of dripping or leaking contaminants; and,</li> <li>○ Any concrete rubble, asphalt, or other debris from construction must be taken to an approved disposal site.</li> </ul>	During Construction	Contractor and County of Riverside		
<p><b>WQ-3:</b> Prior to the start of construction activities, the Project limits in proximity to</p>	Prior to and	Contractor and		



**MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR THE  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

<b>Avoidance and Minimization Measures</b>	<b>Reporting Milestone</b>	<b>Reporting / Responsible Party</b>	<b>VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE</b>	
			<b>Initials</b>	<b>Date</b>
jurisdictional waters must be marked with high visibility Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) fencing or staking to ensure construction will not further encroach into jurisdictional waters.	During Construction	County of Riverside		
<b>WQ-4:</b> Contract specifications will include the following BMPs, where applicable, to reduce erosion during construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Existing vegetation will be protected in place where feasible to provide an effective form of erosion and sediment control;</li> <li>○ As a permanent BMP, slope roughening by equipment tracking will be implemented to create unevenness on bare soil. Surface roughening reduces erosion potential by decreasing runoff velocities, trapping sediment, and increasing water infiltration.</li> </ul>	During Construction	Contractor and County of Riverside		
<b>TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC</b>				
<b>TRA-1:</b> Temporary impacts to traffic flow as a result of construction activities would be minimized through construction phasing and signage and a traffic management plan.	Prior to and During Construction	County of Riverside and Contractor		
<b>TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>				
<b>TRBL-1:</b> In the event that human remains are discovered during construction at any time all construction activity shall immediately be halted within 60 feet of the discovery until the County Coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.	During Construction	County of Riverside and Contractor		

# Appendix B      Air Quality Road Construction Emissions Model

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Road Construction Emissions Model, Version 9.0.0

Daily Emission Estimates for -> Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement													Total	Exhaust	Fugitive Dust	Total	Exhaust	Fugitive Dust
Project Phases (Pounds)	ROG (lbs/day)	CO (lbs/day)	NOx (lbs/day)	PM10 (lbs/day)	PM10 (lbs/day)	PM10 (lbs/day)	PM2.5 (lbs/day)	PM2.5 (lbs/day)	PM2.5 (lbs/day)	SOx (lbs/day)	CO2 (lbs/day)	CH4 (lbs/day)	N2O (lbs/day)	CO2e (lbs/day)				
Grubbing/Land Clearing	0.87	9.53	8.47	0.77	0.37	0.40	0.41	0.33	0.08	0.02	2,206.54	0.58	0.06	2,239.05				
Grading/Excavation	7.36	63.75	73.65	3.45	3.05	0.40	2.81	2.73	0.08	0.16	15,717.24	4.68	0.23	15,901.50				
Drainage/Utilities/Sub-Grade	4.64	43.25	43.95	2.15	1.75	0.40	1.67	1.59	0.08	0.11	10,528.84	2.70	0.14	10,637.38				
Paving	0.83	12.86	8.75	0.41	0.41	0.00	0.34	0.34	0.00	0.03	2,668.49	0.56	0.13	2,721.52				
Maximum (pounds/day)	7.36	63.75	73.65	3.45	3.05	0.40	2.81	2.73	0.08	0.16	15,717.24	4.68	0.23	15,901.50				
Total (tons/construction project)	1.26	11.49	12.41	0.60	0.51	0.09	0.48	0.46	0.02	0.03	2,796.53	0.78	0.04	2,828.98				

Notes:  
 Project Start Year -> 2024  
 Project Length (months) -> 24  
 Total Project Area (acres) -> 26  
 Maximum Area Disturbed/Day (acres) -> 0  
 Water Truck Used? -> Yes

Phase	Total Material Imported/Exported Volume (yd <sup>3</sup> /day)		Daily VMT (miles/day)			
	Soil	Asphalt	Soil Hauling	Asphalt Hauling	Worker Commute	Water Truck
Grubbing/Land Clearing	12	0	30	0	200	40
Grading/Excavation	27	9	60	30	1,120	40
Drainage/Utilities/Sub-Grade	8	0	30	0	720	40
Paving	45	32	90	60	320	40

PM10 and PM2.5 estimates assume 50% control of fugitive dust from watering and associated dust control measures if a minimum number of water trucks are specified.

Total PM10 emissions shown in column F are the sum of exhaust and fugitive dust emissions shown in columns G and H. Total PM2.5 emissions shown in Column I are the sum of exhaust and fugitive dust emissions shown in columns J and K.

CO2e emissions are estimated by multiplying mass emissions for each GHG by its global warming potential (GWP), 1, 25 and 298 for CO2, CH4 and N2O, respectively. Total CO2e is then estimated by summing CO2e estimates over all GHGs.

Total Emission Estimates by Phase for -> Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement													Total	Exhaust	Fugitive Dust	Total	Exhaust	Fugitive Dust
Project Phases (Tons for all except CO2e. Metric tonnes for CO2e)	ROG (tons/phase)	CO (tons/phase)	NOx (tons/phase)	PM10 (tons/phase)	PM10 (tons/phase)	PM10 (tons/phase)	PM2.5 (tons/phase)	PM2.5 (tons/phase)	PM2.5 (tons/phase)	SOx (tons/phase)	CO2 (tons/phase)	CH4 (tons/phase)	N2O (tons/phase)	CO2e (MT/phase)				
Grubbing/Land Clearing	0.02	0.25	0.22	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	58.25	0.02	0.00	53.63				
Grading/Excavation	0.78	6.73	7.78	0.36	0.32	0.04	0.30	0.29	0.01	0.02	1,659.74	0.49	0.02	1,523.36				
Drainage/Utilities/Sub-Grade	0.43	4.00	4.06	0.20	0.16	0.04	0.15	0.15	0.01	0.01	972.87	0.25	0.01	891.68				
Paving	0.03	0.51	0.35	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	105.67	0.02	0.01	97.77				
Maximum (tons/phase)	0.78	6.73	7.78	0.36	0.32	0.04	0.30	0.29	0.01	0.02	1,659.74	0.49	0.02	1,523.36				
Total (tons/construction project)	1.26	11.49	12.41	0.60	0.51	0.09	0.48	0.46	0.02	0.03	2,796.53	0.78	0.04	2,566.43				

PM10 and PM2.5 estimates assume 50% control of fugitive dust from watering and associated dust control measures if a minimum number of water trucks are specified.

Total PM10 emissions shown in column F are the sum of exhaust and fugitive dust emissions shown in columns G and H. Total PM2.5 emissions shown in Column I are the sum of exhaust and fugitive dust emissions shown in columns J and K.

CO2e emissions are estimated by multiplying mass emissions for each GHG by its global warming potential (GWP), 1, 25 and 298 for CO2, CH4 and N2O, respectively. Total CO2e is then estimated by summing CO2e estimates over all GHGs.

The CO2e emissions are reported as metric tons per phase.



Appendix C

CNDDDB, USFWS, CNPS, and  
CDFW Special Status Species  
Table

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## Listed, Proposed Species, Natural Communities, and Critical Habitat Potentially Occurring or Known to Occur in the Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent <sup>1</sup>	Rationale	
<b>ANIMAL SPECIES</b>						
burrowing owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None SSC Covered	Common yearlong resident of southern California. Prefers open, annual, or perennial grasslands, deserts, and scrublands characterized by low-growing vegetation. Requires fossorial burrows for roosting and nesting surrounded by relatively short vegetation and open habitat for foraging and watching for predators. Also known to occupy man-made structures including drainpipes, debris piles, and development pads.	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
ferruginous hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None WL Not Covered	Fairly common winter resident of southern California frequently seen in grassland and scrub habitats in foothill areas. Typically present in California from September through May. Requires large areas of treeless grasslands with sparse shrub cover for foraging. Does not breed in California.	A	Marginally suitable foraging habitat present in disturbed areas along the margins of the BSA. Species does not nest in California, therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
monarch butterfly	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	FC S2S3 Not Covered	Winter roost sites extend along the coast from northern Mendocino County to Baja California, Mexico. Roost located in wind-protected tree groves (eucalyptus, Monterey pine, cypress), with nectar and water sources nearby.	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
southwestern willow flycatcher	<i>Empidonax tailii extimus</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	FE SE Covered	Uncommon summer resident of southern California. Occurs in riparian woodlands in southern California. Typically requires large areas of willow thickets in broad valleys, canyon bottoms, or around ponds and lakes. These areas typically have standing or running water or are at least moist.	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status		General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent <sup>1</sup>	Rationale
western mastiff bat	<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None SSC Not Covered	Primarily a cliff-dwelling species, roost generally under exfoliating rock slabs. Roosts are generally high above the ground, usually allowing a clear vertical drop of at least 3 meters below the entrance for flight. In California, it is most frequently encountered in broad open areas. Its foraging habitat includes dry desert washes, flood plains, chaparral, oak woodland, open ponderosa pine forest, grassland, and agricultural areas.	A	There is no suitable roosting habitat (i.e., cliffs, caves, bridges) within or adjacent to the BSA.
prairie falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None WL Not Covered	Uncommon permanent resident that ranges from southeastern deserts northwest throughout the Central Valley and along the inner Coast Ranges and Sierra Nevada. Distributed from annual grasslands to alpine meadows, but associated primarily with perennial grasslands, savannahs, rangeland, some agricultural fields, and desert scrub areas. Mostly absent from northern coastal fog belt. Not found in upper elevations of Sierra Nevada. Breeding sites located on cliffs, but forages far afield.	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
desert tortoise	<i>Gopherus agassizii</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	FT ST Covered	Occurs in desert scrub, desert wash, and Joshua tree habitats with friable, sandy, well-drained soils for nest and burrow construction. Highest densities occur in creosote bush scrub with extensive annual wildflower blooms and succulents with little to no non-native plant species.	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
western yellow bat	<i>Lasiurus xanthinus</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None SSC Covered	Uncommon in California, known only in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties. Occurs in valley foothill riparian, desert riparian, desert wash, and palm oasis habitats. Prefers to roost and feed in, and near, palm oases and riparian habitats.	A	There is no suitable roosting habitat (i.e., palm trees) within or adjacent to the BSA.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent <sup>1</sup>	Rationale	
Palm Springs pocket mouse	<i>Perognathus longimembris bangsi</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None SCC Covered	Species occurs only in restricted portions of the Coachella Valley. Inhabits flat to gently sloping topography, sparse to moderate vegetative cover, and loosely packed or sandy soils (often windblown) of desert wash, Sonoran desert scrub communities with preference to creosote dominated desert scrub. Species is unlikely to utilize areas with compacted, stony, and cobbly soils, in saltbush dominated communities, or in areas of human disturbance. Hibernation is believed to occur below ground from October-March.	A	Project site contains desert scrub dominated by iodine bush but lacks creosote dominated desert scrub communities or windblown sandy soils; habitat unsuitable for Palm Springs pocket mouse. The nearest CNDDDB occurrence is greater than 5 miles from the project. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
Flat-tailed horned lizard	<i>Phrynosoma mcallii</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None SCC Not Covered	Species inhabits desert scrub, desert wash, succulent shrub, and alkali scrub habitats. Requires fine sands for burrowing, shrubs or grass for vegetative cover, relatively flat topography and an adequate source of ants for food; species is an ant specialist. Hibernation occurs as early as October and can extend to March, but may emerge in January or February. Breeds in early spring and may produce multiple clutches within a breeding season; young appear in July through September.	HP	Project site contains desert scrub habitat with relatively flat topography and fine sandy soils.. The nearest CNDDDB occurrences are presumed extant but are greater than 5 miles from the project location. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
black-tailed gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila melanura</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None WL Not Covered	In Mojave, Great Basin, Colorado, and Sonoran Desert communities, prefers nesting and foraging in densely lined arroyos and washes dominated by creosote bush and saltbush with scattered bursage, burroweed, ocotillo, saguaro, barrel cactus, prickly pear cactus and cholla.	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
vermillion flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None SSC Not Covered	Occurs in a variety of open habitats including open woodland, clearings, desert scrub, savannah, agricultural	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that "No

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status		General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent <sup>1</sup>	Rationale
				land, golf courses, and recreational parks. The species tends to stay near water, often occurring in riparian vegetation characterized by cottonwoods, mesquite ( <i>Prosopis</i> spp.), willows, and sycamores ( <i>Platanus</i> spp.).		Effect” to the species will occur.
Yuma Ridgway's rail	<i>Rallus obsoletus yumanensis</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	FE ST Covered	Nests in freshwater marshes. Prefers stands of cattails and tules dissected by narrow channels of flowing water.	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that “No Effect” to the species will occur.
American badger	<i>Taxidea taxus</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None SCC Not Covered	Prefers treeless, dry, open areas within most shrub and herbaceous habitats with friable soils and a supply of rodent prey. Also found in forest glades and meadows, marshes, brushy areas, hot deserts, and mountain meadows up to 12,000 feet elevation. Species maintains burrows within home ranges estimated between 338-1,700 acres, dependent on seasonal activity. Burrows are frequently re-used, but new burrows may be created nightly. Young are born in March and April within burrows dug in relatively dry, often sandy, soil, usually in areas with sparse overstory cover. Species is somewhat tolerant of human activity, but is sensitive to automobile mortality, trapping, and persistent poisons.	HP	The project site contains desert scrub habitat with friable sandy soils adjacent to large undeveloped areas to the north and east of the project site. However, no burrows were observed during surveys conducted in June and July, 2021. The lack of burrow suggests transient individuals may be seen in the project area but permanent residents are unlikely. Additionally, the project area is within the OHWM of the White Water River and subject to burrow-destroying flooding. Therefore, it was determined that “No Effect” to the species will occur.
Crissal thrasher	<i>Toxostoma crissale</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None SSC Covered	Common yearlong resident in southern California. Occupies arid habitats including desert washes, riparian	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that “No

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status		General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent <sup>1</sup>	Rationale
				brush, and mesquite thickets at lower elevations and dense scrub in arroyos at higher elevations. Occurs in areas dominated by mesquite hummocks and thickets with acacias, arrow weed, and in desert saltbush scrub.		Effect” to the species will occur.
LeConte's thrasher	<i>Toxostoma lecontei</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None SCC Covered	An uncommon desert resident inhabiting open desert wash, desert scrub, alkali desert scrub, desert succulent shrub and Joshua tree habitats with scattered desert shrubs and cacti. Often nests in dense, spiny shrub or densely branched cactus in desert wash habitat, usually 2-8 feet above ground. Breeds January-June.	HP	The site contains desert scrub habitat with dense shrubby areas suitable for this species. The nearest CNDDDB occurrence was documented in 1924 greater than 5 miles from the project location. This species has the potential to be impacted by project activities conducted during the nesting season.
Coachella Valley Fringe-toed lizard	<i>Uma inornata</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	FT SE Covered	Sparsely vegetated arid areas with fine wind-blown sand, including dunes, washes, alkali scrub, and flats with sandy hummocks formed around the bases of vegetation. Requires fine, loose, wind-blown sand for burrowing.	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that “No Effect” to the species will occur.
least Bell's vireo	<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP	FE SE Covered	Uncommon summer resident of southern California. Prefers riparian habitat near waterbodies that typically feature a dense, stratified canopy. Species is typically associated with southern willow scrub, cottonwood-willow forest, mule-fat scrub, sycamore alluvial woodlands, coast live oak riparian forest, willow riparian forest, or mesquite in desert regions.	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that “No Effect” to the species will occur.
Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel	<i>Xerospermophilus tereticaudus chlorus</i>	Fed: CA: CVMSHCP:	None SSC Covered	Prefers open, flat, grassy areas in fine-textured, sandy soil. Habitats include mesquite- and creosote-dominated sand dunes, creosote bush scrub, creosote-palo verde, and saltbush/alkali scrub. Substrates include wind-blown	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that “No Effect” to the species will occur.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status		General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent <sup>1</sup>	Rationale
				sand, coarse sand, and packed silt with desert pavement.		
<b>PLANT SPECIES</b>						
chaparral sand-verbena	<i>Abronia villosa</i> var. <i>aurita</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 1B.1	An annual herb inhabiting sandy soils of chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and desert dune communities. Flowers January-August (256- 5,249 feet).	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. The project site's elevation is at -132 feet, well below the species lower elevation range; habitat unsuitable for chaparral sand-verbena. The nearest occurrence is greater than 5 miles from the project. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
singlewhorl burrobush	<i>Ambrosia monogyra</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 2B.2 Not Covered	A perennial shrub inhabiting sandy soils within chaparral and Sonoran desert scrub communities. Blooms August-November (32-1640 feet).	A	The project site's elevation is at -132 feet, well below the species lower elevation range. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
Coachella Valley milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus lentiginosus</i> var. <i>cochellae</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	FE None 1B.2 Covered	Occurs in dunes and sandy flats along disturbed margins of sandy washes and in sandy soils along roadsides adjacent to existing sand dunes. May also occur in sandy substrates in creosote bush scrub. Found at elevations ranging from 130 feet to 2,150 feet above msl. Blooming period is February to May.	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur. Habitat within the BSA is generally disturbed and/or comprised of agricultural and residential land uses.
Lancaster milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus preussii</i> var. <i>laxiflorus</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 1B.1 Not Covered	A perennial herb inhabiting alkaline flats of Chenopod scrub communities. Species is only known to be extant near Lancaster and Edwards Air Force Base. Blooms March –May (2,296-2,329 feet).	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the BSA. The project site's elevation is at -132 feet, well below the species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status		General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent <sup>1</sup>	Rationale
						lower elevation range and is outside the known species occurrence localities; habitat unsuitable for Lancaster milkvetch. The nearest CNDDDB occurrence is more than 70 years old and greater than 5 miles from the project. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
gravel milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus sabulonum</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 2B.2 Not Covered	An annual to perennial herb inhabiting sandy and sometimes gravelly soils of flats, washes and roadsides within desert dune, Mojavean scrub, and Sonoran desert scrub communities. Blooms February – June (-196 -3,051 feet).	A	The project site contains sandy soils within desert scrub habitat potentially suitable for the species. The nearest CNDDDB occurrence is over 100 years old and greater than 5 miles from the project. Surveys conducted during the blooming season on June 18, 2021 did not detect the species. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
little-leaf elephant tree	<i>Bursera microphylla</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 2B.3 Not Covered	A perennial tree inhabiting rocky slopes of Sonoran desert scrub communities. Blooms in June (0-2,296 feet).	A	The project site's elevation is at -132 feet, well below the species lower elevation range. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
glandular ditaxis	<i>Ditaxis claryana</i>	Fed: CA:	None None	An annual to perennial herb inhabiting sandy soils of creosote bush scrub, desert	A	No suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the



Common Name	Scientific Name	Status		General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent <sup>1</sup>	Rationale
		CNPS: CVMSHCP:	2B.2 Not Covered	wash, Mojavean desert scrub and Sonoran desert scrub communities. Blooms December-March (0-1,525 feet).		BSA. The project site's elevation is at -132 feet, well below the species lower elevation range; The nearest CNDDDB occurrence is greater than 5 miles from the project. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
Santa Rosa mountains leptosiphon	<i>Leptosiphon floribundus</i> ssp. <i>Hallii</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 1B.3 Not Covered	A perennial herb inhabiting desert canyons of pinyon and juniper woodland and Sonoran desert scrub communities. Species is known only from the Santa Rosa Mountains. Blooms May (3,280-6,561 feet).	A	The project site's elevation is at -132 feet, well below the species lower elevation range. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
slender cottonheads	<i>Nemacaulis denudata</i> var. <i>gracilis</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 2B.2 Not Covered	An annual herb inhabiting sandy soils of coastal dunes, desert dunes, and Sonoran desert scrub communities. Blooms March-May (-164-1,640 feet).	A	Suitable sandy soils in desert scrub habitat are present at the project site. However, no CNDDDB records are present in the Indio quad; this species was not detected during surveys conducted in June and July of 2021. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
narrow-leaf sandpaper plant	<i>Petalonyx linearis</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 2B.3 Not Covered	A perennial shrub inhabiting sandy or rocky canyons of Mojavean desert scrub and Sonoran desert scrub communities. Species generally occurs in creosote-bush scrub. Blooms March-May (-82 – 3,658 feet).	A	The project site's elevation is at -132 feet, well below the species lower elevation range. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status		General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent <sup>1</sup>	Rationale
slender-stem bean	<i>Phaseolus filiformis</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 2B.1 Not Covered	An annual herb inhabiting washes of Sonoran desert scrub communities. Blooms April (393-426 feet).	A	The project site's elevation is at -132 feet, well below the species lower elevation range. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
Cove's cassia	<i>Senna covesii</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 2B.2 Not Covered	A perennial herb inhabiting dry, sandy desert washes and slopes of desert wash and Sonoran desert scrub communities. Blooms March-April (1,000-3,510 feet).	A	The project site's elevation is at -132 feet, well below the species lower elevation range. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
jackass-clover	<i>Wislizenia refracta</i> <i>ssp. refracta</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 2B.2 Not Covered	An annual herb inhabiting sandy washes, roadsides, and alkaline flats of desert dune, Mojavean desert scrub, playas, and Sonoran desert scrub communities. Blooms April-October (295- 3,805 feet).	A	The project site's elevation is at -132 feet, well below the species lower elevation range. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.
Mecca aster	<i>Xylorhiza cognata</i>	Fed: CA: CNPS: CVMSHCP:	None None 1B.2 Covered	A perennial herb inhabiting arid canyons and washes of creosote-bush scrub and Sonoran desert scrub communities. Species is known mostly from Indio Hills and Mecca Hills. Blooms January-June (65-1,312 feet).	A	The project site's elevation is at -132 feet, well below the species lower elevation range. Therefore, it was determined that "No Effect" to the species will occur.

<sup>1</sup>Absent [A] - no habitat present and no further work needed. Habitat Present [HP] -habitat is or may be present. The species may be present. Present [P] - the species is present. Critical Habitat [CH] - Project footprint is located within a designated critical habitat unit but does not necessarily mean that appropriate habitat is present. Status: Federal Endangered (FE); Federal Threatened (FT); Federal Proposed (FP, FPE, FPT); Federal Candidate (FC), Federal Species of Concern (FSC); State Endangered (SE); State Threatened (ST); Fully Protected (FP); State Rare (SR); State Species of Special Concern (SSC) State Watch List (WL); California Native Plant Society (CNPS); Covered by the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Conservation Plan (Covered).



Appendix D      AB 52 Native American  
Correspondence Log

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**AB52 Native American Consultation Log  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

Affiliation	Name	Contact Date	Contact Type	Response
Native American Heritage Commission	Andrew Green, Cultural Resources Analyst	05/19/2021	Letter	Andrew Green of NAHC responded June 4, 2021 to the inquiry letter and indicated that a sacred lands search failed to indicate the presence of Native American cultural resources in the area. A list of Native American individuals or groups in the area was also provided. Tribes were contacted based on the AB52 list developed at the County.
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians	Pattie Garcia-Plotkin, THPO	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification Letter, no response
	Lacy Padilla, Archaeologist	02/17/2022	Email	Lacy Padilla sent a letter via email indicating the project area is located within the Tribe's traditional use area and requesting the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation</li> <li>• Cultural Resources Inventory of the project area by a qualified archaeologist</li> <li>• Copy of the records search with associated survey reports and site records from the information center</li> <li>• Copies of any cultural resource documentation (report and site records) generated in connection with this project</li> </ul>
		03/10/2022	Email	Dokken Engineering archaeologist Amy Dunay responded via email stating the cultural resource reports including record search results will be sent once the draft is ready. The email further communicated that the record searches and pedestrian surveys of the project area were negative. In addition, the entirety of the channel under the bridge is currently being concrete lined by CVWD for scour protection, so little ground disturbance within the channel is anticipated

**AB52 Native American Consultation Log  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Date</b>	<b>Contact Type</b>	<b>Response</b>
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians	Lacy Padilla, Archaeologist			during construction of the bridge with exception of the abutments at either end of the bridge along the channel levees.
		07/19/2022	Email	County of Riverside provided requested project information to the tribe via email.
		8/26/2022	Email	Tribe emailed letter requesting implementation of a measure in the event human remains are discovered. This measure has been implemented as TRBL-1 in the environmental document.
		10/3/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
Augustine Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians	Amanda Vance, Chairperson	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		03/04/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response
		06/22/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response.
		08/10/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
Cabazon Band of Mission Indians	Doug Todd Welmas, Chairperson	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		03/04/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response
		06/22/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response.
		08/10/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
Cahuilla Band of Indians	Anthony Madrigal, Sr., THPO	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		06/2/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response
		07/26/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
Colorado River Indian Tribes	Brian Etsitty, THPO	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		06/2/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response



**AB52 Native American Consultation Log  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Date</b>	<b>Contact Type</b>	<b>Response</b>
		07/26/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians	Andrew Salas, Chairperson	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		06/2/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response
		07/26/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
Morongo Band of Mission Indians	Ann Brierty, THPO	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		6/2/2022	Letter	Follow-up letter was sent to tribe.
		7/5/2022	Letter	Letter received from Ann Brierty, the THPO for the tribe, requesting to consult under AB52. The tribe requested the current project design, record search information, copies of the cultural documents, shapefiles, and the geotechnical report.
		7/19/2022	Email	County of Riverside provided requested project information to the tribe via email.
		08/23/2022	Email	Follow-up email, no response
		09/6/2022	Email	Follow-up email, no response
		09/30/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
Pala Band of Mission Indians	Shasta C. Gaughen, THPO	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		06/2/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response
		07/26/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
	Jill McCormick,	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification

**AB52 Native American Consultation Log  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Date</b>	<b>Contact Type</b>	<b>Response</b>
Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation	THPO	01/25/2022	Email	Jill McCormick of Quechan Indian Tribe responded via email that the tribe has no comment on the project. Consultation considered complete.
Ramona Band of Cahuilla	Joseph D. Hamilton, Chairperson	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		06/2/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response
		07/26/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians	Cheryl Madrigal, Cultural Resources Manager	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians	Deneen Pelton, Cultural Resources Department Coordinator	02/15/2022	Email	Ms. Pelton sent a letter via email stating that the Project is not within the Band's specific Area of Historic Interest and that the Band does not have any additional information to provide. Ms. Pelton recommended contacting a Tribe that is closer to the project. Consultation considered complete.
San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians	Anthony Morales, Chairperson	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		06/2/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response
		07/26/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians	Ryan Nordness, Cultural Director	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		06/2/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response
		07/26/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
		01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response

**AB52 Native American Consultation Log  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Date</b>	<b>Contact Type</b>	<b>Response</b>
Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians	Isaiah Vivanco, Chairperson	03/04/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response
		06/22/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response.
		08/10/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
Temecula Band of Luiseno Indians (Pechanga)	Ebru Ozdil, Cultural Analyst	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		06/2/2022	Letter	Follow-up letter, no response
		07/26/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.
Torres- Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians	Thomas TorteZ, Chairperson	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification, no response
		03/04/2022	Email	Follow-up letter sent, response received from Gary Wayne Resvaloso, Jr., Cultural Committee and MLD. Consultation details with Gary Wayne Resvaloso, Jr. can be found below.
		07/26/2022	Letter	Close out letter stating no further consultation effort is required was provided to the tribe. Consultation considered complete.
	Gary Wayne Resvaloso, Jr. Cultural Committee and MLD	03/08/2022	Email	Gary Wayne Resvaloso Jr. responded on behalf of the Torres Martinez Cultural Committee on 3/8/2022 indicating the project area is located in the Tribe's Ancestral territory and requested a meeting to discuss project details or any questions, comments, and concerns that the committee may have.  Future consultation will occur with Gary Wayne Resvaloso Jr.

**AB52 Native American Consultation Log  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

Affiliation	Name	Contact Date	Contact Type	Response
Torres- Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians	Gary Wayne Resvaloso, Jr. Cultural Committee and MLD	03/31/2022	Zoom Meeting	A meeting was held to discuss the project. Amy Dunay (Dokken Engineering Archaeologist) provided overview of proposed project with the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, Caltrans Native American coordinator, and Riverside County Transportation Dept. Gary Resvaloso Jr., stated that the proposed project was within the Tribe's Land Use Area and that there were four village sites located approximately 1-2 miles away from the proposed project area. The Tribe requested archaeological testing done in areas that have not been disturbed. Amy stated that she believes that all areas within the proposed project area have been disturbed, the most recent disturbance due to a separate project being done by the Coachella Valley Water District. Amy provided evidence of disturbance via aerial imagery (Google Earth) and photographs during the meeting. Gary Jones, Caltrans Native American Coordinator, inquired permission to include and mention the four village sites in the cultural reports. Gary and Thomas Torte (Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Cultural Committee) both stated that it was permissible to state the four village sites in the cultural reports.
		04/01/2022	Email	On April 1, 2022, the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians sent names of their village sites and their general locations relative to the APE. The Tribe's knowledge of village sites within 1 to 2 miles radius of the Project are: Temal Wakhish (earth dry- La Mesa) (west of APE), Awelpitcava (dog lying by the trail) (east of APE), Ekwawinet/

**AB52 Native American Consultation Log  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

Affiliation	Name	Contact Date	Contact Type	Response
Torres- Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians	Gary Wayne Resvaloso, Jr. Cultural Committee and MLD			Kelewutkwikwinut (wood hanging down) (west of APE), and Palaiyil (Water turtle) (north of APE).
		04/01/2022	Email	Amy sent the attendees at the 3/31/2022 meeting project maps, images of the project area, and a summary of the current condition of the project area. Because of the extensive ground disturbance that has occurred throughout the entirety of the project area, Amy concluded that there are no areas of undisturbed soils. Amy requested confirmation from the Tribe that as there are no undisturbed areas that they did not require archaeological testing.
		04/01/2022	Email	Gary Wayne Resvaloso Jr responded that they will review the information and follow up the next week.
		04/11/2022	Email	<p>Gary Wayne Resvaloso Jr. responded regarding 3/31/2022 to summarize that previously the Tribe communicated that Phase 2 testing and Phase 3 data recovery would need to occur on any undisturbed soil within the project. They confirmed that Amy had previously communicated that the entire project area has been disturbed.</p> <p>The Tribe relayed that their current concern was whether archaeological/tribal monitoring was done during the previous activities/projects that disturbed the project area and if anything was found. If yes, they would like a copy of those reports. If no, they would require Tribal</p>

**AB52 Native American Consultation Log  
AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT**

Affiliation	Name	Contact Date	Contact Type	Response
Torres- Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians	Gary Wayne Resvaloso, Jr. Cultural Committee and MLD			<p>monitoring to recover artifacts that might be present in the project area.</p> <p>Gary relayed that in the past, the Tribe monitored many CVWD water line replacements/ discontinued lines and have found cremation remains in the side walls of the trenches done in the 1940's. They also found artifacts in the canals. Gary stressed that he brings up this information to show that there was no archaeological monitoring during those activities to record these findings.</p>
		07/26/2022	Letter	Close out letter stating no further consultation effort is required was provided to the tribe. Consultation considered complete.
Twenty- Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians	Darrel Mike, Chairperson	01/12/2022	Letter	Project Notification Letter, no response
		03/04/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response
		06/22/2022	Email	Follow-up letter, no response.
		08/10/2022	Letter	Final close-out letter sent to tribe, no response. Consultation considered complete.

## Appendix E Acronyms

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AB	Assembly Bill
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BSA	Biological Study Area
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CGP	Construction General Permit
CH <sub>4</sub>	methane
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	carbon monoxide
CO <sub>2</sub>	carbon dioxide
CRHR	California Register of Historic Resources
CVMSHCP	Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
dBA	Decibel A-weighted
EIC	Eastern Information Center
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
E.O.	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	greenhouse gases
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan

HFC	Hydrofluorocarbons
Ldn	day-night average sound level
Leq	equivalent continuous sound level
Lb	pound
Lmax	maximum sound level
LOS	Level of Service
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MND	Mitigated Negative Declaration
Mph	miles per hour
MRZ	Mineral Resource Zone
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
ND	Negative Declaration
NEPA	National Environmental Protection Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NO <sub>2</sub>	nitrogen dioxide
NO <sub>x</sub>	nitrogen oxides
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
O <sub>3</sub>	ozone
PAL	Project Area Limits
Pb	lead
PFC	Perfluorocarbons
PM	particulate matter
ppb	parts per billion
ppm	parts per million
ROG	Reactive organic compounds
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board



# Appendix F      Response to Public Comments

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**Comment A: Lupe Valadez (March 29, 2023)**



**AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT** (Proyecto de reemplazo)

Taller Publico

•29 de marzo, 2023 •Escuela John Kelley Elementary

Nombre: Lupe Valadez Fecha: 3/29/23  
Teléfono: (760) 960-3170 Correo Electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_ Dirección: 56271 Orange St.  
Afilación: Owner

El Departamento de Transportación del Condado de Riverside gustaría sus comentarios: \_\_\_\_\_

the road is to narrow that you cant even see in coming cars from your right side.

Los comentarios pueden ser enviados por correo electrónico a [dcastro@rivco.org](mailto:dcastro@rivco.org) o enviar este postal por correo (por favor usar estampilla de la primera clase) antes del 17 de abril 2023

Solicito estar en la lista de correo del proyecto.

Alojamientos para la cita:

¿Cómo se enteró de esta junta o proyecto? thru a friend

¿Se cumplieron adecuadamente sus necesidades de comunicación?

Sí  No  No Aplica

Como resultado de una discapacidad, ¿fueron adecuadamente satisfechas sus necesidades de alojamiento?

Sí  No  No Aplica

Si seleccionó No en cualquiera de las opciones anteriores, explique cómo podrían satisfacer mejor sus necesidades en el futuro:

Para acomodar gente con discapacidades, este postal estará disponible en formatos alternos bajo demanda.

A1

Thank you for your comments; they have been included within the Final Environmental Document.

Response A1: The Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project proposes to widen Airport Boulevard to 71 feet, and will include 6 foot wide sidewalks on both sides of the bridge, 8 foot wide shoulders, a 14 foot wide eastbound and westbound lane, and a 12 foot wide striped median/turn lane. Intersection improvements at the intersection of Orange Street will be constructed with the Project and sight distance is anticipated to be improved with the Project.

Comment B: Jesse Valadez (March 29, 2023)



AIRPORT BOULEVARD BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT  
PUBLIC WORKSHOP

• March 29, 2023 • John Kelley Elementary School

Name: JESSE VALADEZ Date: 3/29/2023  
Phone: (760) 427 1088 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: 56271 ORANG  
Affiliation: OWNER OF PROPERTY

The Riverside County Transportation Department welcomes your comments:

AT THE INTERSECTION OF ORANG ST.  
AND AIRPORT BL. THE ROAD ORANG ST. GETS VERY  
NARROW OR BOTTLENECK'S VERY DANGEROUS TO PULL  
OUT OR OTHER CAR'S PULLING OUT ALSO THERE IS A SUBSTATION

Comments may be submitted via email to [dacastro@rivco.org](mailto:dacastro@rivco.org) or by mailing this postcard (please include first class postage). Comments due by April 17, 2023  I request to be on the Project Mailing List.

Meeting Accommodations:

How did you hear about this meeting or project? MAIL INVITE

Were your communications needs adequately met?  
 Yes  No  Not Applicable

As a result of a disability, were your accommodations needs adequately met?  
 Yes  No  Not Applicable

If you checked No to either of the above, please explain how your needs could be better met in the future:

To accommodate persons with disabilities, this card will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

B1

Thank you for your comments; they have been included within the Final Environmental Document.

Response B1: The Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project proposes to widen Airport Boulevard to 71 feet, and will include 6 foot wide sidewalks on both sides of the bridge, 8 foot wide shoulders, a 14 foot wide eastbound and westbound lane, and a 12 foot wide striped median/turn lane. Intersection improvements at the intersection of Orange Street will be constructed with the Project and sight distance is anticipated to be improved with the Project.

## Comment C: Imperial Irrigation District (April 17, 2023)



[www.iid.com](http://www.iid.com)

Since 1911

April 17, 2023

Mr. David Castro  
Associate Transportation Planner  
County of Riverside Transportation Department  
3525 14th Street  
Riverside, CA 92501

SUBJECT: NOA of a Draft IS and Intent to Adopt an ND for the Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project

Dear Mr. Castro:

On March 24, 2023, the Imperial Irrigation District received from the County of Riverside Transportation Department, the Notice of Availability of a Draft Initial Study and Intent to adopt a Negative Declaration for the Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project. The County of Riverside Transportation Department, in cooperation with the City of Coachella, proposes to replace the existing Airport Boulevard Bridge over the Whitewater River with a new, wider, 2-lane bridge and reconstruct the connecting approach roadways to meet current Caltrans seismic design codes. The Airport Boulevard Bridge is located in the community of Thermal, in the County of Riverside, California.

IID has reviewed the project information and found that the comments provided in the December 15, 2021 district e-mail (see attached e-mail) continue to apply.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (760) 482-3609 or at [dvargas@iid.com](mailto:dvargas@iid.com). Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Respectfully,

Donald Vargas  
Compliance Administrator II

Enrique B. Martinez – General Manager  
Mike Pacheco – Manager, Water Dept.  
Jamie Asbury – Manager, Energy Dept.  
Matthew H Smelser – Deputy Mgr. Energy Dept.  
Daryl Buckley – Mgr. of Distribution Svcs. & Maint. Optrns., Energy Dept.  
Geoff Holbrook - General Counsel  
Michael P. Kemp – Superintendent, Regulatory & Environmental Compliance  
Laura Cervantes. – Supervisor, Real Estate

**Vargas, Donald A**

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**From:** Vargas, Donald A  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 15, 2021 11:42 AM  
**To:** 'AleGarcia@rivco.org'; 'utilities@rivco.org'  
**Cc:** Barraza, Guillermo; Bergmark, Constance; Buckley, Daryl; De Leon, Enrique; Gerardo, Jose Luis; Lopez, Ivan; Lopez, Joel F; Martinez, Jesus; Miranda, Mark; Varnado, Edward; Kemp, Michael; Marilyn Del Bosque Gilbert; Martinez, Enrique B; Ortega, Antonio; Pacheco, Mike; 'Raquel Najera (majera@iid.com)'; Asbury, Jamie; Smith Hoff, Joanna; Strumpfer, Wayne Kevin; Cervantes, Laura; Gallinat, Lisa M; Gray, Randy; Pacheco, Jorge; Solorio, Sandra  
**Subject:** Response to Information Request RE: D1-0079 - Airport Blvd - Bridge Replacement Project  
**Attachments:** D1-0079 Airport Blvd - Utility Map Request.pdf; 4012069 CND.pdf; 4012069 BRIDGE DETAILS.pdf; 4014950 CND.pdf; D1-0079 - Airport Blvd - Bridge Replacement Project - Letter No. 1 (Signed).pdf

Alexander Garcia  
Utility Coordination Unit  
County of Riverside Transportation Department  
3525 14th Street, Annex  
Riverside, CA 92501

SUBJECT: D1-0079 - Airport Blvd - Bridge Replacement Project

Dear Mr. Garcia:

Pursuant to your information request regarding Imperial Irrigation District's electrical facilities in the area of the County of Riverside's proposed bridge replacement project on Airport Boulevard from Orange Street to Desert Cactus Drive in the vicinity of Thermal, CA, attached please find location map and plans showing IID's infrastructure within the project limits.

1. Based on the information provided to the IID, the district has identified a preliminary list of potential impacts and mitigation. A final study will be developed once a customer project application (available at <http://www.iid.com/home/showdocument?id=12923>) and final bridge plans are submitted for IID review. This detailed information package will allow IID to perform an accurate assessment and provide a full report of any potential impacts and mitigation.
2. The upgrade of existing transmission line "K" line running on the west side of the Whitewater River might be required.
3. The conversion to underground of existing distribution lines (conduit and cable) will be required. Specifically, the installation of a new conduit system with 6-6 inch and 2-3 inch conduits on a spacer's system through the proposed bridge replacement alignment will be required, including the interconnection with existing Hwy 111 and Hwy 86 Express Bridges' conduit systems (See attached).
4. Line extensions and upgrades required will be made in accordance with the following IID Regulations:  
No. 2 (<http://www.iid.com/home/showdocument?id=2540>),  
No. 13 (<http://www.iid.com/home/showdocument?id=2553>),  
No. 15 (<http://www.iid.com/home/showdocument?id=2555>),  
No. 20 (<http://www.iid.com/home/showdocument?id=2560>).

} C1  
} C2  
} C3  
} C4



The final cost for line extensions and upgrades will be determined once the applicant submits a CSP application with final plans and design.

C4  
continued

5. Underground infrastructure that includes trenching, conduits, pull boxes, switch boxes and pads should be installed following IID approved plans. Physical field installation of underground infrastructure should be verified and approved by an IID inspector prior to cable installation as per IID Developer's Guide (available at the district website <https://www.iid.com/home/showdocument?id=14229>).

C5

6. Any construction or operation on IID property or within its existing and proposed right of way or easements including but not limited to: surface improvements such as proposed new streets, driveways, parking lots, landscape; and all water, sewer, storm water, or any other above ground or underground utilities; will require an encroachment permit, or encroachment agreement (depending on the circumstances). A copy of the IID encroachment permit application and instructions for its completion are available at <https://www.iid.com/about-iid/department-directory/real-estate>. The IID Real Estate Section should be contacted at (760) 339-9239 for additional information regarding encroachment permits or agreements.

C6

7. Relocation of existing IID facilities to accommodate the project and/or to accommodate street widening improvements imposed by the City will be deemed project-driven and all costs, as well as securing of rights of way and easements for relocated facilities, shall be borne by the applicant.

C7

8. Public utility easements over all private public roads and additional ten (10) feet in width on both side of the private and public roads shall be dedicated to IID for the construction, operation, and maintenance of its electrical infrastructure.

C8

9. Any new, relocated, modified or reconstructed IID facilities required for and by the project (which can include but is not limited to electrical utility substations, electrical transmission and distribution lines, etc.) need to be included as part of the project's CEQA and/or NEPA documentation, environmental impact analysis and mitigation. Failure to do so will result in postponement of any construction and/or modification of IID facilities until such time as the environmental documentation is amended and environmental impacts are fully mitigated. **Any mitigation necessary as a result of the construction, relocation and/or upgrade of IID facilities is the responsibility of the project proponent.**

C9

10. Dividing a project into two or more pieces and evaluating each piece in a separate environmental document (Piecemealing or Segmenting), rather than evaluating the whole of the project in one environmental document, is explicitly forbidden by CEQA, because dividing a project into a number of pieces would allow a Lead Agency to minimize the apparent environmental impacts of a project by evaluating individual pieces separately, each of which may have a less-than-significant impact on the environment, but which together may result in a significant impact. Segmenting a project may also hinder developing comprehensive mitigation strategies. In general, if an activity or facility is necessary for the operation of a project, or necessary to achieve the project objectives, or a reasonably foreseeable consequence of approving the project, then it should be considered an Integral project component that should be analyzed within the environmental analysis. The project description should include all project components, including those that will have to be approved by responsible agencies. The State CEQA Guidelines define a project under CEQA as "the whole of the action" that may result either directly or indirectly in physical changes to the environment. This broad definition is intended to provide the maximum protection of the environment. CEQA case law has established general principles on project segmentation for different project types. **For a project requiring construction of offsite infrastructure, the offsite infrastructure must be included in the project description.** *San Joaquin Raptor/Wildlife Rescue Center v. County of Stanislaus* (1994) 27 Cal.App. 4th 713.

C10

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Respectfully,

Imperial Irrigation District  
333 E. Barioni Blvd.  
Imperial CA 92251



Donald Vargas  
Compliance Administrator II  
Regulatory & Environmental  
Compliance Section  
General Services Department  
Tel: (760) 482-3609  
Cel: (760) 427-8099  
E-mail: [dvargas@iid.com](mailto:dvargas@iid.com)

Thank you for your comments; they have been included within the Final Environmental Document.

Response C1: The project is finalizing the Project Approval and Environmental Document phase and is expected to be completed in May or June 2023. Final Design plans are expected to be ready for an informal review by project stakeholders (such as Imperial Irrigation District) in Fall/Winter 2023/Spring 2024. Final design and construction bidding is expected to occur in Summer 2024.

Response C2: At this time specific utility relocations have not been determined. Coordination between the County of Riverside and utility companies will be ongoing throughout the design phase of the project. The County will coordinate directly with utility companies that require relocations as a result of this project's construction.

Response C3: During the design phase of the project, the County of Riverside will coordinate with all utility companies that would like to have facilities within the bridge structure. The large width of the bridge should allow for enough room for all interested utility companies to locate facilities within the bridge. Determination of liability for relocations will be determined during the design phase of the project. All liability determinations will be based on prior rights information and the County of Riverside will take into consideration information provided by the utility companies.

Response C4: The project is finalizing the Project Approval and Environmental Document phase and is expected to be completed in May or June 2023. Final Design plans are expected to be ready for an informal review by project stakeholders (such as Imperial Irrigation District) in Fall/Winter 2023/Spring 2024. During the design phase of the project, the County of Riverside will coordinate with all utility companies.

Response C5: At this time specific underground utility work including trenching, conduits, pull boxes, switch boxes and pads has not been determined. Coordination between the County of Riverside and utility companies will be ongoing throughout the design phase of the project. The County will coordinate directly with utility companies that require underground utility work as a result of this project's construction.

Response C6: At this time specific utility relocations have not been determined. Coordination between the County of Riverside and utility companies will be ongoing throughout the design phase of the project. The County will coordinate directly with utility companies that require relocations as a result of this project's construction. If an encroachment permit is required, the County of Riverside will coordinate with the IID Real Estate section.

Response C7: Determination of liability for relocations will be determined during the design phase of the project. All liability determinations will be based on prior rights information and the County of Riverside will take into consideration information provided by the utility companies.

Response C8: Public Utility Easements will be determined during the right-of-way phase of the project, anticipated to begin Summer 2024. The Project is anticipated to accommodate for the construction, operation, and maintenance of public infrastructure.

Response C9: Section XIX in the Final Environmental Document discusses utility relocations anticipated associated with the Project, including IID infrastructure and states the following:

“Depending on the Project design, utility relocation may be required. Utility relocations would be conducted with close coordination and would be designed to ensure that no new environmental impacts not already discussed in this document would occur.”

The Final Environmental Document is anticipated to provide coverage under CEQA for all required utility relocations needed as a result of the Project.

Response C10: The comment provides requirements under CEQA as it relates to segmentation and the necessity to evaluate the whole of the project under CEQA; however, no specific details or concerns related to the Project were noted. The existing document covers all of the project components necessary for the project that are known at this time. The document has not been segmented nor piecemealed and meets the requirements under CEQA for a stable and accurate project description.

Additionally, the Project Description discloses that utility relocations may be required, and states the following on Page 2 of the Final Environmental Document:

“Depending on the Project design, utility relocation may be required. Coordination with the following utilities to determine actions that may need to be taken once Project design is established include: Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial Irrigation District, Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, Level 3 Communications/CenturyLink, MCI (Verizon Business), So Cal Gas (Distribution - Palm Desert division), and Frontier. The new bridge will also be constructed to accommodate future utility lines within the bridge.”

Additionally, the Project Area and Area of Potential Effects on Figure 3 and Figure 7 in the Final Environmental Document have been determined to be sufficiently large enough to accommodate all required utility work associated with the Project.



## Comment D: California Department of Fish and Wildlife – Inland Desert Region (April 17, 2023)



State of California – Natural Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
Inland Deserts Region  
3602 Inland Empire Blvd., Suite C-220  
Ontario, CA 91764  
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor  
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



April 17, 2023  
Sent via e-mail

David Castro  
Associate Transportation Planner  
County of Riverside  
3525 14th Street  
Riverside, CA 92501

Dear Mr. Castro:

Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement (PROJECT)  
NEGATIVE DECLARATION (ND)  
SCH# 2023030456

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a Notice of Intent to Adopt an ND from the County of Riverside for the Project pursuant the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.<sup>1</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code.

### CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California's **Trustee Agency** for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State. (Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a).) CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species. (*Id.*, § 1802.) Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments as a **Responsible Agency** under CEQA. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381.) CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As proposed, for example, the Project may be subject to CDFW's lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority. (Fish & G. Code, § 1600 et seq.) Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in "take" as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.), the project proponent may seek related take authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

**Proponent:** County of Riverside Transportation Department

**Objective:** The objective of the Project is to replace the bridge at Airport Boulevard with a new, wider, 2-lane bridge. Primary Project activities include replacing the existing bridge with a new bridge that is widened by about 71 feet, increasing the height profile of the bridge by about 2-3 feet, and reconstructing the connecting approaching roadways. The Project may also involve constructing retaining walls to maintain access to the mobile home community on the south side of Airport Boulevard, improving pavement grading

<sup>1</sup> CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

transition to the existing grade separation structure west of the bridge, and improving the intersection at Orange Street and Airport Boulevard. Utility relocations and stormwater improvements are also proposed. The Project will occur in four phases: grubbing/land clearing, grading/excavation, drainage utilities/sub-grade work, and paving.

**Location:** The Airport Boulevard Bridge (Federal Bridge No. 56C-0020) is located on Airport Boulevard east of Grapefruit Boulevard and west of State Route 86 and crosses over the Whitewater River. It is in the community of Thermal, in the County of Riverside, California. Latitude: 33.642017 Longitude: -116.137127. APN: 763-330-006.

**Timeframe:** Project timeline was not specified in the ND.

### COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CDFW has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (i.e., biological resources). CDFW offers the comments and recommendations below to assist the County of Riverside in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the project's significant, or potentially significant, direct, and indirect impacts on biological resources. The ND has not adequately identified and disclosed the Project's impacts (i.e., direct, indirect, and cumulative) on biological resources and whether those impacts are less than significant. Moreover, CDFW is concerned that a mitigated negative declaration (MND) would be more appropriate than an ND for the Project given the potential for special-status species to occur on the Project site.

#### Existing Environmental Setting

Compliance with CEQA is predicated on a complete and accurate description of the environmental setting that may be affected by the proposed Project. CDFW is concerned that the assessment of the existing environmental setting has not been adequately analyzed in the ND. Without a complete and accurate description of the existing environmental setting, the ND likely provides an incomplete or inaccurate analysis of Project-related environmental impacts and whether those impacts can be avoided, minimized, or mitigated to a level less than significant.

The ND bases its analysis of impacts to biological resources on field assessments conducted on June 18 and July 1, 2021. Methods for the field assessment were not provided. A desk review for the IS/ND found 14 special-status plants and 19 special-status animal species as having potential to occur in or near the Project site. However, the IS/ND indicates that "the field assessments did not observe any sensitive species within the Project area and determined that due to a lack of suitable habitat within the BSA [Biological Study Area], none of the nineteen special status animal species are expected to occur within the BSA and are presumed absent" (p. 28). Similarly, the IS/ND reports that no special-status plant species were observed during field assessments. CDFW is concerned that the field assessments were not sufficient in timing and scope to determine the presence of special-status species on the project site. The field assessment included no focused surveys for special-status species, such as bats, burrowing owl, and special-status plants. In addition, CDFW is concerned that the field assessments conducted in 2021 are now out of date and may not provide a complete and accurate depiction of the existing environmental setting. Note that CDFW generally considers biological field assessments for wildlife to be valid for a one-year period, and assessments for rare plants may be considered valid for a period of up to three years.

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#### Mitigation Measures

CDFW is concerned that the mitigation measures proposed in the ND are not adequate to avoid or reduce impacts to biological resources to below a level of significance. To support County of Riverside in ensuring that Project impacts to biological resources are reduced to a level that is less than significant, CDFW recommends revising or adding mitigation measures for CVMSHCP compliance, special-status plants, nesting birds, burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), special-status bats, artificial nighttime lightning, construction noise,

and notifying CDFW's Lake and Streambed Alteration Program. These mitigation measures should be included in a revised CEQA document.

**I. Mitigation Measure or Alternative and Related Impact Shortcoming**

**COMMENT #1: Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP)**

**Location in ND: Biological Resources, p. 25**

**Issue:** The Project occurs within the CVMSHCP plan area and is subject to provisions and policies of the CVMSHCP.

**Specific impact and why impact would occur:** The County of Riverside is the Lead Agency and a Permittee of the CVMSHCP. To be considered a covered activity, Permittees should demonstrate that the proposed actions are consistent with the CVMSHCP and its associated Implementing Agreement. Specifically, Section 6.6.1 of the CVMSHCP discusses the obligation of Local Permittees to impose local development mitigation fees, including "collecting all revenues generated within their respective jurisdictional boundaries for the Plan implementation and transferring those revenues to CVCC within thirty (30) days of collection" (Coachella Valley, p. 6-16).

**Evidence impact is significant:** Within the Inland Deserts Region, CDFW issued Natural Community Conservation Plan Approval and Take Authorization for the CVMSHCP per Section 2800, et seq., of the California Fish and Game Code on September 9, 2008. The CVMSHCP establishes a multiple species conservation program to minimize and mitigate habitat loss and provides for the incidental take of covered species in association with activities covered under the permit. Compliance with approved habitat plans, such as the CVMSHCP, is discussed in CEQA. Specifically, Section 15125(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that the CEQA document discuss any inconsistencies between a proposed Project and applicable general plans and regional plans, including habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans. An assessment of the impacts to the CVMSHCP as a result of this Project is necessary to address CEQA requirements. To obtain additional information regarding the CVMSHCP please go to: <http://www.cvmshcp.org/>.

**Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure**

CDFW recommends the addition of the following mitigation measure to a revised CEQA document to reduce impacts to less than significant:

**MM BIO-[A]: CVMSHCP Compliance**

**Prior to construction and issuance of any grading permit, the County of Riverside shall ensure compliance with the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) and its associated Implementing Agreement and shall ensure the collection of payment of the CVMSHCP Local Development Mitigation Fee.**

**COMMENT #2: Special-Status Plant Surveys**

**Location in ND: Biological Resources, Page 28**

**Issue:** CDFW is concerned that field assessments for the ND were not sufficient in timing or scope to detect special-status plant species, including those not covered by the CVMSHCP, that may occur on the Project site.

**Specific impact and why impact would occur:** The ND indicates that no special-status plants were observed during the field assessments conducted on June 18 and July 1, 2021. CDFW is concerned that the field assessment was not conducted at the appropriate time of year to detect special-status plants, including the CVMSHCP-

D2

D3

covered Coachella Valley milk-vetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *coachellae*) as well as special-status plants not covered under the CVMSHCP that may occur on the Project site. Floristic assessments typically involve multiple visits to the project site at appropriate times of year to detect plants in blooming seasons. If the presence of special-status plant species is not determined through floristic-based surveys, unauthorized take or disturbance of special-status plant species not covered by the CVMSHCP could occur.

**Evidence impact would be significant:** The California Rare Plant Rank 1B indicates plants that are rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere, and California Rare Plant Rank 2B indicates plants that are rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere. Impacts to these species must be analyzed during preparation of environmental documents relating to CEQA because they meet the definition of rare or endangered under CEQA Guidelines §15125 (c) and/or §15380.

**Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure**

CDFW recommends that the revised CEQA document include the following mitigation measure to reduce impacts to special-status plants to less than significant:

**MM BIO-[B]: Special-Status Plant Surveys**

**A thorough floristic-based assessment of special-status plants and natural communities, following CDFW's *Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities* (CDFW 2018 or most recent version) shall be performed by a qualified biologist prior to commencing Project activities. Should any state-listed plant species be present in the Project area, the Project proponent shall obtain an Incidental Take Permit for those species not covered under the CVMSHCP prior to the start of Project activities.**

**COMMENT #3: Nesting Bird Surveys and Existing Avoidance and Minimization Measure BIO-3**

**Location in ND: Biological Resources, Page 29**

**Issue:** CDFW is concerned that existing Minimization Measure BIO-3 is not sufficient in timing or scope to prevent impacts to nesting birds.

**Specific impact and why impact would occur:** The ND indicates that the Project site includes vegetation with "the potential to provide refuge cover from predators, perching sites, and favorable conditions for avian nesting that could be directly and indirectly impacted by construction activities." Based on a review of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) and Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS), the Project has the potential to impact avian species that nest and forage in the region including, but not limited to: ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax tailii extimus*), prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), black-tailed gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila melanura*), vermilion flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*), Yuma Ridgway's rail (*Rallus obsoletus yumanensis*), Crissal thrasher (*Toxostoma crissale*), LeConte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*), and least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*). CDFW is concerned about the impacts to nesting birds including loss of nesting/foraging habitat and potential take from ground-disturbing activities and construction. Additionally, the timing of the nesting season varies greatly depending on several factors, such as bird species, weather conditions in any given year, and long-term climate changes (e.g., drought, warming, etc.). CDFW staff have observed that climate change conditions may result in nesting bird season occurring earlier and later in the year than historical nesting season dates. CDFW recommends the completion of nesting bird surveys regardless of the time of year to ensure compliance with all applicable laws pertaining to nesting and migratory birds.

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D4



**Evidence impact would be significant:** It is the Project proponent's responsibility to comply with all applicable laws related to nesting birds and birds of prey. Fish and Game Code sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 afford protective measures as follows: section 3503 states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by Fish and Game Code or any regulation made pursuant thereto. Fish and Game Code section 3503.5 makes it unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by Fish and Game Code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto. Fish and Game Code section 3513 makes it unlawful to take or possess any migratory nongame bird except as provided by rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 703 et seq.).

**Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure**

CDFW recommends the revised CEQA document include specific avoidance and minimization measures to ensure impacts to nesting birds do not occur. Project-specific avoidance and minimization measures may include but are not limited to: Project phasing and timing, monitoring of Project-related noise (where applicable), sound walls, and buffers, where appropriate. CDFW recommends that disturbance of occupied nests of migratory birds and raptors within the Project site be avoided **any time birds are nesting on-site**. Preconstruction nesting bird surveys shall be performed within 3 days prior to Project activities to determine the presence and location of nesting birds. CDFW recommends replacing existing Avoidance and Minimization Measure BIO-3 with the following Mitigation Measure to reduce impacts to less than significant:

**Mitigation Measure BIO-[C]: Nesting Bird Surveys**

**Regardless of the time of year, nesting bird surveys shall be performed by a qualified avian biologist no more than three (3) days prior to vegetation removal or ground-disturbing activities. Pre-construction surveys shall focus on both direct and indirect evidence of nesting, including nest locations and nesting behavior. The qualified biologist will make every effort to avoid potential nest predation as a result of survey and monitoring efforts. If active nests are found during the pre-construction nesting bird surveys, a qualified biologist shall establish an appropriate nest buffer to be marked on the ground. Nest buffers are species specific and should be at least 300 feet for passerines and 500 feet for raptors and birds-of-prey. Active nests and adequacy of the established buffer distance shall be monitored daily by the qualified biologist until the qualified biologist has determined the young have fledged or the Project has been completed. The qualified biologist has the authority to stop work if nesting pairs exhibit signs of disturbance.**

**COMMENT #4: Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)**

**Location in ND: Appendix C—Listed, Proposed Species, Natural Communities, and Critical Habitat Potentially Occurring or Known to Occur in the Project Area**

**Issue:** CDFW is concerned that the ND does not sufficiently identify Project impacts to burrowing owl nor ensure impacts are mitigated to a level less than significant.

**Specific impact and why impact would occur:** The ND notes that no suitable habitat for burrowing owl occurs within or adjacent to the Biological Study Area and that it was determined that "no effect" to burrowing owl will occur (Appendix C). However, CDFW review of CNDDDB and BIOS data indicates that the Project site and nearby locations provide suitable habitat for burrowing owls. Burrowing owls frequently move into disturbed areas, and the Whitewater River continues to provide habitat for burrowing owls. CDFW is concerned that the field assessments conducted in 2021 were insufficient in timing and scope to detect burrowing owls and their sign on the Project site.

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Given this information, impacts to burrowing owl from the Project could include take of burrowing owls, their nests, or eggs; destroying nesting or foraging habitat; or impacting burrowing owl populations through changes in vegetation via the destruction, conversion, or degradation of burrowing owl habitat. Impacts can result from grading, earthmoving, burrow blockage, heavy equipment compaction and crushing of burrows, and other activities. Changes in vegetation can result from the destruction, conversion, or degradation of nesting, foraging, or over-wintering habitats; destruction of natural burrows, and general Project disturbance that has the potential to harass owls at occupied burrows.

**Evidence impact would be significant:** Burrowing owl is a California Species of Special Concern. Take of individual burrowing owls and their nests is defined by Fish and Game Code section 86 and prohibited by sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513. Fish and Game Code section 3513 makes it unlawful to take or possess any migratory nongame bird except as provided by rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 703 et seq.). Take is defined in Fish and Game Code section 86 as "hunt, pursue, capture or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill." Burrowing owl is a Covered Species under the CVMSHCP, which requires that avoidance and minimization measures be implemented for this species.

#### **Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure**

CDFW recommends that prior to commencing Project activities, focused and preconstruction surveys for burrowing owl be conducted by a qualified biologist in accordance with the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012 or most recent version). CDFW recommends the revised CEQA document include avoidance and minimization measures to ensure that impacts to burrowing owls are reduced to less than significant. CDFW recommends the revised CEQA document include the following mitigation measure to reduce impacts to less than significant:

#### **Mitigation Measure BIO-[D]: Burrowing Owl Surveys**

**Prior to the start of Project activities, focused burrowing owl surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist according to the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012 or most recent version). If burrowing owls are detected during the focused surveys, the qualified biologist and Project proponent shall prepare a Burrowing Owl Plan that shall be submitted to CDFW for review and approval prior to commencing Project activities. The Burrowing Owl Plan shall describe proposed avoidance, minimization, and monitoring actions. The Burrowing Owl Plan shall include the number and location of occupied burrow sites, acres of burrowing owl habitat that will be impacted, details of site monitoring, and details on proposed buffers and other avoidance measures if avoidance is proposed. If impacts to occupied burrowing owl habitat or burrow cannot be avoided, the Burrowing Owl Plan shall also describe relocation actions that will be implemented. Proposed implementation of burrow exclusion and closure should only be considered as a last resort, after all other options have been evaluated as exclusion is not in itself an avoidance, minimization, or mitigation method and has the possibility to result in take. If impacts to occupied burrows cannot be avoided, information shall be provided regarding adjacent or nearby suitable habitat available to owls along with proposed relocation actions. The Permittee shall implement the Burrowing Owl Plan following CDFW review and approval.**

**Preconstruction burrowing owl surveys shall be conducted no less than 14 days prior to the start of Project-related activities and within 24 hours prior to ground disturbance, in accordance with the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012 or most recent version). Preconstruction surveys should be performed by a qualified biologist following the recommendations**

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and guidelines provided in the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation*. If the preconstruction surveys confirm occupied burrowing owl habitat, Project activities shall be immediately halted. The qualified biologist shall coordinate with CDFW and prepare a Burrowing Owl Plan that shall be submitted to CDFW for review and approval prior to commencing Project activities.

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**COMMENT #5: Special-Status Bat Species**

**Location in ND: Appendix C**—Listed, Proposed Species, Natural Communities, and Critical Habitat Potentially Occurring or Known to Occur in the Project Area

**Issue:** CDFW is concerned that the ND does not sufficiently identify Project impacts to bat species nor ensure impacts are mitigated to a level less than significant.

**Specific impact and why impact would occur:** According to CNDDDB and BIOS data, special status bat species including western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*), western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), and pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) have the potential to occur in the Project area. However, the ND determined that bats are absent from the Project site because "there is no suitable roosting habitat (i.e., cliffs, caves, bridges) within or adjacent to the BSA" (Appendix C). CDFW is concerned about the potential for bats to roost in the existing Airport Boulevard Bridge and in the Project area. Bridges are known to provide suitable roosting habitat for bat species. Removal of the existing bridge could result in impacts to bat species through loss of roosting habitat if bat species are not properly detected prior to construction. Additionally, an increase in noise levels, vibration, and artificial light can impact bats' sensory activity (see Comments 6 and 7). CDFW is concerned that the field assessments conducted in 2021 were insufficient in timing and scope to detect special-status bats and their sign on the Project site.

**Evidence impact would be significant:** It is the Project proponent's responsibility to comply with all applicable laws relating to bats. Take and possession of bats are defined by Fish and Game Code section 86 and prohibited by sections 2000, 2002, and 4150. The Harassment of bats is defined and prohibited in California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 251.1. In addition, the western yellow bat is a covered species under the CVMSHCP, which requires that avoidance and minimization measures be implemented for this species.

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**Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure**

**Mitigation Measure BIO-[E]: Surveys for Daytime, Nighttime, Wintering (Hibernacula), and Maternity Roosting Sites for Bats**

Prior to the initiation of Project activities within suitable bat roosting habitat, The County of Riverside shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct focused surveys to determine presence of daytime, nighttime, wintering (hibernacula), and maternity roost sites. Two spring surveys (April through June) and two winter surveys (November through January) shall be performed by qualified biologists. Surveys shall be conducted during favorable weather conditions only. Each survey shall consist of one dusk emergence survey (start one hour before sunset and last for three hours), followed by one pre-dawn reentry survey (start one hour before sunrise and last for two hours), and one daytime visual inspection of all potential roosting habitat on the Project site. Surveys shall be conducted within one 24-hour period. Visual inspections shall focus on the identification of bat signs (i.e., individuals, guano, urine staining, corpses, feeding remains, scratch marks and bats squeaking and chattering). Bat detectors, bat call analysis, and visual observation shall be used during all dusk emergence and pre-dawn re-entry surveys.

If active hibernacula or maternity roosts are identified in the work area or 500 feet extending from the work area during preconstruction surveys, for maternity roosts, Project construction will only occur between October 1 and

**February 28, outside of the maternity roosting season when young bats are present but are not yet ready to fly out of the roost. Maternity roosts shall not be evicted, excluded, removed, or disturbed.**

**A minimum 500-foot no-work buffer shall be provided around hibernacula. The buffer shall not be reduced. Project-related construction and activities shall not occur within 500 feet of or directly under or adjacent to hibernacula. Buffers shall be left in place until the end of Project construction and activities or until a qualified bat biologist determines that the hibernacula are no longer active. Project-related construction and activities shall not occur between 30 minutes before sunset and 30 minutes after sunrise. Hibernacula roosts shall not be evicted, excluded, removed, or disturbed. If avoidance of hibernacula is not feasible, the Project Biologist will prepare a relocation plan to remove the hibernacula and provide for construction of an alternative bat roost outside of the work area. A bat roost relocation plan shall be submitted for CDFW review prior to construction activities. The qualified biologist will implement the relocation plan and new roost sites shall be in place before the commencement of any ground-disturbing activities that will occur within 500 feet of the hibernacula. New roost sites shall be in place prior to the initiation of Project related activities to allow enough time for bats to relocate. Removal of roosts will be guided by accepted exclusion and deterrent techniques. The County of Riverside shall compensate no less than 2:1 for permanent impacts to roosting habitat.**

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**COMMENT #6: Artificial Light**

**Location in ND: Aesthetics, p. 10**

**Issue:** The ND does not analyze impacts to biological resources from artificial nighttime lighting.

**Specific impact and why impact would occur:** The ND indicates that the Project proposes the addition of permanent lighting on the bridge and that construction areas may be lit during construction. Mitigation Measure VIS-1 indicates that lighting will be shielded and be consistent with city and county lighting guidelines; however, lighting design specifications are not provided. In addition, impacts to biological resources from artificial nighttime lighting are not analyzed. The direct and indirect impacts of artificial nighttime lighting on biological resources including migratory birds that fly at night, bats, and other nocturnal and crepuscular wildlife should be analyzed, and appropriate avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to less than significant should be included in the revised CEQA document.

**Evidence impact would be significant:** Artificial nighttime lighting often results in light pollution, which has the potential to affect fish and wildlife significantly and adversely. Artificial lighting alters ecological processes including, but not limited to, the temporal niches of species; the repair and recovery of physiological function; the measurement of time through interference with the detection of circadian and lunar and seasonal cycles; and the detection of resources and natural enemies and navigation (Gatson et al. 2013). Many species use photoperiod cues for communication (e.g., bird song; Miller 2006), determining when to begin foraging (Stone et al. 2009), behavior thermoregulation (Beiswenger 1977), and migration (Longcore and Rich 2004). Phototaxis, a phenomenon which results in attraction and movement towards light, can disorient, entrap, and temporarily blind wildlife species that experience it (Longcore and Rich 2004).

D7

**Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure**

To facilitate a meaningful review by CDFW and support the County of Riverside in demonstrating that impacts to biological resources are less than significant, CDFW recommends that the ND is revised to include lightning specifications for all artificial nighttime lightning that will be used by the Project, an analysis of the direct and indirect



impacts of artificial nighttime lighting on biological resources, and appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures that will reduce impacts to less than significant.

Because of the potential for artificial lighting at night to negatively impact wildlife, CDFW recommends the revised CEQA document include the following mitigation measure:

**MM BIO-[F]: Artificial Light**

**During Project construction and operations over the lifetime of the bridge, the County of Riverside shall eliminate all nonessential lighting throughout the Project area and avoid or limit the use of artificial light during the hours of dawn and dusk when many wildlife species are most active. The County shall ensure that lighting for Project activities is shielded, cast downward, and does not spill over onto other properties or upward into the night sky (see the International Dark-Sky Association standards at <http://darksky.org/>). The County shall ensure the use of LED lighting with a correlated color temperature of 3,000 Kelvins or less, proper disposal of hazardous waste, and recycling of lighting that contains toxic compounds with a qualified recycler.**

D7  
continued

**COMMENT #7: Construction Noise**

**Location in ND: Noise, p. 70**

**Issue:** The ND does not analyze impacts to biological resources from construction noise.

**Specific impact and why impact would occur:** The ND states that “during construction of the Project, noise from construction activities may intermittently dominate the noise environment in the immediate area of construction” (p. 73). Furthermore, the lowest equipment related noise levels would be 55 dBA at 50 feet for a pickup truck. The highest equipment-related noise levels would be up to 85 dBA at 50 feet for excavation and drilling as part of the installation of bridge piers and footings. These values exceed exposure levels that may adversely affect wildlife species (55 to 60 dBA). Because of the potential for construction noise to negatively impact wildlife, CDFW recommends the revised CEQA document include an analysis of impacts to biological resources and specific avoidance and minimization measures to ensure that impacts to wildlife are reduced to less than significant.

**Evidence impact would be significant:** Construction may result in substantial noise through road use, equipment, and other Project-related activities. This may adversely affect wildlife species in several ways as wildlife responses to noise can occur at exposure levels of only 55 to 60 dB (Barber et al. 2009). Anthropogenic noise can disrupt the communication of many wildlife species including birds, and bats (Sun and Narins 2005, Patricelli and Blickley 2006, Gillam and McCracken 2007, Slabbekoom and Ripmeester 2008). Noise can also affect predator-prey relationships as many nocturnal animals such as bats and owls primarily use auditory cues (i.e., hearing) to hunt. Additionally, many prey species increase their vigilance behavior when exposed to noise because they need to rely more on visual detection of predators when auditory cues may be masked by noise (Rabin et al. 2006, Quinn et al. 2017). Noise has also been shown to reduce the density of nesting birds (Francis et al. 2009) and cause increased stress that results in decreased immune responses (Kight and Swaddle 2011).

D8

**Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure**

Because of the potential for construction noise to negatively impact wildlife, CDFW recommends the revised CEQA document include the following mitigation measure:

**MM BIO-[G]: Construction Noise**

During all Project construction, the County of Riverside shall restrict use of equipment to hours least likely to disrupt wildlife (e.g., not at night or in early morning) and restrict use of generators except for temporary use in emergencies. Power to sites can be provided by solar PV (photovoltaic) systems, cogeneration systems (natural gas generator), small micro-hydroelectric systems, or small wind turbine systems. The County shall ensure use of noise suppression devices such as mufflers or enclosures for generators. Sounds generated from any means must be below the 55-60 dB range within 50-feet from the source.

D8  
continued

**COMMENT #8: CDFW's Lake and Streambed Alteration (LSA) Program**

**Location in ND: Permits and Approvals Needed, p. 3**

**Issue:** The bridge replacement and associated Project activities occur along the Whitewater River. The ND states that an LSA Agreement will be obtained prior to construction.

**Specific impact and why impact would occur:** The proposed Project occurs along Whitewater River and may impact the river and the fish and wildlife (biological) resources that use the river. Despite disturbance, wildlife and habitat persist in and adjacent to the Whitewater River. Fish and Game Code 1602 extends to all fish and wildlife resources associated with rivers and streams, including trees, shrubs, and forbs, and nesting, foraging, refugia, and burrowing habitat for mammals, reptiles, birds, and other wildlife.

**Evidence impact would be significant:** Fish and Game Code section 1602 requires an entity to notify CDFW prior to commencing any activity that may do one or more of the following: substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream, or lake; substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel or bank of any river, stream, or lake; or deposit debris, waste or other materials that could pass into any river, stream or lake. Note that "any river, stream or lake" includes those that are episodic (i.e., those that are dry for periods of time) as well as those that are perennial (i.e., those that flow year-round). This includes ephemeral streams, desert washes, and watercourses with a subsurface flow. It may also apply to work undertaken within the flood plain of a body of water. Upon receipt of a complete notification, CDFW determines if the proposed Project activities may substantially adversely affect existing fish and wildlife resources and whether a Lake and Streambed Alteration (LSA) Agreement is required. An LSA Agreement includes measures necessary to protect existing fish and wildlife resources. CDFW may suggest ways to modify the Project that would eliminate or reduce harmful impacts to fish and wildlife resources. Information about CDFW's Lake and Streambed Alteration Program can be found here: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/LSA>.

D9

**Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure**

**MM BIO-[H]: CDFW Lake and Streambed Alteration Program**

**Prior to construction and issuance of any grading permit, the Project Sponsor shall obtain written correspondence from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) stating that notification under section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code is not required for the Project, or the Project Sponsor should obtain a CDFW-executed Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement, authorizing impacts to Fish and Game Code section 1602 resources associated with the Project.**

**ENVIRONMENTAL DATA**

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a database which may be used to make subsequent or

D10



David Castro, Associate Transportation Planner  
County of Riverside  
April 17, 2023  
Page 11

supplemental environmental determinations. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e).) Accordingly, please report any special status species and natural communities detected during Project surveys to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). The CNDDDB field survey form can be filled out and submitted online at the following link: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>. The types of information reported to CNDDDB can be found at the following link: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Plants-and-Animals>.

}  
D10  
continued

#### ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEES

The Project, as proposed, would have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and assessment of environmental document filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the environmental document filing fee is required in order for the underlying project approval to be operative, vested, and final. (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 753.5; Fish & G. Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089.)

}  
D11

#### CONCLUSION

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the ND to assist the County of Riverside in identifying and mitigating Project impacts on biological resources. CDFW concludes that the ND does not adequately identify or mitigate the project's significant or potentially significant impacts on biological resources. CDFW concludes that a mitigated negative declaration (MND) would be more appropriate than an ND for the proposed Project. CDFW recommends that prior to the adoption of the CEQA document, the County of Riverside revise the document to include a more complete assessment of the project's potential impacts on biological resources and appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a level less than significant.

CDFW personnel are available for consultation regarding biological resources and strategies to minimize impacts. Questions regarding this letter or further coordination should be directed to [Claire.Sullivan@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Claire.Sullivan@wildlife.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
94F927FE024C8...

Kim Freeburn  
Environmental Program Manager

Attachment 1, MMRP for CDFW-Proposed Mitigation Measures

ec: Heather Brashear, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor), CDFW  
[Heather.Brashear@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Heather.Brashear@wildlife.ca.gov)

Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse, Sacramento  
[State.Clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov](mailto:State.Clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov)

Rollie White, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
[rollie\\_white@fws.gov](mailto:rollie_white@fws.gov)

Vincent James, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
[vincent\\_james@fws.gov](mailto:vincent_james@fws.gov)

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Biological Resources (BIO)		
Mitigation Measure (MM) Description	Implementation Schedule	Responsible Party
<p><b>MM BIO-[A]: CVMSHCP Compliance</b></p> <p>Prior to construction and issuance of any grading permit, the County of Riverside shall ensure compliance with the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) and its associated Implementing Agreement and shall ensure the collection of payment of the CVMSHCP Local Development Mitigation Fee.</p>	Prior to construction and issuance of any grading permit	County of Riverside
<p><b>MM BIO-[B]: Special-Status Plant Surveys</b></p> <p>A thorough floristic-based assessment of special-status plants and natural communities, following CDFW's <i>Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities</i> (CDFW 2018 or most recent version) shall be performed by a qualified biologist prior to commencing Project activities. Should any state-listed plant species be present in the Project area, the Project proponent shall obtain an Incidental Take Permit for those species not covered under the CVMSHCP prior to the start of Project activities.</p>	Prior to ground disturbance and at the appropriate time of year when plants will be both evident and identifiable	County of Riverside
<p><b>MM BIO-[C]: Nesting Bird Surveys</b></p> <p>Regardless of the time of year, nesting bird surveys shall be performed by a qualified avian biologist no more than three (3) days prior to vegetation removal or ground-disturbing activities. Pre-construction surveys shall focus on both direct and indirect evidence of nesting, including nest locations and nesting behavior. The qualified biologist will make every effort to avoid potential nest predation as a result of survey and monitoring efforts. If active nests are found during the pre-construction nesting bird surveys, a qualified biologist shall establish an appropriate nest buffer to be marked on the ground. Nest</p>	No more than 3 days prior to vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities	County of Riverside

<p>buffers are species specific and should be at least 300 feet for passerines and 500 feet for raptors and birds-of-prey. Active nests and adequacy of the established buffer distance shall be monitored daily by the qualified biologist until the qualified biologist has determined the young have fledged or the Project has been completed. The qualified biologist has the authority to stop work if nesting pairs exhibit signs of disturbance.</p>		
<p><b>MM BIO-[D]: Burrowing Owl Surveys</b></p> <p>Prior to the start of Project activities, focused burrowing owl surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist according to the <i>Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation</i> (CDFG 2012 or most recent version). If burrowing owls are detected during the focused surveys, the qualified biologist and Project proponent shall prepare a Burrowing Owl Plan that shall be submitted to CDFW for review and approval prior to commencing Project activities. The Burrowing Owl Plan shall describe proposed avoidance, minimization, and monitoring actions. The Burrowing Owl Plan shall include the number and location of occupied burrow sites, acres of burrowing owl habitat that will be impacted, details of site monitoring, and details on proposed buffers and other avoidance measures if avoidance is proposed. If impacts to occupied burrowing owl habitat or burrow cannot be avoided, the Burrowing Owl Plan shall also describe relocation actions that will be implemented. Proposed implementation of burrow exclusion and closure should only be considered as a last resort, after all other options have been evaluated as exclusion is not in itself an avoidance, minimization, or mitigation method and has the possibility to result in take. If impacts to occupied burrows cannot be avoided, information shall be provided regarding adjacent or nearby suitable habitat available to owls along with proposed relocation actions. The Permittee shall implement the Burrowing Owl Plan following CDFW review and approval.</p> <p>Preconstruction burrowing owl surveys shall be conducted no less than 14 days prior to the start of Project-related activities and within 24 hours prior to ground disturbance, in accordance with the <i>Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation</i> (CDFG 2012 or most recent version). Preconstruction surveys should be performed by a qualified biologist following the recommendations and guidelines provided in the <i>Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation</i>. If the preconstruction surveys confirm occupied burrowing owl habitat, Project activities shall be immediately halted. The qualified biologist shall coordinate with CDFW and prepare a Burrowing Owl Plan that shall be submitted to CDFW for review and approval prior to commencing Project activities.</p>	<p><b>Focused Surveys:</b> Prior to commencing Project-related activities</p> <p><b>Pre-construction surveys:</b> no less than 14 days prior to the start of Project-related activities and no more than 24 hours prior to ground disturbance</p>	<p>County of Riverside</p>
<p><b>MM BIO-[E]: Surveys for Daytime, Nighttime, Wintering (Hibernacula), and Maternity Roosting Sites for Bats</b></p> <p>Prior to the initiation of Project activities within suitable bat roosting habitat, The County of Riverside shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct focused surveys to determine presence of daytime, nighttime, wintering (hibernacula), and maternity roost sites. Two spring surveys (April through June) and two winter surveys (November through January) shall be performed by qualified biologists. Surveys shall be conducted during favorable weather conditions only. Each survey shall consist of one dusk emergence survey (start one hour before sunset and last for three hours), followed by one</p>	<p><b>Focused surveys:</b> Two spring surveys and two winter surveys prior to initiation of project activities</p>	<p>County of Riverside</p>

<p>pre-dawn reentry survey (start one hour before sunrise and last for two hours), and one daytime visual inspection of all potential roosting habitat on the Project site. Surveys shall be conducted within one 24-hour period. Visual inspections shall focus on the identification of bat signs (i.e., individuals, guano, urine staining, corpses, feeding remains, scratch marks and bats squeaking and chattering). Bat detectors, bat call analysis, and visual observation shall be used during all dusk emergence and pre-dawn re-entry surveys.</p> <p>If active hibernacula or maternity roosts are identified in the work area or 500 feet extending from the work area during preconstruction surveys, for maternity roosts, Project construction will only occur between October 1 and February 28, outside of the maternity roosting season when young bats are present but are not yet ready to fly out of the roost. Maternity roosts shall not be evicted, excluded, removed, or disturbed.</p> <p>A minimum 500-foot no-work buffer shall be provided around hibernacula. The buffer shall not be reduced. Project-related construction and activities shall not occur within 500 feet of or directly under or adjacent to hibernacula. Buffers shall be left in place until the end of Project construction and activities or until a qualified bat biologist determines that the hibernacula are no longer active. Project-related construction and activities shall not occur between 30 minutes before sunset and 30 minutes after sunrise. Hibernacula roosts shall not be evicted, excluded, removed, or disturbed. If avoidance of hibernacula is not feasible, the Project Biologist will prepare a relocation plan to remove the hibernacula and provide for construction of an alternative bat roost outside of the work area. A bat roost relocation plan shall be submitted for CDFW review prior to construction activities. The qualified biologist will implement the relocation plan and new roost sites shall be in place before the commencement of any ground-disturbing activities that will occur within 500 feet of the hibernacula. New roost sites shall be in place prior to the initiation of Project related activities to allow enough time for bats to relocate. Removal of roosts will be guided by accepted exclusion and deterrent techniques. The County of Riverside shall compensate no less than 2:1 for permanent impacts to roosting habitat.</p>		
<p><b>MM BIO-[F]: Artificial Light</b></p> <p>During Project construction and operations over the lifetime of the bridge, the County of Riverside shall eliminate all nonessential lighting throughout the Project area and avoid or limit the use of artificial light during the hours of dawn and dusk when many wildlife species are most active. The County shall ensure that lighting for Project activities is shielded, cast downward, and does not spill over onto other properties or upward into the night sky (see the International Dark-Sky Association standards at <a href="http://darksky.org/">http://darksky.org/</a>). The County shall ensure the use of LED lighting with a correlated color temperature of 3,000 Kelvins or less, proper disposal of hazardous waste, and recycling of lighting that contains toxic compounds with a qualified recycler.</p>	<p>During project construction and operations over the lifetime of the bridge</p>	<p>County of Riverside</p>
<p><b>MM BIO-[G]: Construction Noise</b></p> <p>During all Project construction, the County of Riverside shall restrict use of equipment to hours least likely to disrupt wildlife (e.g., not at night or in early morning) and restrict use of generators except for temporary use in emergencies. Power to sites can be provided by solar PV (photovoltaic) systems, cogeneration systems (natural</p>	<p>During Project activities.</p>	<p>County of Riverside</p>

<p>gas generator), small micro-hydroelectric systems, or small wind turbine systems. The County shall ensure use of noise suppression devices such as mufflers or enclosures for generators. Sounds generated from any means must be below the 55-60 dB range within 50-feet from the source.</p>		
<p><b>MM BIO-[H]: CDFW Lake and Streambed Alteration Program</b></p> <p>Prior to construction and issuance of any grading permit, the Project Proponent shall obtain written correspondence from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) stating that notification under section 1602 of the Fish and Game Code is not required for the Project, or the Project Sponsor should obtain a CDFW-executed Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement, authorizing impacts to Fish and Game Code section 1602 resources associated with the Project.</p>	<p>Prior to construction and issuance of any grading permit</p>	<p>Project proponent and County of Riverside</p>

Thank you for your comments; they have been included within the Final Environmental Document.

Response D1: The field assessments for biological resources on the proposed Project site were conducted on June 18, 2021, and July 1, 2021. The general biological survey consisted of walking through the Project footprint plus a 500-foot buffer, the Biological Study Area, to determine if any special status species or their habitat were present. Transects were walked in a fashion to provide full line of sight coverage of entire BSA. Natural communities, plant and wildlife species, and notable habitat characteristics were recorded; however, no special status plants or wildlife were found to be present within the BSA and all habitat assessed was found to be marginal, largely disturbed, and unsuitable for all special status plants or wildlife.

Since the field assessments for biological resources were conducted, the CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project has removed all vegetation from the entire channel and the entire riverbed has been lined with concrete, preventing growth of any new vegetation within the channel. Work associated with the CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project will continue within and adjacent to the Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project area for the foreseeable future and no habitat for sensitive plants or wildlife is anticipated to be within the riverbed at the time of construction for the bridge replacement.

The field assessments for biological resources conducted in 2021 did not note any sensitive biological resources or suitable habitat at the time, and with the disturbance associated with the CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project including removal of all vegetation within the stormwater channel, these surveys are considered to have sufficiently noted the existing biological environment. Regardless, the bridge replacement project will conduct pre-construction surveys to ensure the project avoids and minimizes impacts to sensitive biological resources.

Response D2: Section IV - Biological Resources Part F in the Final Environmental Document discusses the Project's compliance with the CVMSHCP. As stated, the proposed Project is



located in the City of Coachella and is entirely within the CVMSHCP area. Therefore, the Project is obligated to comply with the requirements set forth in the CVMSHCP. The CVMSHCP is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional habitat conservation plan focusing on conservation of species and their associated habitats in the Coachella Valley region of Riverside County. The proposed Project was further analyzed for its consistency with the CVMSHCP within the NES, and a separate consistency report was not prepared. Section 6.6.1.1 (Joint Project Review Process within Conservation Areas) specifies that the Joint Project Review Process pertains only to projects in a Conservation Area that could result in disturbance to habitat, natural communities, biological corridors, or essential ecological processes. While the proposed Project is located within the CVMSHCP boundaries, it is not located within any CVMSHCP identified Conservation Areas. Thus, the proposed Project is not subject to the Joint Project Review. The project is not adjacent to a Conservation Area, and it is not subject to Land Use Adjacency Guidelines under Section 4.5 of the CVMSHCP. The Project is identified as a "Covered Activity" under the CVMSHCP Section 7.2.3 (Regional Road Projects), Table 7-3 (CVAG Regional Road Projects). The proposed Project is specifically designated in CVMSHCP Table 7-3 as the "AVENUE 56 / AIRPORT BLVD" Street under the "SPRR to East side of Bridge over Coachella Valley Storm Channel" segment. According to CVMSHCP Section 7.0 (Take Authorization for Covered Activities and Term of Permit), Covered Activities are not likely to result in "Take" of "Covered Species" under the CVMSHCP as long as applicable avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures described in the CVMSHCP are implemented. The Project is not subject to CVMSHCP avoidance, minimization, and measures as there were no resources determined to be present or likely to occur within the BSA. See Chapter 4 (Avoidance and Minimization Efforts) of this report. Additionally, the Project fulfills mitigation requirements per CVMSHCP Section 5.2.1.3 (Regional Road Projects Mitigation) and Section 6.6.1 (Obligations of Local Permittees). These sections describe obligations of the local permittees for mitigation for regional road projects and projects outside of Conservation Areas. Per Section 5.2.1.3, mitigation for the proposed Project as a Covered Activity per Section 7.2.3, is covered through the Riverside County Measure A half-cent sales tax. Section 6.6.1 requires public projects to be consistent with Section 4.4 mitigation measures, and overall CVMSHCP compliance for public projects. As discussed previously in this portion of this report, the proposed Project is consistent with CVMSHCP requirements for public projects. Thus, the proposed Project is consistent with the biological resource goals and objectives of the CVMSHCP. The Project is proposing impacting approximately 0.34 acres of previously undisturbed land with new impervious surfaces, which will require the County of Riverside to pay \$2,286.50 to the CVMSHCP Local Development Mitigation Fee per the CVAG & CVCC Fee Estimator calculator. The suggested measure will not be incorporated, and no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

Response D3: The field assessments for biological resources on the proposed Project site were conducted on June 18, 2021, and July 1, 2021. The general biological survey consisted of walking through the Project footprint plus a 500-foot buffer, the Biological Study Area, to determine if any special status species or their habitat were present. Transects were walked in a fashion to provide full line of sight coverage of entire BSA. Natural communities, plant and wildlife species, and notable habitat characteristics were recorded; however, no special status plants were found to be present within the BSA. Marginally suitable habitat consisting of creosote brush scrub habitat occurs within the Biological Study Area for one (1) special status plant species, Coachella Valley milk-vetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *coachellae*) based on the field survey and CNDDDB, CNPS, and IPaC records search; however, this plant is typically found at elevations ranging from 130 feet to 2,150 feet above mean sea level. As the Project's elevation is at -132 feet below sea level, it was determined that no suitable habitat occurs within or adjacent to the Biological Study Area. Furthermore, the CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project has concrete lined the



entire Whitewater River channel, resulting in the removal and disturbance of all biological communities within the Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project's footprint.

Additionally, due to the Project site's elevation being -132 feet below sea level, no special status plants are known to occur at this low of an elevation with exception of the gravel milk-vetch (*Astragalus sabulonum*). The gravel milk-vetch is an annual herb known to bloom from February to July and blooming season surveys were conducted during June; however, this plant was not detected during bloom season surveys. As a result, no special status plant species are expected to occur within the Biological Study Area and are presumed absent because of the lack of suitable habitat within the Biological Study Area. Further, the CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project's CEQA Environmental Impact Report also determined that no special status plant species were present within their project's footprint, which encompasses all undeveloped areas of the Airport Boulevard Bridge Replacement Project. Thus, no direct impacts to special status plant species are anticipated to occur because of the proposed Project. The suggested measure will not be incorporated, and no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

Response D4: The field assessments for biological resources on the proposed Project site were conducted on June 18, 2021, and July 1, 2021. The only nest sites detected to date in the Project area were inactive cliff swallow nests beneath the Airport Boulevard Bridge. Crissal Thrasher (*Toxostoma crissale*), Le Conte's Thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*), Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia brewsteri*), Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*), and Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) nesting habitat is not present within the channel due to the recent clearing of vegetation and on-going channel maintenance by the CVWD. Additionally, the CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project will prohibit nesting habitat from re-establishing within the stormwater channel itself as all vegetation has been removed and the entire channel has been lined with concrete, preventing growth of any new vegetation within the channel. Cooper's Hawk (*e*), Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*), Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus obscurus*), Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), Black-Tailed Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila melanura*), and Albert's Towhee (*Pipilo aberti*) are all special status species not included in the CVMSHCP which have, in the past, been known to occur within the channel vicinity of the Whitewater River Channel. However, very marginal nesting habitat currently occurs within the Project area for these species which is fragmented and degraded/disturbed to allow for access roads to the property and to the CVWD maintain channel. Additionally, the marginal nesting habitat in the northeast quadrant of the Project area is anticipated to be removed by another development project, the Coachella Airport Business Park.

Measure BIO-3 is included in the Final Environmental Document to avoid impacting nesting birds. Measure BIO-3 states that construction should occur outside of the avian nesting season (February 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>). This avian nesting season range is consistent with the CVMSHCP recommendation in Section 9.7 for Species Accounts and Conservation Measures related to birds, which requires projects to "avoid impacts to habitat during nesting season, generally from February through July, for all bird species." If construction is to occur during nesting bird season, a preconstruction nesting bird survey by a qualified biologist will be needed prior to disturbance. If nesting birds are present, the County of Riverside would coordinate with the wildlife agencies to determine the appropriate buffers to avoid disturbance of the nesting birds. No work would be permitted within the buffer area near the nest until young have fledged. While there is no established protocol for nest avoidance, when consulted, the CDFW generally recommends avoidance buffers of about 500 feet for birds-of-prey, and 100 to 300 feet for songbirds. It is anticipated that coordination with the wildlife agencies including CDFW would likely result in daily

monitoring of any active nests to ensure they are not disturbed during construction. The suggested measure will not be incorporated, and no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

Response D5: The field assessments for biological resources on the proposed Project site including burrowing owl were conducted on June 18, 2021, and July 1, 2021. These surveys were considered a Phase I Habitat Assessment and Phase II Burrow Survey of the protocol and conducted at the appropriate time as the Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines recommends nesting season burrowing owl surveys be conducted between April 15 and July 15. The surveys determined that no suitable burrows exist within the Project area; therefore, Phase III Burrowing Owl Surveys, Census and Mapping protocol level surveys are not required for burrowing owl. Further, due to the CVWD channel lining project which concrete lined the entire Whitewater River within the Project Area, and the remaining project area being unsuitable habitat made up of disturbed/developed lands and densely vegetated iodine scrub brush which were lacking suitable burrows, no suitable habitat for Burrowing Owl occurs within or adjacent to the Biological Study Area; therefore, Burrowing Owl is presumed absent from the Project Area and has very limited potential to occur within the Project area. Although no suitable habitat is within the Project area, measure BIO-3 in the Final Environmental Document requires pre-construction nesting bird surveys to be conducted. These pre-construction surveys will ensure there will be no impacts to burrowing owls as the entire Project area plus a 300-foot buffer will be covered in the survey. It is anticipated the pre-construction nesting bird survey would confirm that there is no suitable habitat and no active burrowing owl nests within or adjacent to the Project. The suggested measure will not be incorporated, and no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

Response D6: The field assessments for biological resources on the proposed Project site were conducted on June 18, 2021, and July 1, 2021. There was no suitable roosting habitat (i.e., cliffs, caves, bridges) identified within or adjacent to the Biological Study Area during the field assessments; therefore, bats are presumed absent from the Project Area. The existing bridge does not provide any suitable crevices for bat habitat as there are minimal longitudinal joints, and all joints are grouted and do not provide suitable habitat for bats. The bridge was observed for signs of historic bat usage; however, no signs including staining or guano was observed along the entirety of the bridge; therefore, it is presumed bats do not utilize the bridge as roosting habitat.

Further, palm trees do exist within the nearby mobile home community approximately 25 feet from the roadway and within private property located along Orange Street that appear to not be maintained or trimmed. While these palm trees in proximity to the Project may provide potential habitat for bats and bats may utilize the Project area as foraging habitat, the Project would have no effect to these trees as no disturbance to the palm trees is anticipated and no trees are anticipated to be removed with the Project. Due to this absence of suitable habitat within the Project footprint, and no signs of historic bat roosting being observed, it is presumed that no roosting bat habitat is within the Project area and the Project would have no effect to bats.

Construction work would be primarily limited to daytime hours, with all work ending by 9 p.m. at the latest, and there will be no potential to effect bats foraging within the Project area at night. As construction will primarily occur during daytime hours, and no trees or other suitable habitat would be removed or effected with the Project, no impacts to bats are anticipated. The suggested measure will not be incorporated, and no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

Response D7: Street lights currently exist at the intersection of Airport Boulevard and Orange Street as well as at the southbound SR-86 off-ramp and Desert Cactus Drive intersection with Airport Boulevard. Section I – Aesthetics discusses the proposed lighting associated with the bridge replacement. Summarized, the proposed Project may include the addition of lighting on the bridge and areas may also be lighted during construction.

Additionally, measure VIS-1 would be included with the Project which states lighting will be appropriately shielded. The Project's lighting design must be consistent with the City of Coachella and County of Riverside lighting guidelines and standards. The County of Riverside will comply with Ordinance No. 655, which regulates light pollution and ensures the lighting will be appropriately shielded. As no sensitive species have been identified within the Biological Study Area, and the CVWD Stormwater Channel Improvement Project has concrete lined the entire Whitewater River channel, thereby removing all-natural communities within the Project footprint, it is not anticipated the project would result in disruption to migratory corridors or impacts to sensitive species as a result of new lighting. The suggested measure will not be incorporated, and no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

Response D8: Section XIII – Noise discloses the potential noise impacts associated with operation and construction of the Project. Summarized, the operational noise associated with the proposed Project would remain the same as the existing bridge as no new travel lanes are proposed with the Project. The proposed Project would not result in any substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels.

Construction noise of this Project would be intermittent, and noise levels would vary depending on the type of construction activity. For the proposed Project, the lowest construction equipment-related noise levels would be 55 dBA at a distance of 50 feet for sound from a pick-up truck. The highest noise levels would be up to 85 dBA at a distance of 50 feet for excavation and drilling as part of the installation of each of the proposed bridge piers and footings.

Additionally, the Project would include construction methods, structure designs, and operational methods that would reduce the potential noise and vibration impacts to less than significant levels, and work activities would not exceed 86 dBA Lmax at 50 feet between the hours of 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. for the duration of construction to minimize disruption to wildlife at night and early morning.

Further, the existing noise levels along Airport Boulevard are higher than 55-60 dBA due to the nearby SR-86. The City of Coachella's General Plan estimates that the Project area is currently experiencing sound levels of approximately 65 dBA due to the volume of cars along the adjacent SR-86. Construction sound levels will intermittently increase the noise levels to approximately 85 dBA at a distance of 50 feet during the CIDH drilling needed to construct the bridge.

As noise impacts are anticipated to be minimal and intermittent, and due to the lack of sensitive biological resources within the Project area, the suggested measure will not be incorporated, and no additional avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required.

Response D9: The County of Riverside will comply with all applicable regulatory requirements, including obtaining coverage per the Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement prior to construction. If the Project features are modified and it is determined a Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement is no longer necessary, the County will request written concurrence from CDFW prior to construction.

Response D10: As no sensitive plant or animal species were observed during the field assessments for biological resources, no data was obtained to provide to CNDDDB. The County of Riverside will provide data to CNDDDB for future projects, if sensitive plant or animal species are observed during field assessments.

Response D11: The County of Riverside will file a Notice of Determination upon approval and adoption of the Final Environmental Document, anticipated in May or June 2023. The County of Riverside will pay the CDFW Filing Fee to the County Clerk upon approval and adoption of the Final Environmental Document and filing of the Notice of Determination with the County Clerk.