



In Monterey County, California  
Near Watsonville, from 0.1 kilometer (0.06 mile) south  
of Jensen Road to Trafton Road  
05-Mon-1 KP 160.7/163.3 (PM 99.9/101.5)  
05-315920

**Initial Study  
with Mitigated Negative Declaration/  
Environmental Assessment  
with Finding of No Significant Impacts**



Prepared by the  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
and the  
State of California Department of Transportation

**May 2006**



# General Information about this Document

## ***What's in this document?***

This Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact discloses the potential environmental impacts of alternatives for the proposed project located on Highway 1 at Salinas Road in Monterey County, California. The document identifies Alternative 7 as the preferred alternative to improve safety and operations at the intersection of Highway 1 and Salinas Road. It describes why the project is being proposed, alternatives considered, the existing environment that would be affected by the project, potential impacts from each of the project alternatives, including the preferred alternative, and the proposed avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures.

An Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment was circulated for public comment from July 14, 2005 to August 12, 2005. A public hearing was held July 28, 2005 between 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. at the Ohlone School auditorium, 21 Bay Farms Road, Watsonville. Comments received during the public comment period were taken into consideration in the selection of the preferred alternative. Comments received and responses to comments are included in this document in Appendix H, which has been added since the earlier document was circulated. Appendices I (Policy Consistency Analysis) and J (Consistency with California Coastal Act) have also been added.

Elsewhere in the document, changes made since the earlier circulation are indicated by a vertical line in the margin.

## ***What happens next?***

The proposed project has completed environmental compliance after the circulation of this document. When funding is approved, the California Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration can design and construct all or part of the project.

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 Caltrans, Attn: John Luchetta, Central Coast Management Branch, California Department of Transportation, 50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401; (805) 549-3243 Voice, or use the California Relay Service TTY number at 1-800-735-2922.

05-MON-1 KP 160.7/163.3  
PM 99.9/101.5  
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Make safety and operational improvements to Highway 1 between Jensen Road (kilometer post 160.7/ post mile 99.9) and the Trafton Road undercrossing (kilometer post R163.3/ post mile R101.5), and build an interchange at Salinas Road (kilometer post T162.5/ post mile T101.0).

**INITIAL STUDY  
with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration  
/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code and  
(Federal) 42 USC 4332(2)(C)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
Federal Highway Administration

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Department of Transportation

MAY 23, 05  
Date of Approval

John Luchetta  
John Luchetta  
Branch Chief Central Region  
Central Coast Management Branch  
California Department of Transportation

7/5/05  
Date of Approval

Gene K. Fong  
for Gene K. Fong  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration



**FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
FOR  
Salinas Road Interchange Project  
On State Route 1  
Monterey County, California**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that this project will not have any significant impact on the human environment. This finding of no significant impact is based on the attached Environmental Assessment, which has been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the environmental issues and impacts of the proposed project. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an environmental impact statement is not required. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the environmental assessment.

06/01/06  
DATE

  
For  
Gene K. Fong  
Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration



State of California  
Department of Transportation

05-MON-1 KP 160 7/163 3  
PM 99.9/101.5  
EA 05-315920

**Mitigated Negative Declaration**

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

**Project Description**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to build an interchange on Highway 1 at Salinas Road and make operational improvements to the highway between Jensen Road and the Trafton Road undercrossing in Monterey County. After consideration of comments received during circulation of the draft environmental document, Alternative 7 with minor design revisions was identified as the preferred alternative.

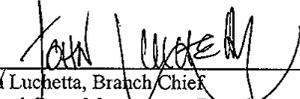
**Determination**

Caltrans has prepared an Initial Study for this project and, following public review, has determined from this study that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The proposed project would have no effect on educational facilities, any publicly owned park or recreational area, any property eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, communities, or floodplains. Nor would it encounter hazardous waste.

The proposed project would have no significantly adverse effect on farmlands, visual qualities, water quality, biological resources, or threatened or endangered species because the following mitigation measures would reduce potential effects to insignificance:

- Farmland conversion would be mitigated through creation of farmland, restoration of degraded farmland and conservation easements.
- Alteration of visual qualities would be mitigated through landscaping, community involvement in design, slope contouring, and aesthetic treatment of structural features
- Oak tree removal would be mitigated through replanting.
- Wetlands and Waters of the U.S. impacts would be mitigated through creation, restoration and enhancement of wetlands
- Removal of potential breeding habitat for California red-legged frog, a threatened species, would be mitigated through restoration of habitat
- Avoidance and minimization measures as described under a Programmatic Biological Opinion for California red-legged frogs (between U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration) would be incorporated into the project.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Luchetta, Branch Chief  
Central Coast Management Branch  
California Department of Transportation

6-01-06  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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## List of Abbreviated Terms

ac	acre
at-grade intersection	two roads at the same ground level or elevation that intersect
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
ft	feet
ha	hectare
KP	kilometer post
m	meter
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PM	post mile
USC	United States Code



# Chapter 1 Proposed Project

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## 1.1 Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Federal Highway Administration, in cooperation with the Transportation Agency of Monterey County, propose to make safety and operational improvements along Highway 1<sup>1</sup> in northern Monterey County (see Figure 1). The project would build an interchange at Salinas Road and make operational improvements to the highway between Jensen and Trafton roads. New right-of-way would be purchased for the construction.

Three build alternatives and a no-build alternative were presented for consideration in the draft environmental document. The build alternatives were as follows:

- Alternative 1: Compact Diamond Interchange
- Alternative 5: Diamond Interchange with Southbound Loop Off-ramp
- Alternative 7: Diamond Interchange with Southbound Loop On-ramp

The draft environmental document was circulated for comment from July 14, 2005 to August 12, 2005. After the public circulation period and consideration of all comments, Alternative 7 was selected as the preferred alternative. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, Caltrans has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration because no significant adverse impacts were identified and all potentially adverse impacts would be mitigated to a level of “less than significant.” Similarly, the Federal Highway Administration has determined the action would not cause a significant impact to the environment and has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

This project was funded in the fiscal year 2005/2006 Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. It is also included in the Transportation Agency of Monterey County 2006 Regional Transportation Plan and the 2006 cost-constrained Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

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<sup>1</sup> Highway 1 is sometimes also referred to as State Route 1 or SR1.

## **1.2 Purpose and Need**

### **1.2.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the project is to improve the safety and function of the intersection at Highway 1 and Salinas Road in a cost effective and timely manner, while minimizing environmental, social and economic impacts.

### **1.2.2 Need**

The high volume of traffic traveling on Highway 1 and the number of vehicles making left turns across Highway 1 at Salinas Road exceeds the operational capacity of the intersection. This, combined with the uncontrolled entry and exit of vehicles from private drives onto the highway, results in a high number of collisions and long delays for backed up traffic near that intersection, particularly during the weekday commute and on summer weekends when recreational traffic increases.

Despite the past completion of improvements recommended by the Highway 1 Safety Corridor Task Force, the number of collisions at the intersection is about double the statewide average for similar intersections. Growth in housing, population and employment in the surrounding area is expected to increase traffic an average of 1.7% per year through 2030, resulting in a 50% increase from the current traffic volume by 2030. Without further improvement of the intersection, the collision rates and long delays are expected to increase.

#### **1.2.2.1 Location**

The project lies on Highway 1, between Jensen Road and the Trafton Road undercrossing in northern Monterey County (see Figure 2). The project stretches from kilometer posts 160.7 to R163.3 (post miles 99.9/R101.5). From Jensen Road to Salinas Road it is a rural two-lane highway intersected by numerous at-grade roads and driveways. From Salinas Road to Trafton Road it is a controlled access freeway.

Salinas Road intersects Highway 1 in an at-grade “T” intersection and runs east. This intersection enables traffic to connect, primarily through County Routes G-11 and G-12, to the local road network serving the Monterey County communities of Pajaro, Las Lomas, Aromas and Prunedale, and the Santa Cruz County community of Watsonville. Jensen Road runs west from Highway 1, providing access to agricultural lands and recreational sites near the Pacific Ocean.

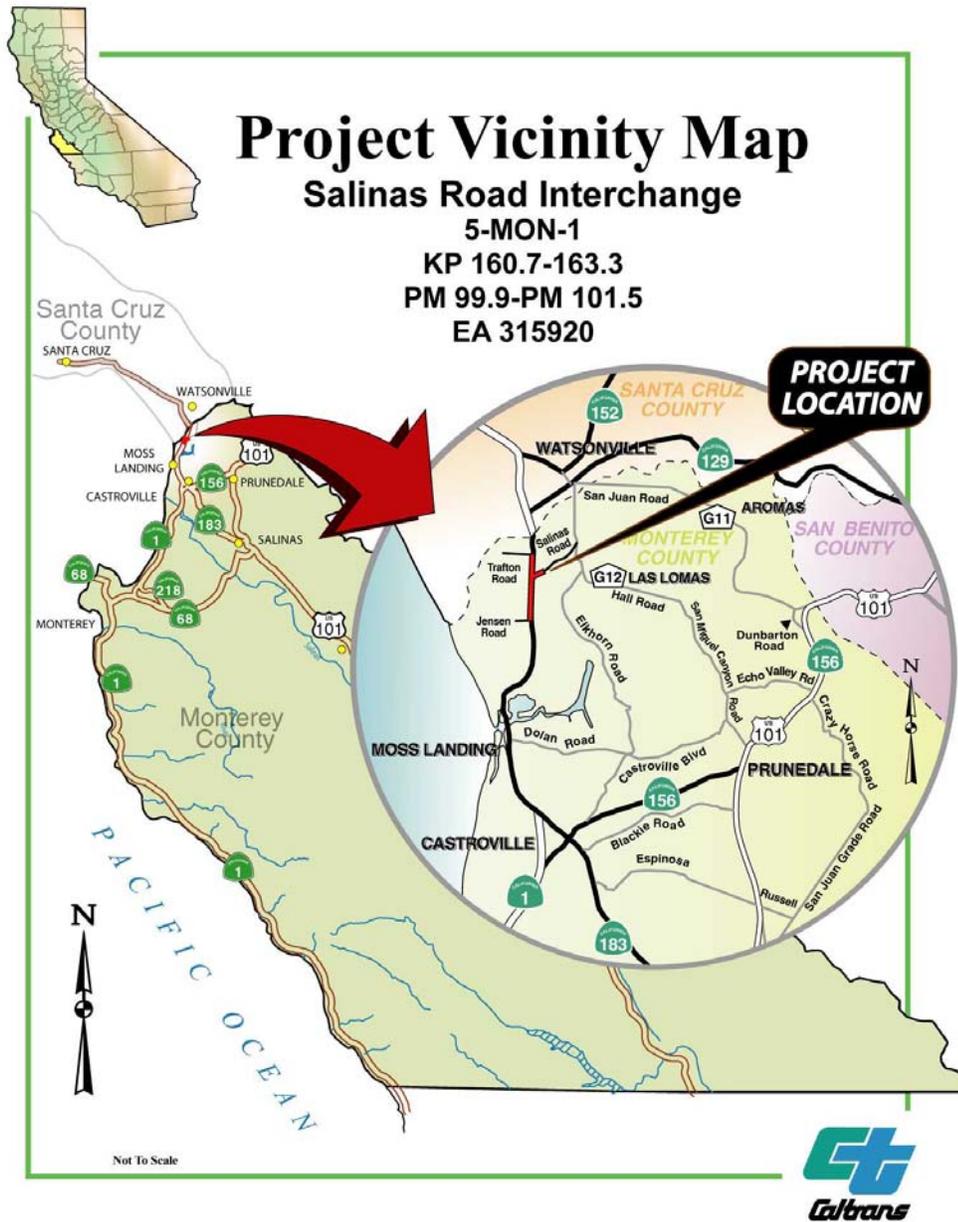


Figure 1 Project Vicinity Map



# Project Location Map

## Salinas Road Interchange

5-MON-1

KP 160.7-163.3

PM 99.9-PM101.5

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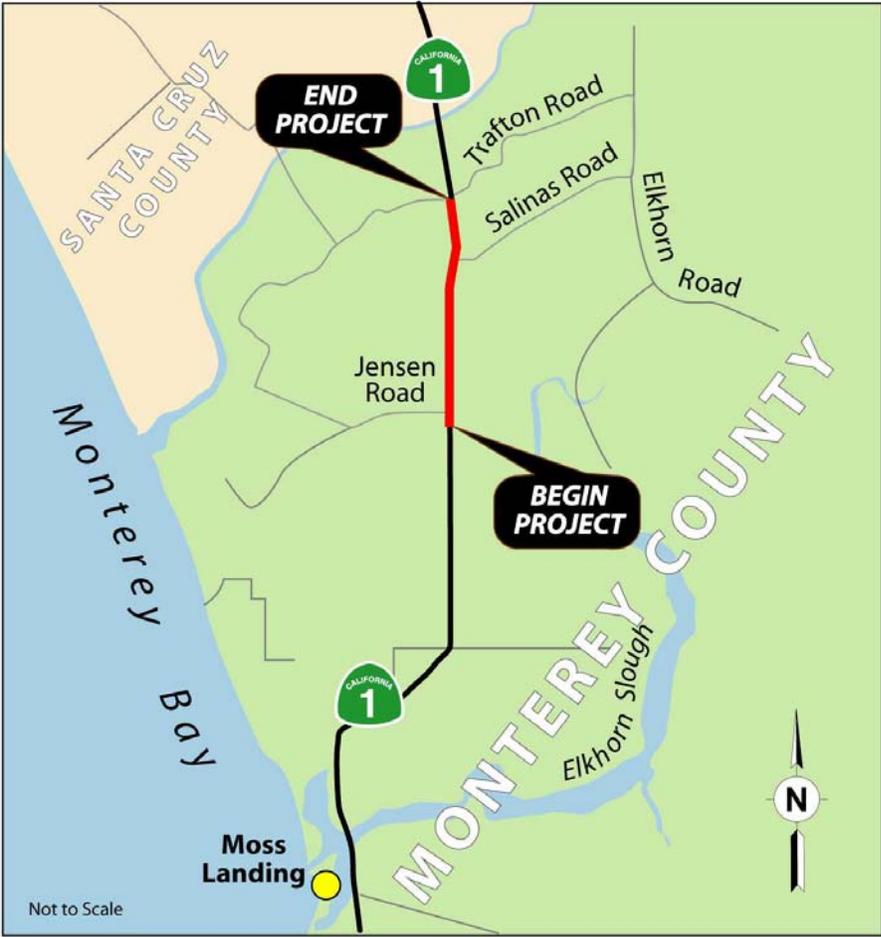


Figure 2 Project Location Map



South of Jensen Road, the two-lane highway runs next to agricultural fields for 13.6 kilometers (8.5 miles), skirts the west side of the Elkhorn Slough, and passes by the communities of Moss Landing and Castroville before widening to four lanes to serve the urban centers of Marina, Seaside and Monterey.

About 0.1 kilometer (0.07 mile) south of the project's northern end—at the Trafton Road undercrossing—Highway 1 widens to four lanes and goes half a mile to the Monterey/Santa Cruz county line at the Pajaro River, then continues north to the urban communities of Watsonville and Santa Cruz.

This stretch of Highway 1 is the main road used for travel between Monterey and Santa Cruz. It is also used as a link to recreational areas in Big Sur. Locally, it provides access to the region's farmlands and nearby residential and commercial communities.

The project area is sparsely populated, with large parcels of agricultural land. A large complex of agriculture-related services—known collectively as Hilltop Industries—lies just southwest of the Salinas Road intersection. A small retail vegetable stand sits at the northwest corner of the intersection of Highway 1 and Jensen Road.

#### **1.2.2.2 Safety**

A high number of collisions have occurred at the Highway 1/Salinas Road intersection. Despite undergoing numerous safety reviews and being modified many times to improve safety, it still has the highest collision occurrence of any state highway intersection in Monterey County, and its total collision rate is twice the statewide average for similar intersections with comparable traffic volumes.

#### ***Highway 1 Safety Corridor Task Force***

A task force was formed in 1997 to evaluate the collision problem and make recommendations to reduce collisions on the two-lane section of Highway 1 between Castroville and the Monterey/Santa Cruz county line, including the Salinas Road intersection. Team members included representatives of the California Highway Patrol, Caltrans, Emergency Services, Monterey County Public Works, elected officials, the Chamber of Commerce, the county school district, Pacific Gas and Electric, and the Moss Landing Harbor District.

The task force recommended increasing CHP enforcement, doing a safety public outreach program, installing safety corridor signs, establishing a daylight headlight zone, adding flashing beacons at the Salinas Road intersection, and installing a northbound off-ramp to eastbound Salinas Road. Implementation of the task force's recommended safety improvements reduced fatal and rear-end collisions at the intersection, but the total collision rate has since increased. The task force recommends building an interchange at Salinas Road.

### ***Types of Collisions***

From January 1999 to December 2003, there were 76 collisions at the intersection of Highway 1 and Salinas Road. These resulted in 26 injuries and two deaths.

About 45% of the collisions were rear-ends. About half of those occurred in the northbound Highway 1 lane, when drivers collided with cars that had stopped ahead of them to allow traffic to cross from southbound Highway 1 to Salinas Road. The other half of the rear-ends occurred in the southbound lane of Highway 1, when the line of cars waiting to turn left extended beyond the turn lane and into the through lane (the main flow of traffic).

Up to 30% of collisions at the intersection were the more severe broadside or sideswipe type of collision. These occurred when cars turning left, either from southbound Highway 1 onto eastbound Salinas Road or from westbound Salinas Road onto southbound Highway 1, were struck by traffic traveling through the intersection on Highway 1.

### ***Collision Rates***

Caltrans calculates collision rates to evaluate the relative safeness of a highway and to set priorities for safety improvement work. A collision rate is expressed as a ratio between the number of collisions that occur over a set time period on a certain roadway segment and the average traffic volume traveling over the length of that segment. The calculated ratio can then be compared to ratios calculated for similar highway segments to establish the relative safeness of the given segment.

Table 1 shows the collision rate for the intersection of Highway 1 and Salinas Road, while Table 2 shows the collision rate for Highway 1 within the project limits during the five-year period from January 1, 1999 to December 31, 2003.

**Table 1. Collision Rate for the Intersection of Salinas Road and Highway 1**

Accident Type	Actual Rate	Statewide Average
Fatal	0.028	0.013
Fatal + Injury	0.39	0.24
Total	1.05	0.58

With a total of 76 collisions, close to twice as many collisions occurred at the Salinas Road intersection compared to similar intersections statewide. The collision rate at the Salinas Road intersection was calculated to be 1.05 collisions per million vehicle miles, while the statewide average collision rate for similar intersections with equivalent traffic volumes was 0.58 collisions per million vehicle miles.

**Table 2. Collision Rate for Highway 1<sup>2</sup>**

Accident Type	Actual Rate	Statewide Average
Fatal	0.02	0.033
Fatal + Injury	0.55	0.44
Total	1.68	0.91

Within the entire project limits, between Jensen Road and Trafton Road, the collision rate was about 1.85 times the rate for similar highways. Over the five-year period studied, there were 170 collisions; these resulted in 54 injuries and two deaths. The collision rate in the project limits was calculated to be 1.68 collisions per million vehicle miles, while the statewide average collision rate for similar intersections with equivalent traffic volumes was 0.91 collisions per million vehicle miles.

### 1.2.2.3 Capacity

Capacity of the existing two-lane Highway 1 is about 1,650 vehicles per lane per hour, or a combined total of 3,300 vehicles per hour. Currently, an average of 23,600 vehicles travel on Highway 1 each day. Of these vehicles, 13,000 are traveling northbound; the remaining 10,600 are traveling southbound. About 10% of this number, or 2,300 vehicles, travel through the Salinas Road intersection during the weekday's most heavily traveled hour (called the peak hour). On summer weekends, when recreational traffic also uses Highway 1, an average of 2,500 vehicles (or 8%

<sup>2</sup> Within the project limits.

more than the weekday peak hour number) travel through the intersection during the heaviest hour of travel. Trucks make up about 10% of the traffic, except during harvest season when that percentage increases.

#### **1.2.2.4 Level of Service**

The quality of traffic flow on a particular roadway is designated by a level of service score. Level of service is a qualitative measure of the effect that speed, travel time, traffic interruptions, freedom to maneuver, safety, driving comfort, convenience and operating costs have on driving conditions. Level of service is expressed as a range of traffic flow, designated as A through F. Level A represents free-flowing traffic conditions; level F represents very congested traffic conditions, with stop-and-go traffic and long delays. Figure 3 defines levels of service for two-lane highways similar to Highway 1. Figure 4 defines levels of service for intersections with no traffic signals similar to the intersection of Salinas Road and Highway 1.

During the peak hour, southbound Highway 1 provides only a single lane and currently operates at level of service F. Northbound Highway 1, which is a single lane at Salinas Road but increases to two lanes a half-mile north near the Trafton Road undercrossing, currently operates at level of service D during the peak hour. The intersection of Highway 1 and Salinas Road currently operates at level of service F during the peak hour.

Levels of service are predicted to decline in the future if no improvements are made to the intersection. In the year 2030, level of service for southbound Highway 1 and the intersection would remain at F and delays would increase considerably. Level of service for northbound Highway 1 and Salinas Road would decline to F and experience considerable delay.

#### **1.2.2.5 Economic Development**

The area surrounding the project in Monterey County, bounded by Highways 1, 101, 129 and 156, supports substantial agricultural and rural density residential land uses. Additionally, there are small amounts of agricultural industrial and low- and medium-density residential land uses.

<h1 style="text-align: center;">LEVELS OF SERVICE</h1> <p style="text-align: center;">for Two-Lane Highways</p>			
Level of Service	Flow Conditions	Operating Speed (mph)	Technical Descriptions
<b>A</b>		55+	Highest quality of service. Free traffic flow with few restrictions on maneuverability or speed. <b>No delays</b>
<b>B</b>		50	Stable traffic flow. Speed becoming slightly restricted. Low restriction on maneuverability. <b>No delays</b>
<b>C</b>		45	Stable traffic flow, but less freedom to select speed, change lanes or pass. <b>Minimal delays</b>
<b>D</b>		40	Traffic flow becoming unstable. Speeds subject to sudden change. Passing is difficult. <b>Minimal delays</b>
<b>E</b>		35	Unstable traffic flow. Speeds change quickly and maneuverability is low. <b>Significant delays</b>
<b>F</b>			Heavily congested traffic. Demand exceeds capacity and speeds vary greatly. <b>Considerable delays</b>

Source: 2000 HCM, Exhibit 20-2, LOS Criteria for Two-Lane Highways in Class 1

Figure 3 Level of Service for Two-Lane Highways



<b>LEVELS OF SERVICE</b> Unsignalized Intersections Four-Way Stop			
Level of Service	Flow Conditions	Delay per Vehicle (seconds)	Technical Descriptions
<b>A</b>		<10	Very short delays
<b>B</b>		10-15	Short delays
<b>C</b>		16-25	Minimal delays
<b>D</b>		26-35	Minimal delays
<b>E</b>		36-50	Significant delays
<b>F</b>		>50	Considerable delays

Source: 2000 HCM, Exhibit 17-22, Level of Service Criteria for AWSC Intersections

Figure 4 Level of Service for Intersections with No Signals



There is no urban center in the project area. Instead, the area is dotted with widely scattered small communities such as Moss Landing (Pop. 300), Castroville (Pop. 6,700), Las Lomas (Pop. 3,000), Aromas (Pop. 2,700) and Pajaro (Pop. 3,400).<sup>3</sup> The area is attractive to families wanting homes in a rural atmosphere. The area's housing and population are projected to increase 16%, and employment is projected to increase 19% by the year 2025.<sup>4</sup>

Two miles to the north, in Santa Cruz County, is the Pajaro Valley and the city of Watsonville (Pop. 47,600). The Pajaro Valley is noted for its thriving agricultural and flower industries. Watsonville's economy is based in the processing and distribution of agricultural products, but has recently diversified to include electronics, manufacturing and service firms. The area's housing is projected to increase 49%; the population is projected to increase by 53%; and employment is projected to increase 39% by the year 2025.<sup>5</sup>

#### **1.2.2.6 Transportation Demand**

A Travel Demand and Forecasting study is used to document regional travel patterns and route choices drivers make when traveling between specific locations. Caltrans conducted such a study for the Salinas Road intersection to forecast the way traffic patterns might grow and change in the future, with and without an interchange, as a result of planned growth.<sup>6</sup> The study used the 2002 Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments conformity model, which contains estimates of future Monterey County housing, employment and planned growth to 2025, to complete the analysis.<sup>7</sup> Caltrans adjusted the model using recent traffic counts and speed surveys to complete the forecasting study.

Within the local surrounding area in Monterey County, the forecast is for modest growth in housing, population, employment and traffic through the year 2025, with a projected increase in housing and population of 16% and a projected increase in employment of 19% by 2025. Forecasted growth in the surrounding area of Santa Cruz County is projected to be stronger, with a projected increase in housing and

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> "Modeling and Forecasting Documentation Memo: Final Salinas Road Interchange Study." Prepared by Caltrans District 5 Transportation Planning Staff, June 12, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments "2004 Population, Housing and Employment Forecasts for Santa Cruz County."

<sup>6</sup> "Modeling and Forecasting Documentation Memo: Final Salinas Road Interchange Study." Prepared by Caltrans District 5 Transportation Planning Staff, June 12, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> 2002 Conformity Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments Travel Demand Model.

population of roughly 50% and a projected increase in housing of about 40% by the year 2025. The study concluded that a Salinas Road interchange would mainly influence traffic patterns in these local areas. Traffic using the intersection is expected to increase 1.7% per year through 2025.

The following tables show the increase in vehicles passing through the intersection, during the peak PM hour, in 2000 (Table 3) and 2030 (Table 4). Table 5 shows the percentage of increase of vehicles traveling through the intersection, in the peak p.m. hour, between 2000 and 2030.

**Table 3. Number of Vehicles Traveling through the Intersection in the PM Peak Hour in 2000**

Traveling From	Number of Vehicles Traveling To:		
	Northbound Highway 1	Southbound Highway 1	Eastbound Salinas Rd
Northbound Highway 1	1,240	NA	130
Southbound Highway 1	NA	1,040	430
Westbound Salinas Road	370	50	NA

NA: Not applicable.

Source: Modeling and Forecasting Documentation Memo: Final Salinas Road Interchange Study, June 12, 2003

**Table 4. Number of Vehicles Traveling through the Intersection in the PM Peak Hour in 2030**

Traveling From	Number of Vehicles Traveling To:		
	Northbound Highway 1	Southbound Highway 1	Eastbound Salinas Rd
Northbound Highway 1	1,940	NA	180
Southbound Highway 1	NA	2,180	780
Westbound Salinas Road	550	290	NA

NA: Not applicable.

Source: Modeling and Forecasting Documentation Memo: Final Salinas Road Interchange Study, June 12, 2003

**Table 5. Percentage of Annual Increase, from 2000 to 2030, of Vehicles Traveling through the Intersection in the PM Peak Hour**

Vehicles Traveling From	Percentage of Vehicles Traveling To:		
	Northbound Highway 1	Southbound Highway 1	Eastbound Salinas Rd
Northbound Highway 1	1.50%	NA	1.00%
Southbound Highway 1	NA	2.50%	1.50%
Westbound Salinas Road	1.20%	1.20%	NA

NA: Not applicable.

Source: Modeling and Forecasting Documentation Memo: Final Salinas Road Interchange Study, June 12, 2003

### 1.2.2.7 Highway Deficiencies

#### **Geometric Deficiencies**

Within the project limits, Highway 1 is classified as freeway with access control north of Salinas Road. South of Salinas Road, it is classified as a two-lane undivided conventional highway with no access control. The posted speed limit in the project area is 55 miles per hour. There is a flashing beacon alerting southbound highway traffic to the intersection. The highway is divided by a median of up to 14 meters (46 feet) wide.

North of Salinas Road, the highway consists of four 3.6-meter (12-foot) lanes with outside shoulders varying in width from 1.1 to 3.6 meters (3.6 to 12 feet) and inside shoulders varying in width from 1.1 to 3.6 meters (3.6 to 12 feet). The lanes north of Salinas Road consist of:

- A single northbound through lane
- A single northbound merge lane, for traffic entering northbound Highway 1 from westbound Salinas Road
- A single southbound through lane
- A single southbound left-turn lane, for traffic turning onto eastbound Salinas Road from southbound Highway 1

South of Salinas Road, the highway consists of two 3.6-meter (12-foot) through lanes (one northbound and one southbound), with 1.5- to 2.4-meter (5- to 8-foot) outside shoulders and 1.1- to 1.5-meter (3.6- to 5-foot) inside shoulders.

Standard highway measurements would be 3.6-meter-wide (12-foot-wide) lanes with 3-meter (10-foot) outside shoulders, 1.5-meter (5-foot) inside shoulders and an 18-meter (60-foot) median.

### ***Unrestricted Access onto the Highway***

Highway 1 between Jensen Road and Salinas Road is a rural two-lane highway intersected by numerous at-grade farm roads and driveways. At the project's southern end, Jensen Road intersects the highway from the west in a "T" configuration. Motorists entering the highway there are controlled by a stop sign; they can turn either right or left onto the highway. A small vegetable stand with driveways onto Jensen Road and Highway 1 sits on the northwest corner of the intersection. North of Jensen Road, unpaved farm roads enter the highway about every 500 feet from both the east and west. A paved driveway leading to a large complex of agriculture-related services (Hilltop Industries) enters the highway from the west about a quarter mile south of the Salinas Road intersection.

Salinas Road meets the highway in a "T" intersection, requiring drivers to cross highway traffic when making left turns, either from southbound Highway 1 to eastbound Salinas Road or from westbound Salinas Road to southbound Highway 1.

The left turn with the greatest potential for conflict and delay is from southbound Highway 1 to eastbound Salinas Road. During the peak hour, about 430 vehicles make this turn across the northbound highway lane, which is carrying about 1,240 vehicles per hour. For vehicles to make the turn, they must line up in the 175-meter-long (575-foot-long) inside left-turn lane of southbound Highway 1. The average wait is about a minute until a gap opens to turn. At times, the waiting cars extend beyond the end of the left-turn lane and into the through lane, blocking southbound travel on Highway 1. For vehicles at the end of the full left-turn lane, the wait to turn can take up to 20 minutes.

These conditions can lead to driver frustration. Motorists who travel the road regularly during the peak hour tell of many inappropriate and illegal moves made by other motorists attempting to turn without delay.

The left-turn from westbound Salinas Road to southbound Highway 1 is controlled by a stop sign. During the peak hour, approximately 50 vehicles turn left across northbound traffic and into an acceleration lane to travel south on Highway 1. Because northbound traffic does not have to stop and is traveling at highway speeds, the wait to make this left turn is about a minute.

North of the Salinas Road intersection, access onto the highway is restricted. A quarter mile north of the intersection, just south of the Trafton Road undercrossing, the highway widens to four lanes.

### **1.3 Alternatives**

This section describes the process that was used to develop the alternatives proposed for the project and to identify the preferred alternative. The alternatives considered are discussed in this section as build alternatives. The no-build alternative is also discussed in this section as a basis for comparison, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act. Also discussed are the alternatives that were considered and withdrawn from further evaluation.

After circulation of the draft environmental document and consideration of comments received, Alternative 7 was selected as the preferred alternative. Minor design changes were made to Alternative 7, as indicated in the discussion below, as a result of input from federal, state and local agencies and the public. Caltrans/Federal Highway Administration has made a final determination of the project's effect on the environment. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, no immitigable significant adverse impacts were identified. Caltrans has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration. Similarly, the Federal Highway Administration has determined that the action does not significantly impact the environment and has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

#### **1.3.1 Alternatives Development Process**

Representatives of Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration, in coordination with the Transportation Agency of Monterey County, regulating and permitting agencies and representatives from the Salinas Road Citizens Advisory Group, formed the project development team. The team met every four to six months throughout the three-year project development process. (See also Chapter 3, Comments and Coordination, for additional detail.) The team met to identify important project issues, write the project's purpose statement, share perspectives and requirements unique to each agency or group, discuss alternative solutions, comment on suggested proposals, and propose avoidance and minimization measures for environmental impacts.

The team used criteria provided by the project's purpose statement and relevant planning documents to develop and evaluate alternative solutions. The criteria consisted of safety, level of service, design standards, projected planned growth in the project's sphere of influence, cost, time to completion, and avoidance and minimization of environmental, social and economic impacts. After consideration of comments received during circulation of the draft environmental document, Alternative 7 was selected as the alternative that best achieves the project purpose with the least impact to the environment.

### **1.3.2 Selection Rationale of the Preferred Alternative**

Alternative 7 would substantially improve safety and operations, while minimizing environmental impacts within the project limits. At the intersection of Highway 1 and Salinas Road, safety would be enhanced, and turning conflicts eliminated between the two roadways, by providing a separated grade crossing and restricting access to and from the highway. Under Alternative 7, level of service is projected to be A on the ramps, the best service levels of all the considered alternatives. Impacts would be minimized with Alternative 7 through the use of sensitive design techniques.

Alternative 7 would have the least impact on the environment: it would convert the least amount of land to transportation use, have the least impact to farmlands, wetlands and other waters, and have only minimal impacts to California red-legged frog habitat.

### **1.3.3 Build Alternatives**

Three build alternatives and the no-build alternatives were considered in the draft environmental document. These build alternatives were:

- Alternative 1: Compact Diamond Interchange (Figure 5)
- Alternative 5: Diamond Interchange with Southbound Loop Off-ramp (Figure 6)
- Alternative 7: Diamond Interchange with Southbound Loop On-ramp (Figure 7a)

### **1.3.4 The Preferred Alternative**

After circulation of the draft environmental document and consideration of public comments, Alternative 7 was selected as the preferred alternative. It was also recommended that minor design changes be made to Alternative 7 as a result of comments received during circulation of the draft environmental document. These

design changes, shown in Figure 7b, are described in Section 1.3.4.2 Unique Features of the Build Alternatives.

#### **1.3.4.1 Common Design Features of the Build Alternatives**

Many features common to each of the build alternatives were designed to avoid or minimize environmental impacts. As these common features are described below, impact avoidance and minimization that resulted from a particular design feature are noted, along with the description of that feature.

Each of the build alternatives would include the following features:

- All interchange configurations would lower the profile of Highway 1 and would separate the grade by constructing a bridge to carry Salinas Road over Highway 1. This design feature was incorporated into the build alternatives to minimize impacts to the rural scenic qualities of the project area (see Visual/Aesthetics,2.2.6).
- All interchange configurations would provide a compact diamond off-ramp from northbound Highway 1 to eastbound Salinas Road and a compact diamond on-ramp from westbound Salinas Road to northbound Highway 1. Each ramp would consist of a single 3.6-meter (12-foot) lane with a 0.6-meter (2-foot) left shoulder and a 2.4-meter (8-foot) right shoulder. The off-ramp would widen to two 3.6-meter (12-foot) lanes as it approaches Salinas Road. The on-ramp would start with two 3.6 meter (12 foot) lanes at the intersection and narrow to one 3.6 meter (12 foot) lane as it connects to the highway.
- Traffic signals would be added to regulate traffic movement between Salinas Road and all ramps at the interchange.
- All interchange configurations would construct the Salinas Road bridge with a 4.8-meter-wide (16-foot-wide) median, which would be striped to allow for left turns onto the ramps. In addition, 2.4-meter-wide (8-foot-wide) striped shoulders would be provided on each side of the bridge to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians (see Traffic and Transportation,2.2.5).
- The two southbound through lanes, which currently narrow to one lane about 200 meters (656 feet) south of the Trafton Road undercrossing, would be extended 560 meters (1,800 feet) south to the new interchange to increase safety and provide continuity. Continuation of the second southbound lane would not be

extended south past the interchange because the increased capacity would not be required and the narrower project footprint would minimize impacts to farmlands and the area's scenic qualities. An advisory design exception has been approved for this feature (see Farmlands, 2.2.3 and Visual/Aesthetics, 2.2.6).

- All build alternatives would restrict entry and exit to the highway from driveways and farm roads both east and west of the highway, between Jensen Road and the interchange, by adding frontage roads. The frontage roads would funnel drivers using driveways and farm roads to Highway 1 via the new interchange. Both frontage roads were located as close as possible to Highway 1 to minimize impacts to farmlands (see Farmlands, 2.2.3).
- The frontage road on the west side of the highway, from Jensen Road to the new interchange, would be between 10 and 25 meters (33 and 85 feet) from and parallel to the highway. It would be paved, 12 meters (40 feet) wide and would include a striped (Class III) 2.4-meter-wide (8-foot-wide) bike lane and bus stops. Parking would be prohibited, and the right-of-way would be fenced. Upon completion of construction, the frontage road would be relinquished to the County of Monterey.
- Highway 1 at the intersection with Jensen Road would be improved by providing enough room for standard-sized trucks to turn onto and off of Jensen Road (see Figure 9).
- The existing drainage system extending the length of the project would be modified using a combination of pipes, concrete-lined ditches and vegetated ditches.
- A fire-suppression pond southwest of the intersection would be reconfigured. The capacity of the pond would remain the same, and water would be available during the entire construction period.
- New right-of-way would be purchased to accommodate construction.
- During construction, a detour would be provided, configured the same as the existing intersection, parallel and east of the existing highway. This detour would fit roughly within the alignment of the ultimate northbound on- and off-ramps (see Figure 10).

- Emergency vehicle access would be provided at all times during construction.

#### **1.3.4.2 Unique Features of the Build Alternatives**

##### ***Alternative 1: Compact Diamond Interchange***

This interchange would provide a four-lane, 60-meter-long (197-foot-long) bridge to carry Salinas Road over Highway 1. The bridge would consist of two 3.6-meter-wide (12-foot-wide) eastbound lanes, one 3.6-meter-wide (12-foot-wide) westbound lane, and a 4.8-meter-wide (16-foot-wide) median lane for left turns (see Figure 11).

A private access road would be added east of the highway starting at Jensen Road, running from 10 to 25 meters (33 to 85 feet) from and parallel to the highway and extending 700 meters (2,300 feet) to the north. It would be paved with aggregate and 6 meters (20 feet) wide. Upon completion of construction, this road would be privately owned. Figure 8 shows the cross-section of the frontage road and highway improvements.

Standard one-way diagonal ramps would be provided between Highway 1 and Salinas Road. The intersection of the western frontage road and Salinas Road would lie about 150 meters (492 feet) west of the ramps and would be uncontrolled. Figure 5 shows this interchange configuration.

##### ***Alternative 5: Diamond Interchange with Southbound Loop Off-ramp***

This interchange would provide a three-lane, 70-meter-long (230-foot-long) bridge to carry Salinas Road over Highway 1. The bridge would have one 3.6-meter-wide (12-foot-wide) lane in each direction and a 4.8-meter-wide (16-foot-wide) median lane for left turns (see Figure 11).

A private access road would be added east of the highway starting at Jensen Road, running from 10 to 25 meters (33 to 85 feet) from and parallel to the highway and extending 700 meters (2,300 feet) to the north. It would be paved with aggregate and 6 meters (20 feet) wide. Upon completion of construction, this road would be privately owned. Figure 8 shows the cross-section of the frontage road and highway improvements.

This interchange would provide one-way diagonal ramps for each turn between Highway 1 and Salinas Road, except for the southbound Highway 1 to eastbound Salinas Road turn. This turn would be accommodated with a loop off-ramp in the southwest quadrant between the highway and the southbound on-ramp. It would meet

Salinas Road in a “T” configuration, which would require traffic to either stop or make a controlled right turn from the off-ramp to eastbound Salinas Road. The western frontage road would be located about 250 meters (820 feet) west of Highway 1 and would be uncontrolled. Figure 6 shows this interchange configuration.

### **Preferred Alternative**

#### **Alternative 7: Diamond Interchange with Southbound Loop On-ramp**

This interchange would provide a four-lane, 63-meter-long (207-foot-long) bridge to carry Salinas Road over Highway 1 (see Figure 7b). The bridge would provide two 3.6-meter-wide (12-foot-wide) eastbound lanes, one 3.6-meter-wide (12-foot-wide) westbound lane for through traffic and a 4.8-meter-wide (16-foot-wide) median lane for left turns (see Figure 11).

A private access road would be added on the east side of the highway starting 690 meters (2,265 feet) north of Jensen Road and extending 1,225 meters (4,020 feet) to Salinas Road. The private access road would be essentially parallel to Highway 1 at the base of the fill slope for the highway and the northbound off-ramp. It would enter Salinas Road at a 90-degree angle, 125 meters (410 feet) east of where the northbound off-ramp enters Salinas Road. It would be paved with aggregate and 6 meters (20 feet) wide. Upon completion of construction, this road would be privately owned. See Figure 7b.

In coordination with the County of Monterey, slopes of both the eastern and western frontage roads have been made steeper, increased from 1:4 to 1:2, where safety would not be compromised, to minimize the footprint of these roadways on adjacent farmlands.

This interchange would provide one-way diagonal ramps for each turn between Highway 1 and Salinas Road, except for the turn of Salinas Road to southbound Highway 1. This turn would be accommodated with a loop on-ramp in the northwest quadrant between the highway and the southbound off-ramp, permitting an unobstructed right turn from westbound Salinas Road to southbound Highway 1.

After consideration of comments made on the draft environmental document, the radius of the southbound loop on-ramp was decreased from 56 meters (184.0 feet) to 45 meters (148.0 feet). As a result, the southbound off-ramp and the western frontage road alignments have been pulled in closer to the highway. These changes were made to minimize impacts to farmlands as requested by permitting agencies in their comments on the draft environmental document.

Two 3.6-meter-wide (12-foot-wide) left-turn lanes would be provided on the southbound off-ramp where it intersects Salinas Road. The frontage road connection would be directly opposite and aligned with the southbound off-ramp. A mandatory design exception has been approved for this feature. Figure 7b shows this interchange configuration.

Traffic signals would include emergency vehicle and bicycle detector loops.

The existing drainage system extending the length of the project would be modified using a combination of pipes, concrete-lined ditches and vegetated ditches. The vegetated ditches (also called bioswales) would consist of at least 1,524 linear meters (5,000 feet), 1 hectare (2.5 acres), of vegetated ditches that receive highway runoff (for transferring and filtering highway water runoff). The ditches would be seeded with grasses and other low-growing vegetation to provide the greatest filtering capacity.

### **1.3.5 No-Build Alternative**

The no-build alternative would leave the intersection of Highway 1 and Salinas Road as it is, in its at-grade “T” configuration. The no-build alternative would not meet the project’s purpose of improving the safety and function of the intersection. Collisions would continue to occur and, over time, increase and worsen. The highway and intersection would continue to operate at a level of service F during the peak hour and, over time, delays would increase.

### **1.3.6 Comparison of Alternatives**

Table 6 compares the effects of the build, the preferred and no-build alternatives, considered in the environmental document, for the proposed project. In some instances, the effects of all alternatives are the same. If effects vary by alternative, they are highlighted in Table 6.



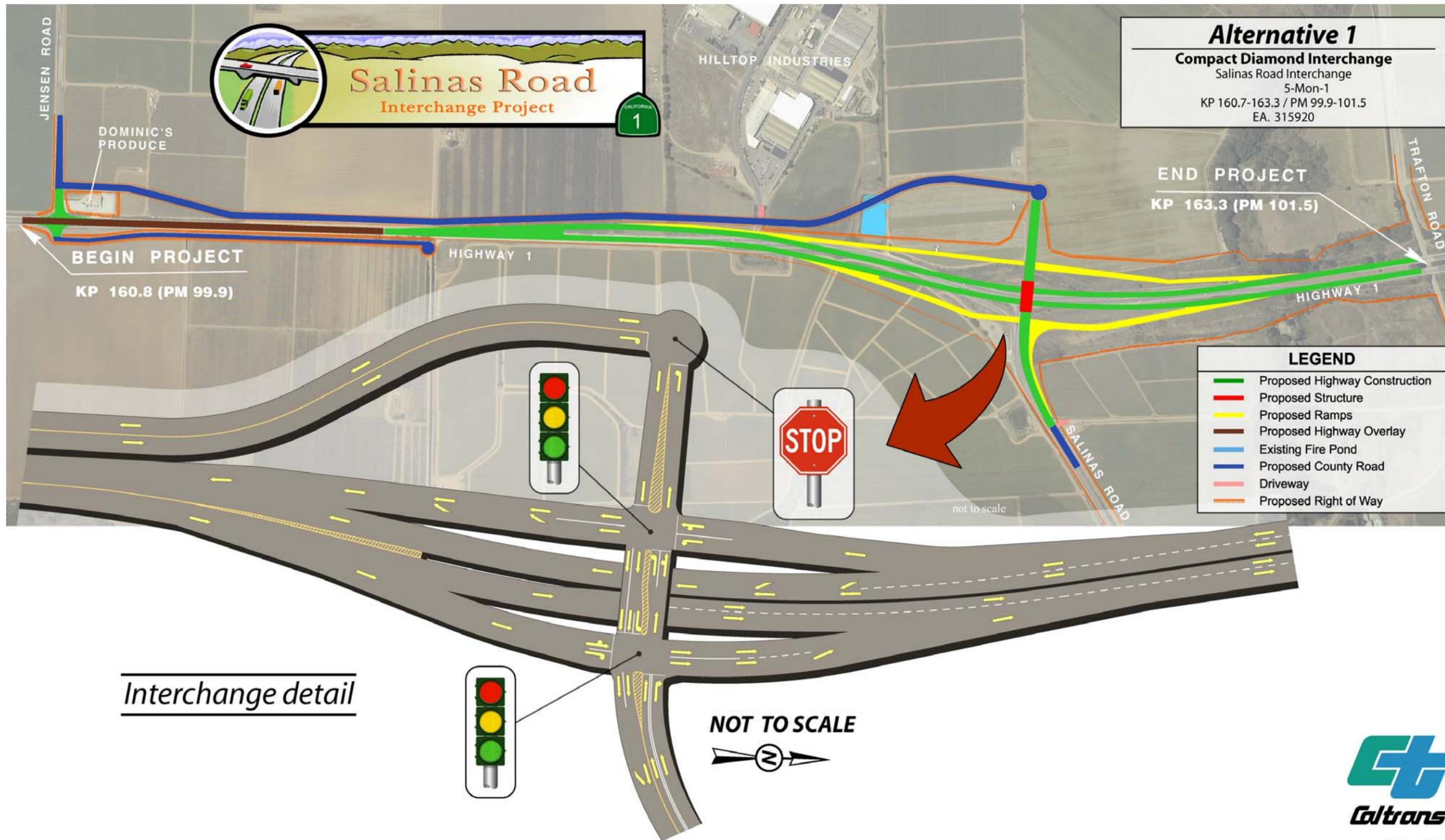


Figure 5 Alternative 1



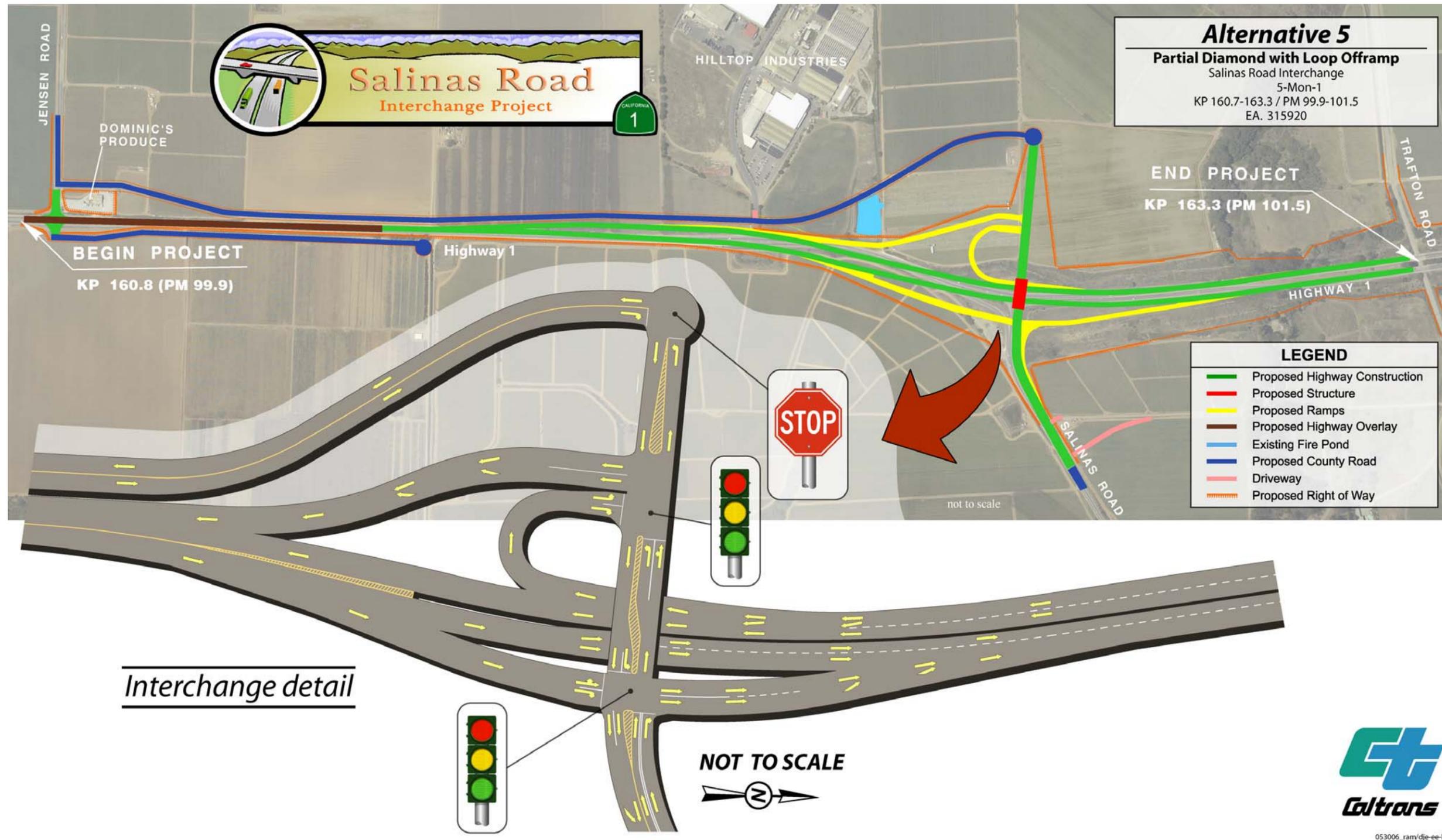


Figure 6 Alternative 5



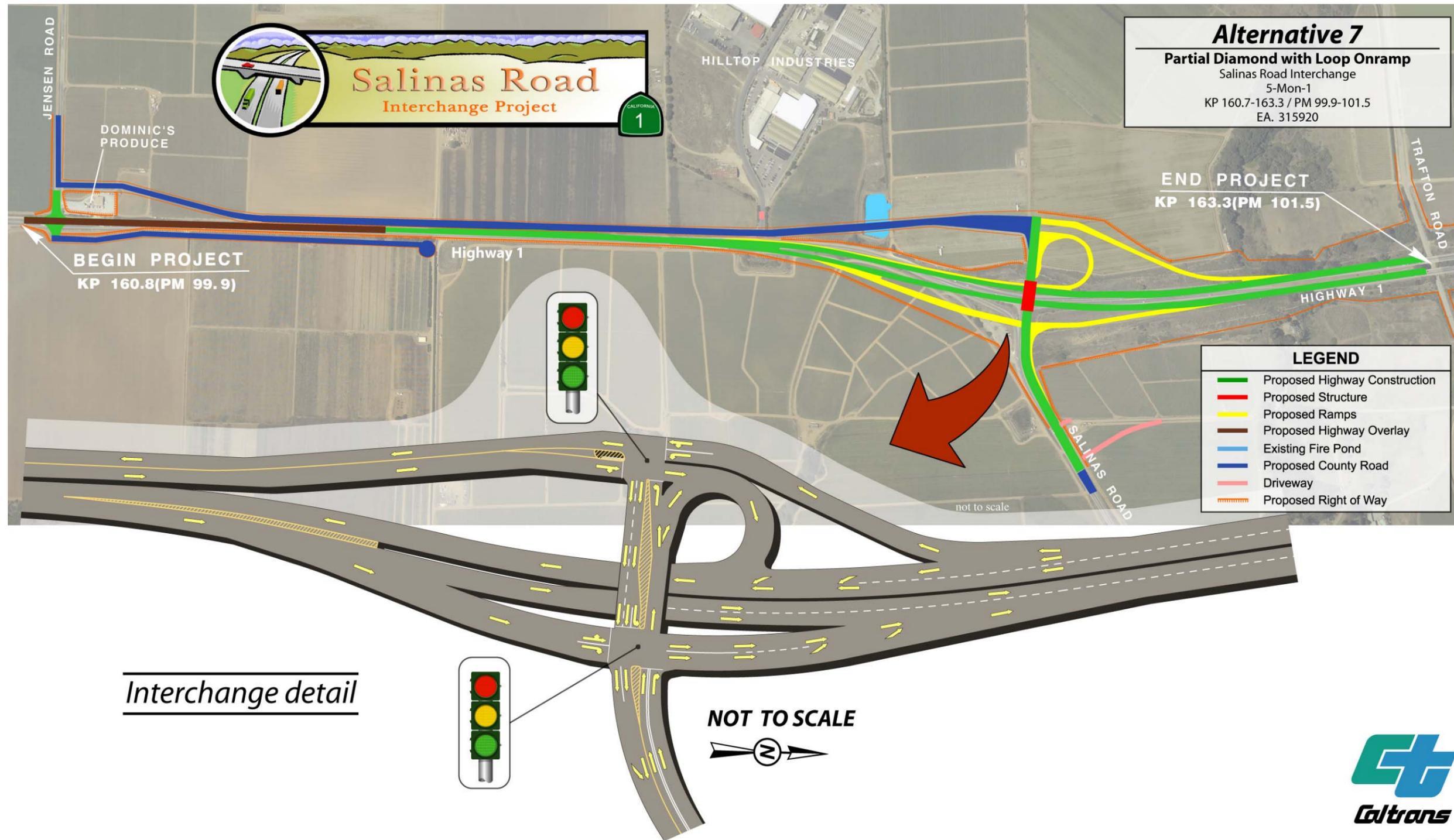


Figure 7a Alternative 7



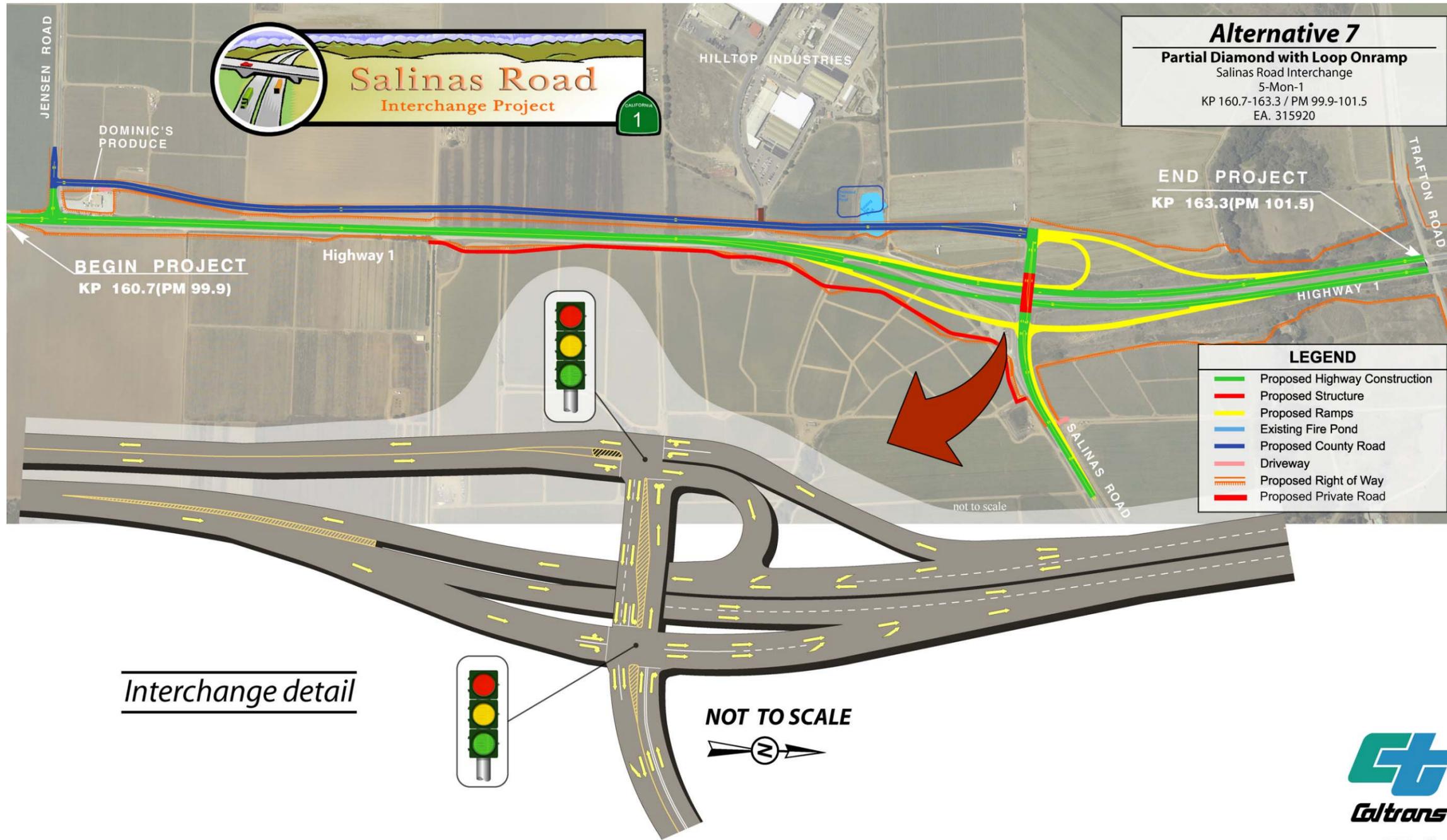


Figure 7b Preferred Alternative 7



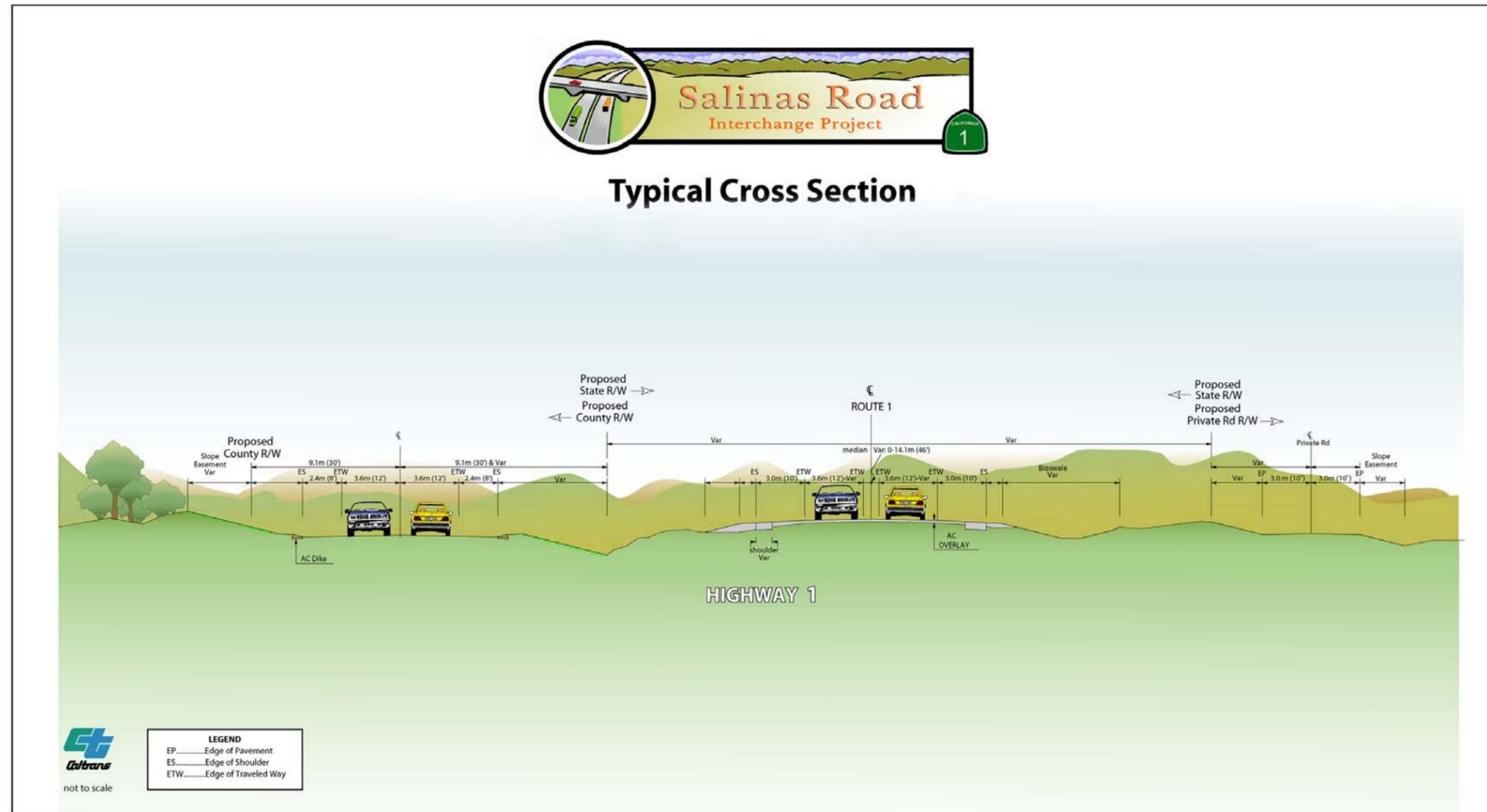


Figure 8 Typical Cross-Section



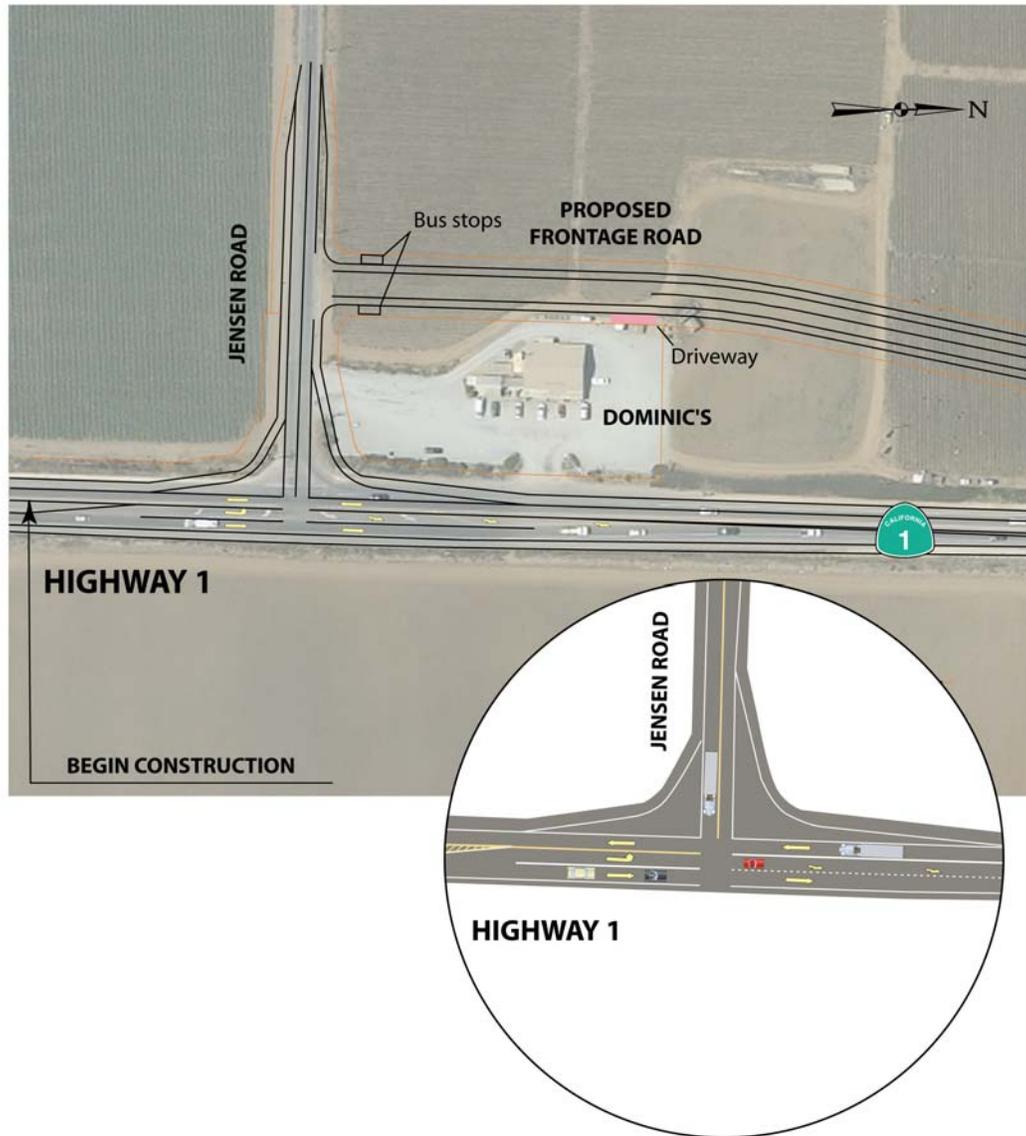


Figure 9 Proposed Improvements at Jensen Road





Figure 10 Highway 1 Construction Detour at Salinas Road



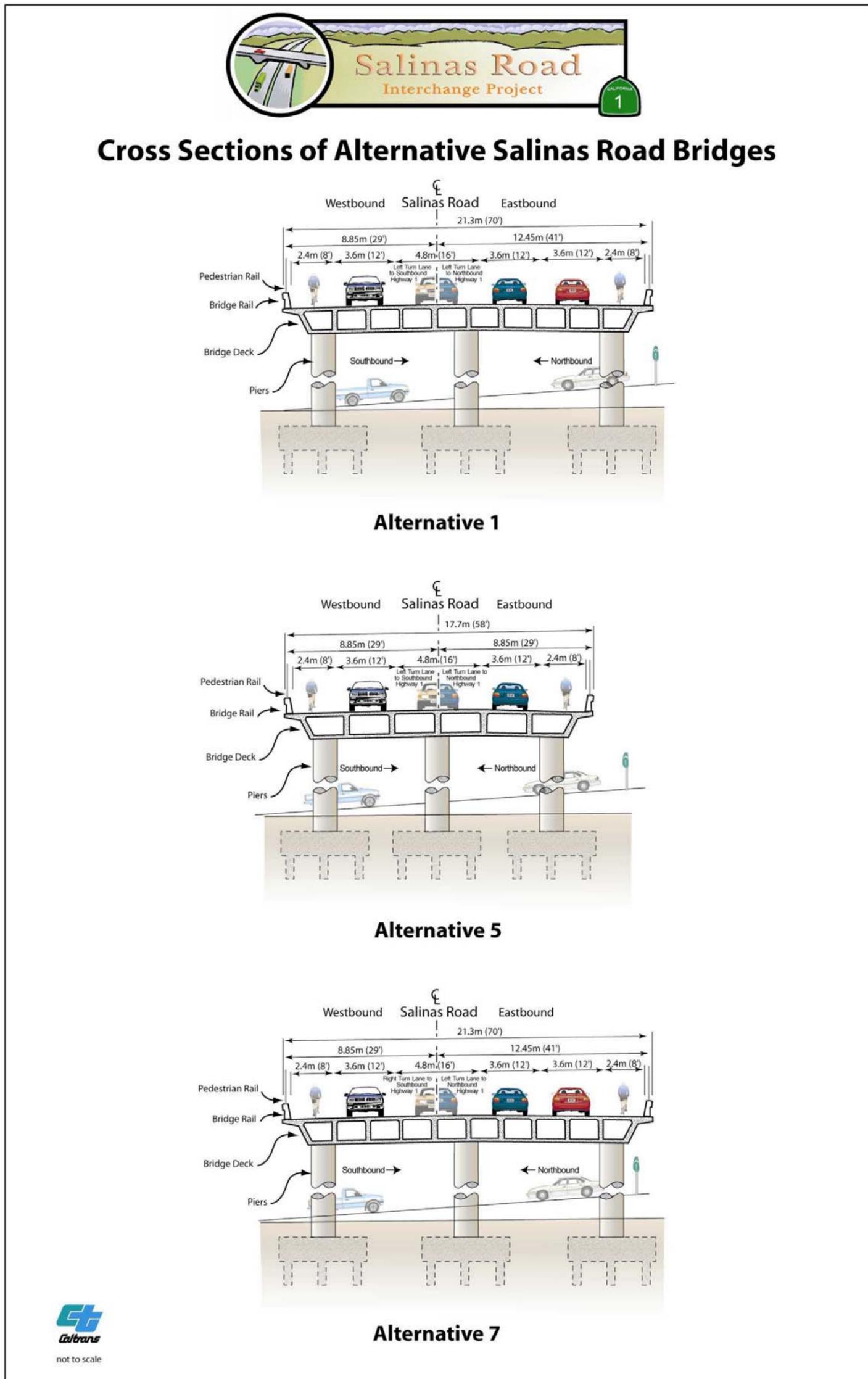


Figure 11 Cross-sections of Alternative Salinas Road Bridges



**Table 6. Summary of Project Effects by Alternative<sup>8</sup>**

Comparison Criteria		Alternative 1	Alternative 5	Alternative 7	Preferred Alternative: Alternative 7 with revisions	No-Build Alternative
Safety		Improved	Improved	Improved	Improved	Increased collisions
Level of Service <sup>9</sup>		Ramps LOS A/B Hwy 1 NB LOS A Hwy 1 SB LOS D	Ramps LOS A/B Hwy 1 NB LOS A Hwy 1 SB LOS D	Ramps LOS A/A Hwy 1 NB LOS A Hwy 1 SB LOS D	Ramps LOS A/A Hwy 1 NB LOS A Hwy 1 SB LOS D	Intersection LOS F Hwy 1 NB LOS F Hwy 1 SB LOS F
Design Standards		Meets design standards. Includes approved design exception for reduction in number of southbound highway lanes, interchange spacing and narrow highway median.	Meets design standards. Includes approved design exception for reduction in number of southbound highway lanes, interchange spacing and narrow highway median.	Meets design standards. Includes approved design exception for alignment of western frontage road, reduction in number of southbound highway lanes, interchange spacing and narrow highway median.	Meets design standards. Includes approved design exception for alignment of western frontage road, reduction in number of southbound highway lanes, interchange spacing and narrow highway median.	Does not meet design standards
Time to Construct		24 months	24 months	24 months	24 months	N/A
Cost	Current Cost of Construction	\$27.3 million	\$27.7 million	\$27.5 million	\$35.3 million	N/A
	Cost for Design Construction & ROW Escalated to 2008/2009	\$39.8 million	\$40.3 million	\$40.0 million	\$46.0 million	N/A
<b>Potential Environmental Impacts</b>						
Land Use <sup>10</sup>		Converts a total of 14.6 ha (36.0 ac): 12.6 ha (31.2 ac) of CAP, 0.9 ha (2.29 ac) of CAC, and 1.1 ha (2.6 ac) AI	Converts a total of 15.7 ha (38.7 ac): 14.0 ha (34.6 ac) CAP, 0.6 ha (1.5 ac) CAC, and 1.1 ha (2.6 ac) AI	Converts a total of 13.8 ha (34.2 ac) 12.4 ha (30.7 ac) CAP, 0.7 ha (1.7 ac) CAC, and 0.7 ha (1.8 ac) AI.	Converts a total of 10.56 ha (26.1 ac) 10.0 ha (24.7 ac) CAP, 0.3 ha (0.8 ac) CAC, and 0.2 ha (0.6 ac) AI.	No land conversion
Coastal Zone	Local Coastal Program	Consistent with mitigation included	Consistent with mitigation included	Consistent with mitigation included	Consistent with mitigation included	N/A
	California Coastal Act	Consistent with mitigation included	Consistent with mitigation included	Consistent with mitigation included	Consistent with mitigation included	N/A
Growth		Designed to accommodate planned growth. Not anticipated to induce unplanned growth.	Designed to accommodate planned growth. Not anticipated to induce unplanned growth.	Designed to accommodate planned growth. Not anticipated to induce unplanned growth.	Designed to accommodate planned growth. Not anticipated to induce unplanned growth.	Would not accommodate planned growth
Farmlands		Converts: 5.0 ha (12.4 ac) Prime/Unique Farmland 7.6 ha (18.6 ac) Farmlands of Statewide Importance <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	Converts: 5.0 ha (12.2 ac) Prime/Unique Farmland 9.0 ha (22.37ac) Farmlands of Statewide Importance <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	Converts: 4.4 ha (10.8 ac) Prime/Unique Farmland 8.0 ha (19.8 ac) Farmlands of Statewide Importance <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	Converts: 4.5 ha (11.2 ac) Prime/Unique Farmland 5.5 ha (13.7 ac) Farmlands of Statewide Importance <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	None

<sup>8</sup> Comparison criteria and potential impacts that have been highlighted in yellow are those that differ by alternative.

<sup>9</sup> Level of Service in 2030

<sup>10</sup> CAP = Coastal Agricultural Preservation lands; CAC = Coastal Agricultural Conservation lands; AI = Agricultural Industrial lands.

Comparison Criteria		Alternative 1	Alternative 5	Alternative 7	Preferred Alternative: Alternative 7 with revisions	No-Build Alternative
Traffic & Transportation	Bicycles	Provides upgraded bicycle facility for Pacific Coast Bike Trail.	Provides upgraded bicycle facility for Pacific Coast Bike Trail.	Provides upgraded bicycle facility for Pacific Coast Bike Trail.	Provides upgraded bicycle facility for Pacific Coast Bike Trail.	No change
	Transit	Replaces existing bus turnouts in improved locations.	Replaces existing bus turnouts in improved locations.	Replaces existing bus turnouts in improved locations.	Replaces existing bus turnouts in improved locations.	No change
	Traffic	Interchange results in 0.3 % annual increase in traffic volumes from diverted trips and pent up demand with increased safety.	Interchange results in 0.3 % annual increase in traffic volumes from diverted trips and pent up demand with increased safety.	Interchange results in 0.3 % annual increase in traffic volumes from diverted trips and pent up demand with increased safety.	Interchange results in 0.3 % annual increase in traffic volumes from diverted trips and pent up demand with increased safety.	Does not accommodate existing traffic volumes. Congestion and delay would worsen with projected planned traffic volumes.
Visual/Aesthetics		Setting would appear more engineered and urbanized. Includes new lighting. <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	Setting would appear more engineered and urbanized. Includes new lighting. <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	Setting would appear more engineered and urbanized. Includes new lighting. <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	Setting would appear more engineered and urbanized. Includes new lighting. <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	None
Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff		Upgrade existing storm water drainage system.	Upgrade existing storm water drainage system.	Upgrade existing storm water drainage system.	Upgrade existing storm water drainage system.	None
Natural Communities		Remove 3 oak trees=0.02 ha (0.06 ac) <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	No oak removal	Remove 3 oak trees=0.02 ha (0.06 ac) <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	Remove 3 oak trees=0.02 ha (0.06 ac) <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	No oak removal
Wetlands/ other Waters	U.S. Army Corps	0	0	0	0	0
	Other Waters of U. S.	0.02 ha (0.04 ac) <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	0.02 ha (0.04 ac) <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	0.02 ha (0.04 ac) <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	0.03 ha (0.06 ac) <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	0
	Coastal Zone	0.01 ha (0.06 ac) <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	0.04 ha (0.1 ac) <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	0.02 ha (0.05 ac) <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	0.08 ha (0.2 ac) <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	0
Threatened/ Endangered Species		Remove small patch of tules, excellent egg laying location for California red-legged frogs, in fire suppression pond. Requires Formal Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	Remove small patch of tules, excellent egg laying location for California red-legged frogs, in fire suppression pond. Requires Formal Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	Requires Formal Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	Formal Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service completed 5/10/06. <i>Mitigation proposed.</i>	No impact
Construction	Water Quality	SWPPP	SWPPP	SWPPP	SWPPP	None
	Traffic Impacts	Highway traffic realigned through a detour. Left turns prohibited at Salinas Road for one week. Transportation Management Plan would be instituted to ensure minimal traffic impact.	Highway traffic realigned through a detour. Left turns prohibited at Salinas Road for one week. Transportation Management Plan would be instituted to ensure minimal traffic impact.	Highway traffic realigned through a detour. Left turns prohibited at Salinas Road for one week. Transportation Management Plan would be instituted to ensure minimal traffic impact.	Highway traffic realigned through a detour. Left turns prohibited at Salinas Road for one week. Transportation Management Plan would be instituted to ensure minimal traffic impact.	None
Cumulative Impacts		None	None	None	None	N/A

### 1.3.7 Alternatives Considered and Withdrawn

As part of the project development process, six additional alternatives were considered, evaluated and ultimately rejected because they did not meet the project's purpose. See Figure 12 for configurations of some of these alternatives.

***At-Grade Signalized Intersection:*** This alternative would install a signal at the at-grade intersection of Highway 1 and Salinas Road to stop traffic on the highway and allow left turns from southbound Highway 1 to eastbound Salinas Road and westbound Salinas Road to southbound Highway 1. Two additional southbound highway lanes, one for through traffic and one for left turns, plus one additional northbound highway lane would have been added to handle the number of highway vehicles that would wait at the signal. Even with the addition of new lanes, highway traffic would back up in the peak hour, and the likelihood of rear-end collisions would increase substantially. By the year 2030, the level of service would be F during the afternoon peak hour. This alternative was withdrawn, prior to development of numbered alternatives because of its potential for increased congestion and collisions.

***Spread Diamond Interchange (Alternative 2):*** The spread diamond interchange alternative would have provided room for the construction of loop ramps in the future. This alternative was withdrawn because it intended to provide more future capacity than was required by the Monterey County General Plan and was, therefore, considered to be growth inducing. It had one of the highest costs and required the most additional new right-of-way. This alternative also had substantial impacts to farmland and biological resources, and it did not provide any greater safety and operational improvements than Alternatives 1, 5 or 7.

***Partial Cloverleaf Interchange with Two Loop Ramps (Alternative 3):*** This interchange configuration would have provided loop ramps for the turns with the highest volume, within a spread diamond footprint. This alternative was withdrawn because it provided more capacity than needed for the predicted 2030 traffic volumes and was considered to be growth inducing.

***Full Cloverleaf Interchange (Alternative 4):*** This interchange configuration would have provided loop ramps for all turns, within a spread diamond footprint. This alternative was withdrawn because it provided more capacity than needed for predicted 2030 traffic volumes and was considered to be growth inducing.

**Modified Trumpet Interchange with Roundabout (Alternative 6):** This alternative would have provided the same interchange movements as Alternative 5, but would have included a roundabout at the intersection of Salinas Road and the northbound on- and off-ramps. This alternative was withdrawn because the roundabout would have required two lanes to provide the capacity needed for future traffic and would have resulted in long lines of vehicles waiting at Salinas Road.

**Transportation Systems Management:** Transportation Systems Management strategies consist of actions that increase the efficiency of existing roadways; they are actions that increase the number of vehicle trips a road can carry without increasing the number of through lanes. Examples of Transportation Systems Management strategies include auxiliary, reversible and turning lanes, and traffic signal coordination. Transportation Systems Management also encourages automobile, public and private transit, ridesharing programs, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements as elements of a unified transportation system. Alternatives use multiple transportation modes, such as pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, rail and transit.

Transportation Systems Management is not an applicable alternative for this project. There are no low-cost measures that would substantially increase intersection capacity without loss of safety. The project area has a low-density population, making Transportation Systems Management stand-alone options such as ridesharing and mass transit infeasible. Signals were considered and rejected as a solution at the intersection, as presented above.



## Alternatives Considered and Withdrawn

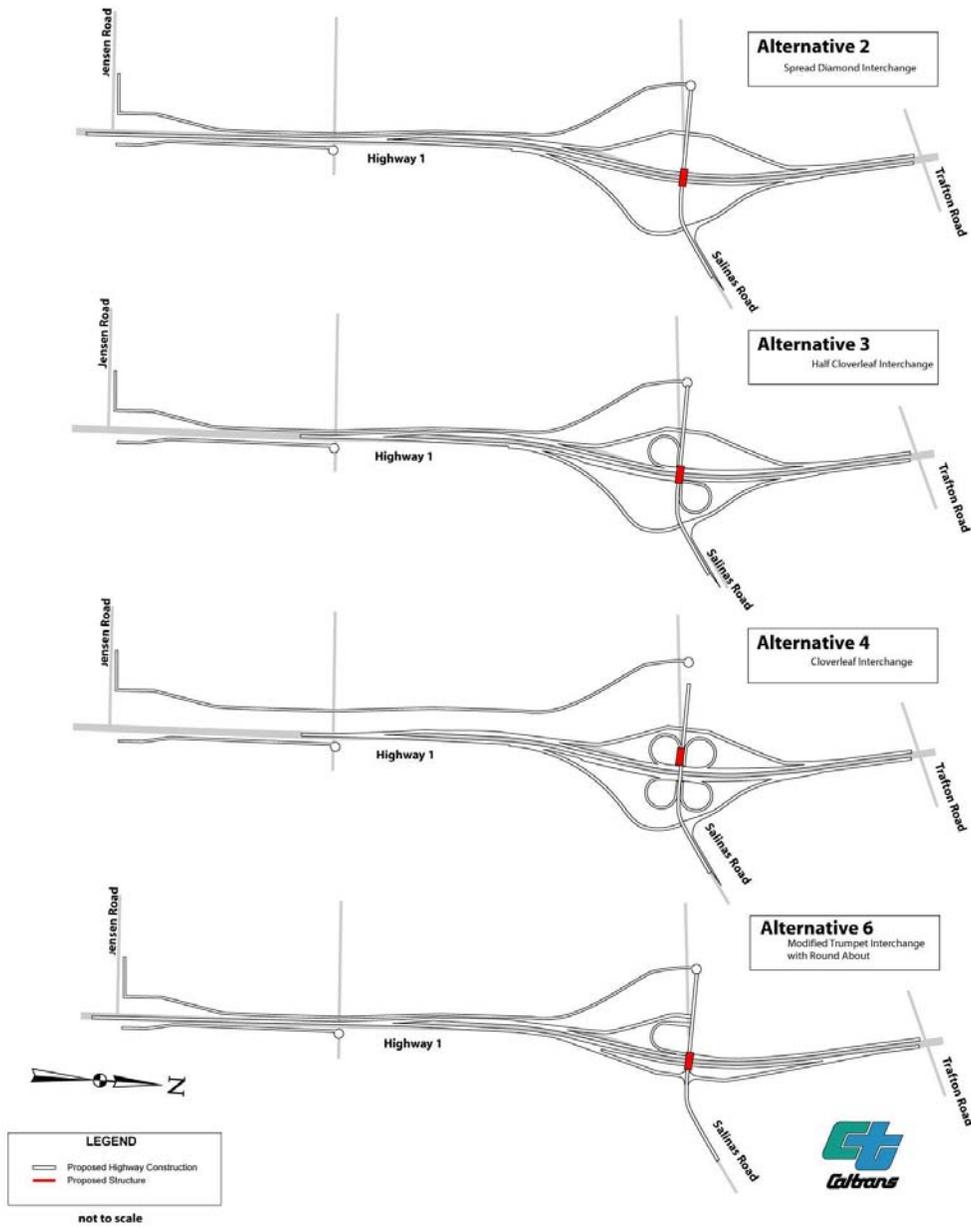


Figure 12 Alternatives Considered and Withdrawn



## 1.4 Permits and Approvals Needed

Table 7 lists the permits and approvals that would be required to construct any of the build alternatives.

**Table 7. Permits and Approvals**

Agency	Permit/Approval
Monterey County	Local Coastal Development Permit
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Permit; Nationwide Permit 14
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Section 7 formal consultation, Programmatic Biological Opinion for California red-legged frogs, received 5/10/06
California Department of Fish and Game	1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement
Regional Water Quality Control Board	401 Water Quality Certification



## Chapter 2      Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures

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This section describes the project study area and the human, physical and biological environments that may be affected by each alternative considered for the project. It explains the project's potential impacts. It identifies measures incorporated into the project to avoid, minimize and mitigate potential project impacts. This section has been updated to include discussion of the preferred alternative, Alternative 7, particularly where design modifications were made to Alternative 7 in response to comments made during the draft document's circulation.

Early in the project development process, as studies were undertaken to refine the project need and purpose and while alternatives were being developed, an environmental study area was delineated that was intended to encompass the full range of alternative solutions. This study area is shown in Figure 13. The study area was the focus of environmental inventories, undertaken as part of the scoping and environmental analysis efforts, to describe the affected environment and identify environmental resources for which there was no potential for adverse impacts and those for which impacts needed to be avoided or minimized.

After completion of environmental scoping efforts and environmental surveys, the project development team found the project's greatest potential impacts would be to farmland, the area's scenic qualities, biological resources, including California red-legged frog, Coastal Zone wetlands, other Waters of the U.S., and oak woodlands. Additionally, the project had the potential to spread invasive species. These topics are discussed in detail later in this chapter.

### **2.1 Resources with No Potential for Adverse Impacts**

As part of the scoping and environmental analyses, the following environmental resources were considered, but no potential for adverse impacts to these resources was identified. Consequently, there is no further discussion regarding these resources in this document:

- **Wild and Scenic Rivers:** No Wild and Scenic Rivers exist within the project area.
- **Parks and Recreation Facilities:** No park or recreation facility is located near the project.
- **Growth:** The proposed Salinas Road Interchange project addresses existing safety and operational deficiencies and has been designed to facilitate and serve existing and planned growth. Construction of the proposed interchange is not expected to induce additional development beyond that included in the Monterey County General Plan. Population distribution in the surrounding area would ultimately be determined by zoning changes made and permits issued by Monterey County, and no shifts in the pattern of development are expected as a result of the interchange.
- **Timberlands:** There is no timberland within the project limits (Natural Environmental Study, 2004).
- **Community Impacts/Environmental Justice:** Land use adjacent to the project area is agricultural; the closest communities are between 2 and 5 miles away. There are no disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations.
- **Cultural Resources:** There are no eligible prehistoric or historic archaeological resources within the project area. There are no impacts to properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (Historic Properties Survey Report; April 2003, and Letter from the Office of Historic Preservation, July 10, 2003).
- **Hydrology and Floodplain:** The project does not encroach upon the 100-year floodplain; no floodplain impacts would occur with the project (Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Rate Insurance Map 10/1025, Monterey County).
- **Geology/Soils/Seismic/Topography:** No major geological features are in the project area. No geologic or seismic features would alter the project design or affect public health (Preliminary Geotechnical Report, May 10, 2004).
- **Paleontology:** The project is not expected to encounter paleontological resources (Paleontological Technical Report, April 2005).

- **Hazardous Waste/Materials:** The project area was investigated for potential involvement with aerially deposited lead, structures with lead-based paint and asbestos-containing materials and hazardous materials. The study found no evidence that the project would encounter any hazardous materials (Initial Site Assessment for Hazardous Waste, May 2002).
- **Air Quality:** The project was included in the 2005 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and is consistent with the most recent update of the Air Quality Management Plan of the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, approved in September 2004. The proposed traffic flow improvements would lead to improved local air quality. Construction emissions were calculated, and none were found to exceed the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District thresholds. During construction, Caltrans Standard Specifications for dust control would be followed (Air Quality Report, April 2005).
- **Noise and Vibration:** Noise at the single sensitive receptor (residence) near the project was measured at 57 dBA and predicted to increase by 2 dBA to 59 dBA with the project. These readings are below the 67 dBA Caltrans noise abatement criteria; no further studies or mitigation are required (Noise Technical Study, April 2005). Predicted noise levels fall within the range of noise levels that are found to be normally acceptable in the Monterey County General Plan.
- **Plant Species:** No special-status plant species were found in the project area during biological surveys done for the project (Natural Environmental Study, November 2004).
- **Animal Species:** Project involvement with California red-legged frog, a federally threatened species, is discussed in Section 2.4.4.

## 2.2 Human Environment

### 2.2.1 Land Use

The project is located in the Coastal Zone in the Monterey County North County Coastal Planning Area.

#### **Regulatory Setting**

The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 is the main federal law enacted to preserve and protect coastal resources. This act sets up a program under which coastal states are encouraged to develop coastal management programs. States with an

approved coastal management plan are able to review federal permits and activities to determine if they are consistent with the state's management plan.

California has developed a coastal zone management plan and has enacted its own law, the California Coastal Act of 1976, to protect the coastline. The policies established by the California Coastal Act are similar to those for the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972. They include the protection and expansion of public access and recreation, the protection, enhancement and restoration of environmentally sensitive areas, the protection of agricultural lands, lands of scenic beauty and of property and life from coastal hazards. The California Coastal Commission is responsible for implementation and oversight under the California Coastal Act.

Just as the federal Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 delegates power to coastal states to develop their own coastal management plans, the California Coastal Act delegates power to local governments (15 coastal counties and 58 cities) to enact their own Local Coastal Programs. These local programs determine the short- and long-term use of coastal resources in their jurisdiction consistent with the California Coastal Act goals.

Monterey County developed its own Local Coastal Program, which was certified by the California Coastal Commission in 1982 and includes various certified amendments since 1982. The Monterey County Local Coastal Program is the determining plan and regulation for areas in the coastal zone. The Monterey County General Plan provides broad policy guidance and background for land use in the project area and, for those policies not covered in the Local Coastal Program guidelines, it supplies specific guidance.

### **Affected Area**

The project falls within the Monterey County North County Coastal Planning Area, which is characterized as rural with fertile coastal terraces, productive wetlands and inland rolling hills with some native vegetative coverage. Crops are grown on the coastal terraces. According to the Monterey County Coastal Implementation Plan, Title 20, the development trend is to keep this area in agricultural use.

Monterey County's coastal zone is divided into four distinct regions that are part of the Monterey County Local Coastal Program. The North County Coastal Planning Area includes the unincorporated area between the Marina City limits and the Santa Cruz County line at the Pajaro River and extends inland to encompass the Elkhorn

Slough watershed. All of the proposed project area falls within the North County Coastal Planning Area.

The project area within the North County Coastal Planning area is made up of about 200 acres of large contiguous areas of productive agricultural and grazing land, including about 3.2 hectares (8 acres) of agricultural drainage ditches, which, because they are regularly reconfigured and maintained, act as minimally functioning wetlands, and 1.61 hectares (4 acres) of oak woodland.

Ground water is the source of all water in the planning area. One of California's principal remaining estuaries, the Elkhorn Slough, is in the planning area. It lies about a mile from the project area and would not be affected by any of the proposed project alternatives.

There is no urban center in the North County Coastal Planning Area, but areas with existing and proposed infrastructures services, such as Moss Landing, are identified in the North County Coastal Plan as appropriate locations for residential development and commercial uses. Pockets of low-, medium- and high-density residential land uses east of Salinas Road and west of Las Lomas are considered appropriate for residential development. In the past, rural residential development throughout the North County Coastal Planning Area has been steady because the area is attractive to families desiring homes in a rural atmosphere. According to the 2002 Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments conformity model, modest growth in housing, population, employment and traffic is expected in the North County Coastal Planning Area.

### ***Future Land Use***

Current and future land use trends were identified using zoning maps for Monterey County, the Monterey County General Plan and the North County Land Use Plan, including the Local Coastal Program and the Implementation Plan. The 2002 Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments Conformity Model provided future housing, population, employment and traffic projections for the area.

Much of the North County Coastal Planning Area is not appropriate for intensive development due to the sensitivity of its natural resources, protection of productive agricultural land and water overdraft issues, but some portions of the planning area are zoned for residential and industrial uses. Table 8 shows the major developments proposed within the North Coastal Planning Area.

**Table 8. Proposed Major Developments Near the Project Area**

Location	Jurisdiction	Zoning	Proposed Uses	Status
Dreisbach Warehouse/ Diamond Organic, Hilltop Road	Monterey County Local Coastal Zone	Agricultural Industrial	Construct 21,500-square foot facility for food storage and shipping	Constructed, 2004
Pajaro Valley Golf Course, South of Salinas Road	Monterey County Local Coastal Zone	High-density Residential and Outdoor Recreation	Create 84 multi-family and 90 single-family units. Add 9 holes to 18-hole golf course. Expand clubhouse.	Permit process complete
Rancho Los Robles, East of Salinas Road at Sill Road	Monterey County Local Coastal Zone	Medium-density Residential	Subdivide 31.7 acres into 103 residential lots.	Permit process complete
Rancho Roberto, South of Salinas Road at Fruitland Avenue	Monterey County Local Coastal Zone	Medium-density Residential	Subdivide 13.3 acres into 26 residential lots.	EIR circulating for review

Source: Monterey County Planning and Building Inspection Department, 2004

## 2.2.2 Consistency with State, Regional and Local Plans

### ***Regional Transportation Plan for Monterey County***

The 2006 Regional Transportation Plan outlines the region's goals and policies for meeting current and future transportation needs and provides a foundation for transportation decision-making. The proposed Salinas Road Interchange project is included in and consistent with the 2006 Regional Transportation Plan for Monterey County and the 2006 cost-constrained Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

### ***Project Consistency with Monterey County Coastal Plans***

A detailed evaluation of the consistency of the preferred Alternative 7, with applicable Monterey County coastal plan policies appears in Appendix I. The preferred alternative conforms to the policies included in Monterey County coastal plans.

Land adjacent to the proposed alternatives is expected to remain in its current use, and none of the alternatives is expected to affect existing land use patterns in the area. Rather, existing zoning, as well as other regulatory, infrastructure and market constraints to development, are the determining factors for land use. The project has been designed to accommodate only the traffic volumes that are projected to occur with current planned growth, as directed by the Monterey County plans, through 2030. The project has been designed to expand into lands that are immediately adjacent to the existing highway, as directed by the Monterey County plans. Based on

the preliminary right-of-way acquisition estimates, none of the build alternatives are expected to affect land use patterns.

The project is essential to improve the health and safety of the traveling public. The project area lies in an agricultural (crop production) area and avoids all development to beach, dune and estuary areas. Avoidance and minimization measures were developed in coordination with California Coastal Commission staff, Monterey County staff and a citizens advisory group to minimize the project's overall scale and footprint. The following features have been incorporated into the project design to reduce potential visual impacts:

- The profile of the proposed bridge was placed at a lower elevation to match the existing landforms and reduce the scale and visibility of the structure.
- To reduce and narrow the overall area of new pavement through the project area, the proposed highway widening of 2 lanes to 4 lanes was not carried through to Jensen Road.
- The new loop northbound on-ramp was scaled down to the smallest radius feasible to reduce the footprint of the interchange.
- Slopes were steepened from 1:4 to 1:2 where safety would not be compromised.
- A design exemption was obtained to allow the western frontage road to be placed directly across from the on and off-ramps rather than several hundred meters to the west of the ramp intersection. This substantially reduced the overall footprint of the interchange.

These design changes would reduce impacts to visual qualities, coastal wetlands and agricultural lands and would allow the new interchange to follow as closely to the existing alignment as feasible, while still allowing the project to meet the safety standards and project purpose. The alternative preferred is the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative.

Additional design features and mitigation include:

- Slope rounding and landscaping with native plants, and incorporation of Aesthetics Design Advisory Committee suggestions for aesthetic features of the project to minimize changes in the rural character of the site.

- Replacement and enhancement of 0.08 hectare (0.2 acre) of regularly maintained and reconfigured agricultural ditches, which qualify as coastal wetlands, but which do not currently function to filter runoff or provide habitat qualities. The coastal wetlands affected by the project would be replaced at a ratio of 3:1, monitored for three years and retained in perpetuity. In addition to this mitigation feature, the project includes at least 1524 lineal meters (5,000 lineal feet) of vegetated bioswales that would function to filter runoff and provide wetland habitat.
- Replacement of coastal agricultural preservation lands at a ratio of 1:1, monitored by the Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Conservancy.

While the project conflicts with Monterey County coastal policies that prohibit filling of coastal wetlands, the project is a safety improvement and there is no alternative that would further minimize impacts. The project includes mitigation measures that would replace and enhance wetland functions and habitat in the project area. On balance, the project is consistent with Monterey County coastal policies.

#### *Project Consistency with the California Coastal Act*

An evaluation of the consistency of the preferred alternative against applicable sections of the California Coastal Act appears in Appendix J. With appropriate avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures, the preferred alternative would be consistent with the policies of the Coastal Act.

The project area lies in an agricultural (crop production) area and avoids all development to beach, dune and estuary areas. Avoidance and minimization measures were developed in coordination with the California Coastal Commission staff, Monterey County staff and the Citizens Advisory Group to minimize the project's overall scale and footprint. The following design features have been incorporated into the project design so that the impacts to the visual character would be reduced:

- The profile of the proposed bridge placed at a lower elevation to match the existing landforms and reduce the scale and visibility of the structure.
- To reduce and narrow the overall area of new pavement through the project area, the proposed highway widening of 2 lanes to 4 lanes was not carried through to Jensen Road.

- The new loop northbound on-ramp was scaled down to the smallest radius feasible to reduce the footprint of the interchange.
- Slopes were steepened from 1:4 to 1:2 where safety would not be compromised.
- A design exemption was obtained to allow the western frontage road to be placed directly across from the on and off-ramps rather than several hundred meters to the west of the ramp intersection. This would substantially reduce the overall footprint of the interchange.

These design changes would reduce impacts to visual qualities, coastal wetlands and agricultural lands and allow the new interchange to follow as closely to the existing alignment as feasible, while still allowing the project to meet the safety standards and project purpose. The alternative preferred is the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative.

Additional design features and mitigation include:

- Slope rounding and landscaping with native plants, and incorporation of Aesthetics Design Advisory Committee suggestions for aesthetic features of the project to minimize changes in the rural character of the site.
- Replacement and enhancement of 0.08 hectare (0.2 acre) of regularly maintained and reconfigured agricultural ditches, which qualify as coastal wetlands, but which do not currently function to filter runoff or provide habitat qualities. The coastal wetlands affected by the project would be replaced at a ratio of 3:1, monitored for success and retained in perpetuity. In addition to this mitigation feature, the project includes at least 1524 lineal meters (5,000 lineal feet) of vegetated bioswales that would function to filter runoff and provide wetland habitat.
- Replacement of coastal agricultural preservation lands at a ratio of 1:1, monitored by the Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Conservancy.

While the project conflicts with California Coastal Act policies that prohibit filling of coastal wetlands, the project is a safety improvement; there is no alternative that would further minimize impacts. The project includes mitigation measures that would replace and enhance wetland functions and habitat in the project area. On balance, the project is consistent with California Coastal Act policies.





### Environmental Project Study Area Map



not to scale



Figure 13 Environmental Project Study Area



### **2.2.3 Farmlands**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

The National Environmental Policy Act and the Farmland Protection Policy Act (United States Code 4201-4209; and its regulations, 7 Code of Federal Regulations Ch. VI Part 658) require federal agencies, such as the Federal Highway Administration, to coordinate with the Natural Resources Conservation Service if their activities may irreversibly convert farmland (directly or indirectly) to nonagricultural use. For purposes of the Farmland Protection Policy Act, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance. The land does not currently have to be used for cropland. It can be forestland, pastureland, cropland or other land, but not water or urban developed land.

The California Environmental Quality Act requires the review of projects that would convert Williamson Act contract land to non-agricultural land and to encourage open space preservation and efficient urban growth. The Williamson Act provides incentives to landowners through reduced property taxes to deter the early conversion of agricultural and open-space lands to other uses.

The California Coastal Commission and County of Monterey regulate agricultural lands through the California Coastal Act and Monterey County Local Coastal Program. The regulations encourage maintaining the maximum amount of prime agricultural land in production to assure the protection of the area's economy. They, furthermore, encourage protection of agricultural preservation and conservation lands through the establishment of stable boundaries between urban and rural areas, by locating new development contiguous to existing developed area and by minimizing conversions or divisions of these agricultural lands.

#### ***Affected Environment***

##### ***Agricultural Profile***

The predominant land use surrounding this project is agricultural. The land adjacent to the proposed project has been in agricultural production for more than 50 years. According to the Monterey County Coastal Implementation Plan, Title 20, the development trend is to keep this area in agricultural use.

The agricultural parcels in the project area range in size from 2 hectares (5 acres) to 89 hectares (220 acres), with the average size being 30.4 hectares (75 acres). By

comparison, the average agricultural parcel in Monterey County is 517 hectares (1,277 acres). Farmers in the project area typically own or lease contiguous parcels, combining them for cost-effective use.

Agriculture represents more than 40 percent of Monterey County's total economy. The county is the number one vegetable-producing region in the nation. Monterey County crops production and value-added agricultural products exceed \$12 billion per year. Organic farming production in the county has increased from a value of \$12 million in 1994 to more than \$120 million in 2002. Monterey County's farmland represents only 1 percent of the farmland acres in California, but produces 10 percent of the state's farm income. Top value crops for Monterey County in 2002 are listed in Table 9.

**Table 9. Top Value Crops in Monterey County**

<b>Crop</b>	<b>Value in millions</b>
Lettuce (head and leaf combined)	\$738.5
Broccoli	\$265.9
Strawberries	\$226.8
Nursery	\$219.0
Grapes	\$147.0
Spinach	\$129.0
Spring salad mix	\$119.0

*Source: Monterey County Crop Report, 2002*

Historically, apples were produced in the project area. Later, potatoes, strawberries and truck crops (lettuce, broccoli and cauliflower) were grown. For the last 10 years, strawberries, flowers and artichokes have been the predominant crops grown in the project area. Groundwater is the main source of water for irrigation, and all acreage is drip irrigated, mostly subsurface, with overhead sprinkling at transplanting time to set the plants before rainfall.

#### *Trends in Agricultural Land Use*

Agricultural acreage in Monterey County remained fairly stable from 1992 to 2002. According to the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, approximately 525,409 hectares (1,298,301 acres) of land were dedicated to agriculture in 2002, compared to 528,376 hectares (1,305,631 acres) in 1992. When acreage is further separated into agricultural land type, the changes in the

amount of farmland<sup>11</sup> and grazing land<sup>12</sup> over the 10-year period between 1992 and 2002 are further clarified, as shown in Table 10.

**Table 10. Change in Agricultural Acreage for Monterey County**

Year	Grazing Land	Farmland
1992	437,492 hectares (1,081,054 acres)	91,018 hectares (224,909 acres)
2002	429,226 hectares (1,060,630 acres)	96,857 hectares (239,335 acres)
Change	Loss of: 8.266 hectares (20.424 acres)	Increase of: 5.839 hectares (14.426 acres)

Source: California Department of Conservation 2004

Changes in the amount of agricultural land (grazing plus farmland) are minimal, only about 0.6 percent in a 10-year period. However, the quality of agricultural land has also changed over this period. Between 1992 and 2002, Monterey County has approved the conversion of about 3 percent of prime farmland to urban development and other non-agricultural uses.<sup>13</sup> Over the same period, this loss was partially offset by conversion of more than 2 percent of grazing land to farmland, primarily planted in wine grapes.

### *Important Farmland*

The State Department of Conservation identifies “Important Farmland” to analyze impacts to California’s agricultural resources. The classification system combines technical soil ratings, current land use and irrigation status as the basis for identifying Important Farmland. There are three types of Important Farmland recognized by the State Department of Conservation: prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, and unique farmland. See Figure 14 for an illustration of farmland types in the project area for each of the build alternatives and Figure 15 for an illustration of farmland types in relation to the design of the preferred alternative.

- Prime Farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for crop production. It has the soil quality, growing season and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops when

<sup>11</sup> "farmland" is roughly equivalent to agricultural lands with a zoning designation of agricultural preservation.

<sup>12</sup> "grazing land" is roughly equivalent to agricultural lands with a zoning designation of agricultural conservation.

<sup>13</sup> California Department of Conservation, 2002.

treated and managed, including water management, according to current farming methods.

- Farmland of Statewide Importance is similar to Prime Farmland, but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to hold and store moisture.
- Unique Farmland is land of lesser-quality soils used for the production of specific high economic value crops at some time during the two update cycles prior to the mapping date. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to current farming methods.

Table 11 shows the number of hectares (acres) within the project area, Monterey County and California that are designated as “Important Farmland.”

**Table 11. Amounts of "Important Farmland"**

<b>Farmland Type</b>	<b>Hectares (Acres) in Project Area</b>	<b>Hectares (Acres) in Monterey County<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Hectares (Acres) in California<sup>2</sup></b>
Prime Farmland	24.7 hectares (61.0 acres)	68,529.0 hectares (169,338.0 acres)	1,977,037.0 hectares (4,885,366.0 acres)
Farmland of Statewide Importance	51.0 hectares (125.9 acres)	18,618.0 hectares (46,007.0 acres)	964,920.0 hectares (2,384,37.0 acres)
Unique Farmland	10.5 hectares (25.9 acres)	10,305.0 hectares (25,465.0 acres)	496,667.0 hectares (1,227,292.0 acres)
Total Amount of "Important Farmland"	86.2 hectares (212.7 acres)	97,453.0 hectares (240,812.0 acres)	3,438,625.0 hectares (8,497,029.0 acres)

<sup>1</sup>Source: Monterey County 2000-2002 Land Use Conversion Table A-17

<sup>2</sup>Source: California Department of Conservation, 2000

### *Agricultural Preserve and Williamson Act Lands*

An agricultural preserve is an area within which a city or county can enter into Williamson Act contracts with landowners. The boundary is designated by resolution by the board of supervisors or city council having jurisdiction. The area must be devoted to either agricultural use, recreational use, or open-space, or any combination of those uses.

In the project area, the Williamson Act is a voluntary land conservation program overseen by Monterey County. The basic purpose of the Williamson Act is to preserve agricultural lands and prevent their conversion to non-agricultural uses. A property must first be designated an agricultural preserve in order for it to be eligible for a Williamson Act contract. The contract is established by landowner request and is entered into by and between the property owner and the County of Monterey to enforceably restrict the use of the land to agricultural and compatible uses for a minimum of 20 years.

Monterey County requires a minimum of 40.0 hectares (100 acres) and a gross income of \$8,000.00 per acre to qualify under a Williamson Act contract. Monterey County currently has 297,912 hectares (736,158 acres) in Williamson Act and Farmland Security Zone contracts. Only one parcel of land within the project area has entered into a Williamson Act contract. According to Monterey County Assessor records, the total acreage of the single Williamson Act contract parcel in the project study area is 43.7 hectares (108 acres).

#### *Local Coastal Program Agricultural Lands*

Monterey County uses a slightly different system, than that used by the State Department of Conservation, for designation of agricultural lands. Within the project area, Monterey County designates coastal agricultural preserve, coastal agricultural conservation, agricultural industrial and transportation (consisting of state highway rights-of-way) land uses.

- Coastal Agricultural Preserve zoning designation includes large contiguous parcels, containing prime and productive agricultural soils with less than 10 percent average slope, with encroachment restrictions to preserve their agricultural viability. (This is equivalent to a combination of the State Department of Conservation's designated prime farmland, unique farmland and farmland of statewide importance.)
- Coastal Agricultural Conservation zoning designation is given to other productive agricultural lands or relatively small pockets of prime agricultural soils and grazing lands. (This is equivalent to the State Department of Conservation's designated grazing lands.)

- Agricultural Industrial zoning designation is given to areas suitable for development with an emphasis on agricultural-related manufacturing.
- Transportation land use is given to existing state highway rights-of-way.

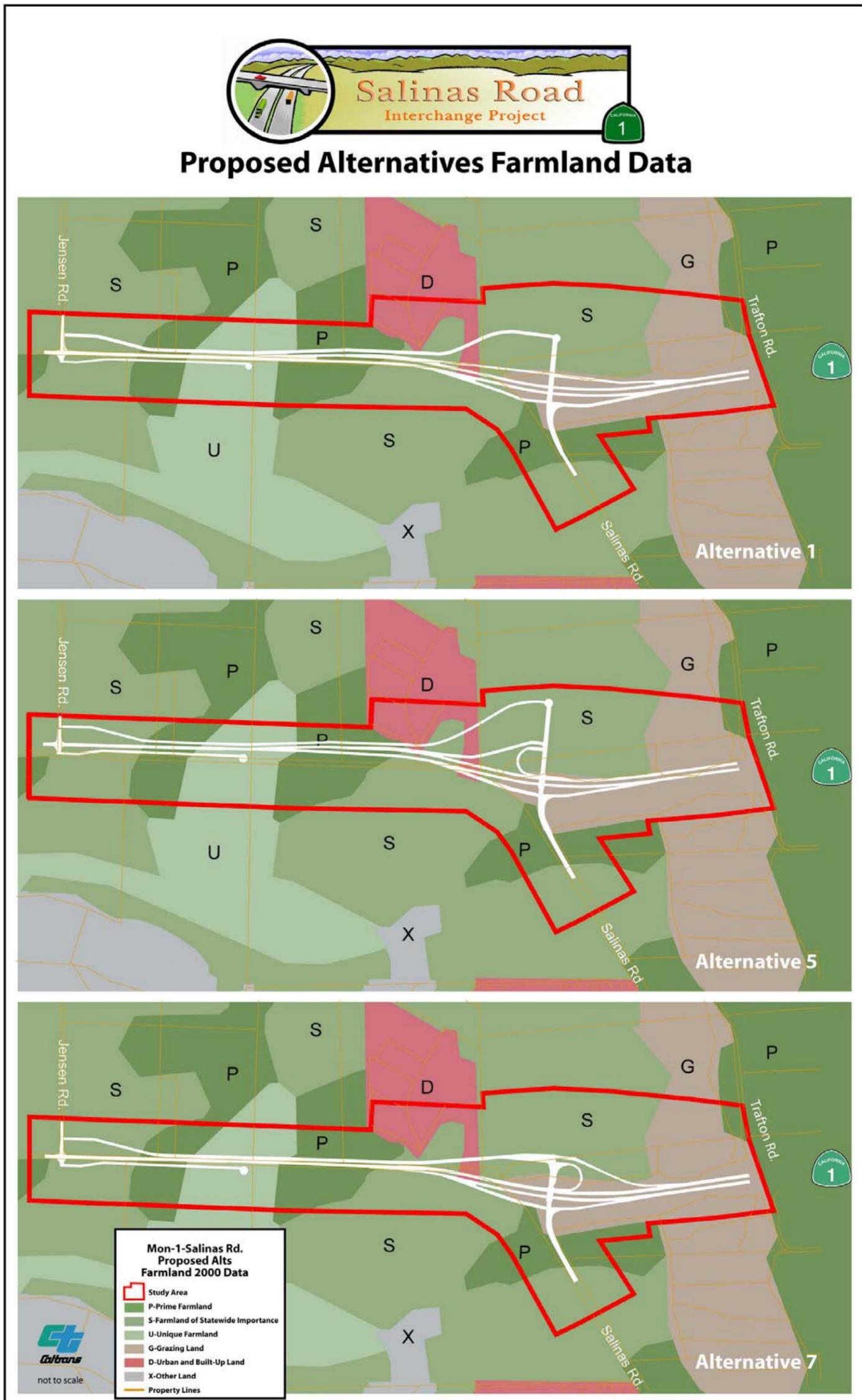


Figure 14 Proposed Alternatives Farmland Data



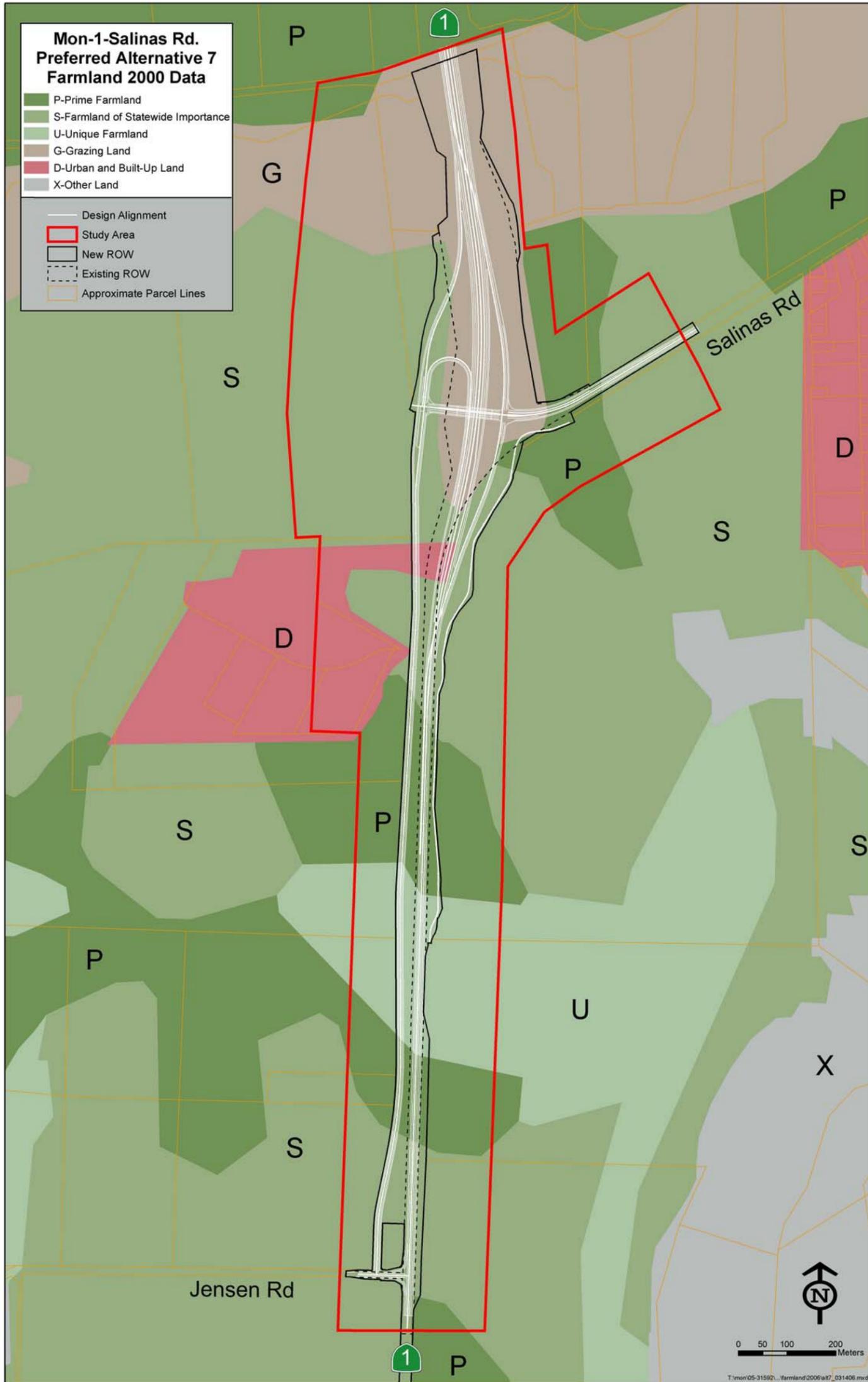


Figure 15 Farmland Data -- Preferred Alternative 7



Table 12 shows the amount of land in each zoning designation within the project area.

**Table 12. Land Use in Project Area**

<b>Zoning Designation</b>	<b>Amount of Land in Project Area</b>
Coastal Agricultural Preserve	87 hectares (213 acres)
Coastal Agricultural Conservation	16 hectares (40 acres)
Agricultural Industrial	6.5 hectares (16 acres)
Transportation	12 hectares (30 acres)

*Source: Monterey County Planning and Zoning Department*

### **Impacts**

#### **Important Farmland**

Caltrans uses the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form, AD-1006, to determine impacts to farmland. The form assigns the affected farmland a combined score of up to 260 points, composed of up to 100 points for the relative value of the affected farmland and up to 160 points for the site (or alternative) assessment. With this score, the effects of each alternative on farmland are quantified. Sites receiving a total score of less than 160 points are given minimal consideration for protection and no additional sites need to be evaluated.<sup>14</sup> The Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form need not be resubmitted to the Natural Resources Conservation Service for further review when the total score is less than 160 points.

A Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form was submitted to the Monterey County Natural Resources Conservation Service on April 6, 2004<sup>15</sup> (a summary is provided in Table 13; see form and explanations for Site Assessment Criteria in Appendix F).

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<sup>14</sup> Pursuant to regulation 7 CFR Ch. VI Part 658.4.

<sup>15</sup> Since the initial submittal in April 2004, farmland impacts have been refined and revised slightly. Consultation with the National Resources Conservation Service resulted in the conclusion that the revised quantities were not substantial enough to require submittal of a revised Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form.

**Table 13. Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form Summary**

Build Alternative	Acres of Important Farmland to be Converted by the Project			Percentage of Monterey County's Important Farmland	Relative Value of Farmland	Total Site Assessment	Total Points
	Prime & Unique	Statewide & Local Importance	Total Important Farmland				
Alt. 1	6.4	30.4	36.8	0.009	69.6	80	149.9
Alt. 5	6.0	34.9	40.9	0.01	70.7	82	152.7
Alt. 7	7.4	26.8	34.2	0.009	69.8	81	150.8

Source: Form NRCS-AD-1006 (Farmland Conversion Impact Rating for Corridor-type Projects)

There is very little difference between the ratings for each build alternative: Alternative 1 would have the least effect; Alternative 7 would have slightly more; Alternative 5 would have the most effect. The value of the farmland affected by all build alternatives is below the 160-point level and would have a minor effect on the overall value of farmland in the region. Therefore, per to the Farmland Protection Policy Act, there is no requirement to consider additional alternatives or to include additional protection to farmlands in the alternatives under consideration.

#### *Williamson Act Lands*

The project would have no effect on Williamson Act contract properties. Each of the three build alternatives would acquire approximately 1 hectare (2.4 acres) from the single Williamson Act contract parcel in the project area. The remaining parcel acreage would be about 42.7 hectares (105.5 acres) and would continue to meet Monterey County criteria for eligibility as a Williamson Act contract parcel.

#### *Local Coastal Program Agricultural Lands*

The project would convert small portions of parcels of coastal agricultural preservation and coastal agricultural conservation land uses for expansion of a roadway. The project would improve the movement of locally produced raw and processed agricultural products within the region as well as across the state and nation.

Under all build alternatives, the highway would be expanded into parcels contiguous to the existing road. Alternative 7 is closest to the existing highway; Alternative 5 is the farthest from it. The frontage roads would serve as buffers between the highway and agricultural lands.

The average farm parcel in Monterey County is 517 hectares (1,277 acres). In the project area, the average farm parcel is 30.4 hectares (75 acres). Table 14 shows the amount of agricultural land that would be acquired for each build alternative and the range and average acreage that would be taken from the parcels by each alternative. Additionally, Table 14 shows the percentage of agricultural land to be acquired with each build alternative, assuming the average-sized parcel in the project area.

**Table 14. Acquisition of Agricultural Lands<sup>16</sup>**

Alternative	Total Acquisition	Number of Parcels Subject to Acquisition	Range of Area to be Acquired Per Parcel		Average Area to be Acquired Per Parcel	% of Land to be Acquired Per Average-sized Parcel <sup>17</sup>
			Low	High		
1	13.5 ha (33.5 ac)	14	>0.01 ha (0.02 ac)	3.1 ha (7.6 ac)	1.0 ha (2.4 ac)	3.20 %
5	14.6 ha (36.2 ac)	13	>0.01 ha (0.01 ac)	3.1 ha (7.6 ac)	1.1 ha (2.8 ac)	3.73 %
7	13.1 ha (32.4 ac)	14	>0.01 ha (0.02 ac)	2.7 ha (6.6 ac)	0.9 ha (2.3 ac)	3.06 %

ha = hectares  
ac = acres

The conversion of farmland would maintain parcels of sufficient size that agricultural use would not be diminished, and the long-term viability of agricultural operations would not be impaired.

Table 15 shows the amount of zoned agricultural land that would be permanently converted to transportation use under each build alternative.

<sup>16</sup> "Agricultural Lands" are the sum of those lands designated as Coastal Agricultural Preservation and Coastal Agricultural Conservation.

<sup>17</sup> The averaged- sized parcel in the project study area is 30.4 hectares (75 acres).

**Table 15. Amount of Permanent Farmland Impacts<sup>18</sup>**

Build Alternative	Amount of Agricultural Land to be Permanently Converted		
	Agricultural Preservation	Agricultural Conservation	Total
Alternative 1	12.6 hectares (31.2 acres)	0.9 hectares (2.3 acres)	13.5 hectares (33.5 acres)
Alternative 5	14.0 hectares (34.6 acres)	0.6 hectares (1.6 acres)	14.6 hectares (36.2 acres)
Alternative 7	12.4 hectares (30.7 acres)	0.7 hectares (1.7 acres)	13.1 hectares (32.4 acres)

Alternative 7 would permanently affect the least land of agricultural preservation and conservation land uses (13.1 hectares/ 32.4 acres). Alternative 1 would affect slightly more (13.5 hectares/ 33.5 acres) land from parcels of agricultural preservation and conservation land uses. Alternative 5 would affect the most land of agricultural preservation and conservation land uses (14.6 hectares/ 36.2 acres).

Temporary impacts to farmlands would occur with construction activities, in particular the establishment of a construction yard and the project detour. In addition, construction would require a 3-meter wide (10-foot-wide) temporary construction zone beyond the permanent impact limits. Table 16 shows the amount of agricultural lands, by zoning designation, that would be temporarily affected by each build alternative.

**Table 16. Amount of Temporary Farmlands Impacts by**

Build Alternative	Amount of Agricultural Land to be Temporarily Affected		
	Agricultural Preservation	Agricultural Conservation	Total
Alternative 1	5.2 hectares (12.9 acres)	0.2 hectares (0.4 acres)	5.4 hectares (13.3 acres)
Alternative 5	4.3 hectares (10.5 acres)	0.1 hectares (0.2 acres)	4.4 hectares (10.7 acres)
Alternative 7	3.0 hectares (7.6 acres)	0.4 hectares (0.9 acres)	3.4 hectares (8.5 acres)

<sup>18</sup> Amounts of permanent and temporary farmlands impacts for the preferred alternative 7 are presented in the discussion under "Preferred Alternative", below.

Alternative 7 would temporarily affect the least land of agricultural preservation and conservation land uses. Alternative 5 would temporarily affect about a hectare more land from parcels of agricultural preservation and conservation land uses. Alternative 1 would temporarily affect the most land of agricultural preservation and conservation land uses.

### *The Preferred Alternative*

The preferred alternative would acquire a total of 10.56 hectares (26.1 acres) from 14 parcels. The area that would need to be acquired from each parcel ranges from less than 0.01 to 3.0 hectares (0.02 to 7.4 acres), which represent an average of 0.75 hectare (1.86 acres) per parcel. This represents 2.5 percent of the average-sized parcel.

The preferred alternative would permanently affect 9.98 hectares (24.73 acres) of Agricultural Preservation and 0.32 hectares (0.78 acres) of Agricultural Conservation land for a total of 10.76 hectares (25.05 acres) of farmland.

The preferred alternative would temporarily affect 3.86 hectares (10.30 acres) of Agricultural Preservation land and 0.07 hectare (0.17 acre) of Agricultural Conservation Land for a total of 3.93 hectares (10.47) acres of farmland.

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

All build alternatives (1, 5, 7 and preferred alternative 7) incorporated measures to minimize impacts to farmlands. These include:

- A. Minimizing the widening of Highway 1 the minimum length necessary to improve safety. Additional lanes would be extended only between Salinas Road and the existing four-lane highway, just south of the Trafton Road undercrossing.
- B. Minimizing the area needed for frontage roads. Frontage roads have been designed as close as possible to the ultimate highway alignment, and slopes have been made steeper (revised from 4:1 to 2:1) to minimize impacts to farmland.
- C. Alternative 7 includes a design exception to allow the western frontage road to intersect Salinas Road, at an intersection with traffic signals at the southbound off-ramp.
- D. During the project development phases subsequent to approval of the final environmental document, Caltrans would continue to incorporate design features that further minimize impacts to farmland.

- E. To minimize temporary construction-related impacts, environmentally sensitive area fencing would be established 3 meters (10 feet) beyond the edge of the permanent impact area. No equipment or earthwork would be allowed in these environmentally sensitive areas.
- F. During construction, provisions for adequate access would ensure that agricultural operations are not impaired and that the roadside produce stand, important to the surrounding farm operations, remains viable.
- G. In the event that an excess parcel of farmland results from construction, adequate access to water for irrigation of crops would be established and a permanent easement would be attached to ensure agricultural land use of the parcel in perpetuity.
- H. Mitigation for temporary impacts to farmlands would consist of the restoration of those areas that were disturbed. Caltrans would direct the construction contractor to stockpile the top 18 inches of topsoil from areas of coastal agricultural preservation lands for eventual replacement on parcels subject to temporary impacts.
- I. Pursuant to the Farmland Protection Policy Act, no mitigation would be required because conversion of farmland by the build alternatives was rated as minor.
- J. Neither Monterey County's North County Land Use Plan, which includes the Local Coastal Program, nor its Implementation Plan establishes mitigation guidelines for impacts to agricultural lands. However, during informal consultation with California Coastal Commission, Monterey County Planning staff indicated that mitigation for farmland impacts would be a condition of the local coastal permit for the project.
- K. On October 25, 2005, Caltrans met with members of the agricultural industry to identify mitigation measures for impacts to farmland that would result from the preferred alternative. Refer to Section 3.3 for details. Caltrans will mitigate impacts to farmland by creating or restoring degraded farmland to irrigated coastal agricultural preservation land use at a ratio of 1:1.
- L. Caltrans would enter into an agreement with the Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Conservancy to monitor and report on success of the agricultural land creation/restoration for a three-year period.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

In the 10-year period between 1992 and 2002, the amount of agricultural preservation lands increased by 5,839 hectares (14,426 acres), primarily due to conversion of grazing lands to vineyards.<sup>19</sup> The project alternatives would convert an average of 13 hectares (32.1 acres) of Agricultural Preservation lands for use as a highway. This land represents 0.013 percent of Monterey County Agricultural Preservation lands. No cumulative impacts to farmlands are anticipated due to the trend in Monterey County of increasing agricultural preservation lands, the small amount of farmland conversion that would occur with this project, and the mitigation measures proposed to offset farmland conversion.

#### **2.2.4 Utilities and Emergency Services**

All build alternatives would require the relocation of Pacific Gas and Electric, SBC California, North County Fire Protection District, and Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency utilities. It is anticipated that underground utilities would be relocated to the west side of Highway 1 and placed beneath the proposed frontage road. Overhead utilities would be relocated outside the proposed state right-of-way.

A fire suppression pond would be reconfigured with all alternatives. During reconfiguration, the full capacity of the pond would be available at all times.

Emergency services would not be impeded during construction.

#### **2.2.5 Traffic and Transportation**

##### ***Regulatory Setting***

The Monterey County Transportation Commission's objective for optimum driving conditions is level of service C or better. The prime transportation emphasis of the Coastal Act is to preserve highway capacity for coastal access and coastal-dependent land uses. Of primary concern in North Monterey County is the improvement of Highway 1 for safety and uncongested traffic flow.

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<sup>19</sup> California Department of Conservation, 2004

### **Affected Environment**

Table 17 summarizes existing transportation conditions for the project. See Sections 1.2.2.2 Safety, 1.2.2.3 Capacity, 1.2.2.4 Level of Service, and 1.2.2.6 Transportation Demand for a full discussion of the existing traffic conditions in the project area.

**Table 17. Summary of Existing Transportation Conditions**

Highway Segment or Intersection Turning Movement	Traffic Volumes <sup>20</sup>	Level Of Service <sup>21</sup>	Collision Rate <sup>22</sup>
Northbound Highway 1	1,240	D	1.85 times the statewide average
Southbound Highway 1	1,040	F	
NB Highway 1 to EB Salinas Road	130	F	2.0 times the statewide average
SB Highway 1 to EB Salinas Road	430		
WB Salinas Road to NB Highway 1	370		
WB Salinas Road to SB Highway 1	50		

NB= northbound; SB= southbound; WB = westbound; EB = eastbound

### **Transit**

The bus stops for Monterey-Salinas Transit Routes 27 and 28 currently sit on both sides of Highway 1 at Dominic’s Produce Stand and Hilltop Industries. Route 27 (Watsonville to Monterey) runs weekdays between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and picks up and drops off, on demand, at both stops. Route 28 (Watsonville to Salinas) serves both stops on demand and runs weekends (Saturdays between 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. and Sundays between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.).

Two bus stops for Pajaro Valley Unified School District Route 113 currently sit on the southbound side of Highway 1: at Hilltop Industries and at a residence just north of Jensen Road. The buses pick up on school days between 8:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and drop off between 3:30 p.m. and 3:45 p.m.

### **Bikeways**

Currently, going south in Monterey County, the Pacific Coast Bike Route travels over the Pajaro River (Santa Cruz and Monterey County Line) on McGowan Road, west on Trafton Road to Bluff Road, east on Bluff Road to Jensen Road, then east on Jensen to Highway 1 southbound.

<sup>20</sup> PM Peak Period for 2000

<sup>21</sup> PM Peak Period for 2000

<sup>22</sup> For the five-year period:1/1/99 to 12/31/03

Going north on the Pacific Coast Bike Route, bicyclists enter Highway 1 at Molera Road, ride along the highway's northbound shoulder to Salinas Road and north on Salinas Road to Trafton Road, west on Trafton Road (under Highway 1) to McGowan Road, and north, over the Pajaro River (Santa Cruz and Monterey County Line).

### ***Impacts***

#### *Level of Service*

All build alternatives would separate the conflicting turn movements, allow unimpeded traffic flow and improve levels of service on Highway 1. The PM peak hour level of service on northbound Highway 1 through the project limits would be A in 2025. PM peak hour level of service on southbound Highway 1 through the project limits would be D in 2025, if southbound Highway 1 remains one lane.

All build alternatives would improve the operations of the intersection above those expected with the no-build alternative. Table 18 shows the projected levels of service and delay for each alternative.

In 2030, Alternative 7 is projected to provide the highest overall quality of service with very short delays. Alternatives 1 and 5 are projected to improve the quality of service and have short delay. The no-build alternative would continue to have considerable delay.

**Table 18. Projected Interchange Level of Service and Delay During Peak Hour in 2030**

Alternative	Interchange or Intersection Movements	Level of Service	Delay per Vehicle (in seconds)
1	Northbound on-/off-ramps	A	4.6
	Southbound on-/off-ramps	B	10.3
5	Northbound on-/off-ramps	B	12.1
	Southbound on-/off-ramps	A	4.2
7	Northbound on-/off-ramps	A	7.4
	Southbound on-/off-ramps	A	4.0
No-Build	Southbound Hwy 1 to eastbound Salinas Road	F	More than 50 <sup>23</sup>
	Westbound Salinas Road to southbound Highway 1	F	More than 50 <sup>25</sup>

Source: Caltrans Traffic Operations Analysis, 2003

### Safety

- All build alternatives would reduce the collision rates by eliminating the existing at-grade turn conflicts.
- All build alternatives would extend the four-lane section of Highway 1 from just south of the Trafton Road undercrossing to the interchange, a length of 0.8 kilometers (about half a mile), to increase safety, improve operations and provide route continuity.
- All build alternatives would restrict access onto Highway 1 by adding frontage roads (between Jensen Road and the interchange on the west side and between Salinas Road and a land-locked parcel on the east side) and funneling traffic from exiting farm roads and driveways to the interchange and Jensen Road.

### Transportation Demand

The Travel Demand and Forecasting study predicts that without construction of an interchange, traffic moving through the intersection would increase an average of 1.7 percent annually through 2030 (see Table 19). With an interchange in place, traffic moving through the intersection would increase an average of 2 percent annually through 2030 (see Table 20). In sum, construction of an interchange at Salinas Road would increase traffic an additional 0.3 percent annually.

<sup>23</sup> Model cannot accurately calculate delay when longer than 50 seconds.

**Table 19. Annual Increase of Vehicles Traveling through the Intersection WITHOUT an Interchange at Salinas Road<sup>24</sup>**

Vehicles Traveling From	Vehicles Traveling To		
	Northbound Highway 1	Southbound Highway 1	Eastbound Salinas Road
Northbound Highway 1	1.50%	NA	1.00%
Southbound Highway 1	NA	2.50%	1.50%
Westbound Salinas Road	1.20%	1.20%	NA

NA: Not applicable.

Source: Modeling and Forecasting Documentation Memo: Final Salinas Road Interchange Study, June 12, 2003

**Table 20. Annual Increase of Vehicles Traveling through the Intersection WITH an Interchange at Salinas Road<sup>25</sup>**

Vehicles Traveling From	Vehicles Traveling To		
	Northbound Highway 1	Southbound Highway 1	Eastbound Salinas Road
Northbound Highway 1	1.50%	NA	1.10%
Southbound Highway 1	NA	2.50%	2.00%
Westbound Salinas Road	1.30%	6.00%	NA

NA: Not applicable.

Source: Modeling and Forecasting Documentation Memo: Final Salinas Road Interchange Study, June 12, 2003

With the interchange in place, the two turns that would have the most dramatic increased use (southbound Highway 1 to eastbound Salinas Road and westbound Salinas Road to southbound Highway 1) are those that currently cross Highway 1 and have the highest number of collisions and longest delay. The increase in motorists that would be making those turns reflects pent up demand (released with improved safety) and consolidation of local trips which, without the interchange, would have used alternate local routes.<sup>26</sup>

Placing the interchange at Salinas Road would not influence regional traffic patterns, but would influence traffic patterns in the local area bounded by Highways 1, 101, 129 and 156. The interchange is expected to add trips, but the numbers are projected to be small; by 2025, approximately 166 additional trips during the peak hour would

<sup>24</sup> During the Peak PM Hour, between 2000 and 2030.

<sup>25</sup> During the Peak PM Hour, between 2000 and 2030.

<sup>26</sup> These are also known as diverted trips.

be generated on Salinas Road, with 105 of those continuing on to Elkhorn and Hall roads. The interchange is not expected to reduce the projected levels of service on the local street network. In 2025, whether an interchange is in place or not, PM peak levels of service would be C on Salinas Road and E to F on the Elkhorn and Hall roads portions of County Route G-12.<sup>27</sup>

### *Transit*

Transit and school bus stops would be relocated to the frontage road on the west side of the highway. Bus stops would be signed, with a paved pullout, landing pad and shelters, designed in coordination with Monterey-Salinas Transit.

### *Bikeways*

A paved and striped 2.4 meter-wide (eight-foot-wide) (Class II) bike lane would be provided on either side of the west-side frontage road and across the Salinas Road Bridge. Parking would be prohibited in the bike lane. Bicycle detector loops would be installed at the signals. Through the project area travel on the Pacific Coast Bike Route remains the same. Northbound Pacific Coast Bike Route riders would travel on the highway shoulder and exit at the Salinas Road off ramp to travel east then north on Salinas Road. Southbound Pacific Coast Bike Route riders would follow the existing route.

### *Construction-Related Impacts*

During construction, Highway 1 would be temporarily realigned eastward, retaining the existing traffic pattern, to allow vehicles to detour around the construction area (see Figure 10). One stage of the proposed detour would close Salinas Road for one week, requiring the rerouting of traffic. Work would be scheduled to coincide with off-peak traffic flow.

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

- A. During construction, provisions for adequate access would ensure that agricultural operations are not impaired and that the roadside produce stand remains viable.
- B. A Traffic Management Plan would be developed to accommodate local traffic patterns and reduce delays and congestion. The plan would be coordinated with Commute Alternatives in Monterey County (a program of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments) and Commute Solutions in Santa Cruz County

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<sup>27</sup> "Transportation Authority for Monterey County Regional Impact Fee Project: LOS of Regional Network." Prepared by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments staff, June 20, 2003

(a program of Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission). The plan would include the following recommendations:

- C. Public awareness through brochures, mailers, media releases and information centers.
- D. Motorist awareness through road signs, including changeable message signs.
- E. Incident management through Construction Zone Enhanced Enforcement Program and traffic surveillance stations.

## **2.2.6 Visual/Aesthetics**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended establishes that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure all Americans safe, healthful, productive and *aesthetically* (emphasis added) and culturally pleasing surroundings [42 U.S.C. 4331(b)(2)]. To further emphasize this point, the Federal Highway Administration, in its implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act [23 U.S.C. 109(h)] directs that final decisions regarding projects are to be made in the best overall public interest taking into account adverse environmental impacts, including among others the destruction or disruption of aesthetic values.

Likewise, the California Environmental Quality Act establishes that it is the policy of the state to take all action necessary to provide the people of the state “with . . . enjoyment of *aesthetic*, natural, scenic and historic environmental qualities.” [California Public Resources Code Section 21001(b)].

Local planning documents and guidelines are indicators of the general level of community sensitivity regarding the aesthetic character of the region and of the project area. The Monterey County Land Use Plan, Local Coastal Program, Section 2.2 *Visual Resources* notes that the Coastal Act of 1976 focuses on the protection of scenic resources, particularly those along the coastline.

This document stresses that any development permitted in scenic ocean areas should be placed and designed to be visually compatible and subordinate to the natural setting. Alteration of natural landforms and degradation of the special communities should be minimized. Highway 1 from Marina to the county line at the Pajaro River should be officially designated as a State Scenic Highway and the visual character of the adjacent scenic corridor should be preserved and, where feasible, restored. The

Monterey County Land Use Plan, Local Coastal Program *Land Use Plan Map* defines Highway 1 through the project limits as a Scenic Corridor.

The Monterey County Coastal Implementation Plan, Regulations for Development in the North County Land Use Plan Area, recommends structures, landscaping and lighting to be designed to blend with the rural setting and be modified to protect and minimize visibility from the public viewshed. Landscaping should incorporate native plants common to the area.

### ***Affected Environment***

The project region has rolling hills and wide valleys. The visual character of the region is influenced equally by agriculture and its proximity to the Pacific Ocean. The ocean, estuaries, low mountains, agricultural fields, the Moss Landing harbor and power plant all contribute to establishing a visual identity for the highway corridor. Scattered residential development is found about a mile east of the project along Salinas Road.

Although the landscape is largely open space, much of what is visible from the highway is developed in terms of agricultural crop production. Strawberry and artichoke fields are close to the project and can be seen on both sides of Highway 1 throughout the region. In addition to the agricultural plantings, native vegetative patterns in the region include wetland and riparian species along the estuaries and waterways, and scattered oak woodland on the distant hillsides. Large eucalyptus, cypress and pine trees have also been introduced into the area and often can be seen as dominant visual elements in the landscape.

Commercial agricultural businesses are visible along the highway corridor. Adjacent to the highway, roadside produce stands reinforce the agricultural character of the area. Overhead utilities parallel Salinas Road and Highway 1. Along Highway 1, the nearest bridge crossings over the highway are about 1.6 miles north of the project site and about 10 miles to the south.

### ***Existing Highway***

The Highway 1/Salinas Road intersection occurs at a slight rise on a marine terrace, in the landform between the Salinas River and Pajaro River valleys, about 3 miles from the ocean. North of the project, the landform drops down into the Pajaro Valley. The rolling landscape limits views to the west, and no ocean views are available from the project site. The highway itself was constructed through an excavated section of this raised landform. As a result, the roadsides immediately north of the intersection

are cut slopes reaching a maximum of about 45 feet in height. In the project vicinity, neither Highway 1 or Salinas Road have been planted with roadside landscaping. North of the project, where Highway 1 widens to four lanes, a modest degree of formal “highway planting” begins. Overhead utilities parallel Highway 1 south of the intersection.

### *Visual Quality*

Views throughout the project area, both to and from Highway 1 and Salinas Road are of a moderately high visual quality. The quality of the views is based on the open space, agricultural character of the landscape. The visual quality of the project area is somewhat tempered by the presence of industrial-style buildings and the cluttering aspect of overhead utilities and highway signs. The constant presence of vehicles travelling through and waiting at the Highway 1 and Salinas Road intersection also detracts from the rural visual character of the setting.

### **Impacts**

Photo simulations were prepared to assess the potential impacts from each alternative as well as to provide a means of public disclosure regarding general project appearance. Photo simulations are shown at the end of Chapter 2.

The landscaping shown in the simulations is not intended to represent a specific planting proposal. Specific landscaping and structure design details are not included in the simulations and would be the product of subsequent design and review efforts involving the community. The simulations are intended to show a reasonable representation of the project and to illustrate the estimated scale and form of any proposed features and their relationship to the setting. The photo simulations were prepared showing the project setting approximately 10 years after construction.

Each of the three build alternatives would result in a substantial change in the existing setting. The inherent size and engineered appearance of the new bridge, regardless of alternative, would cause a permanent change to the visual setting of the Highway 1/ Salinas Road intersection. The character of the highway corridor would appear more urbanized as the highway itself becomes larger, introducing a concrete bridge structure and adding more pavement and roadway accessories into the view.

The extent of visual impact caused by the project would be a factor of how these physical changes are perceived by the viewing public. Viewer sensitivity is likely to be moderately high based on review of planning policy and potential viewer activity. Even considering potential viewer sensitivity, the proposed overcrossing would not

be an uncharacteristic element along Highway 1 throughout northern Monterey and southern Santa Cruz counties. Relative to viewer expectations, adverse combined effects would be low as experienced in the context of other highway features.

The level of impacts reflects the capacity for the bridge to blend the overcrossing with the existing landform and rural character of the setting. The bridge design offers a minimized profile that allows the structure to fit into the landform. By not rising above the western hillside embankment, the structure's silhouette and perceived scale are reduced. No ocean views would be blocked or adversely affected by the bridge. In addition to the basic form of the bridge, architectural treatment of the structure and the landscape design would have a great influence on community opinion of the project.

The earthwork associated with the proposed on- and off-ramps and the eastern bridge abutment would have a considerable effect on the existing visual setting. The changes associated with the ramps would be greatest north of Salinas Road, where the cut slopes are most visible. Throughout the project, sharp transitions between adjacent slope angles and constant flat planes would cause the project to look engineered and create a greater contrast with the natural landform. The addition of lights, signals, signs, striping, guardrail, fencing and other project details would contribute to an inevitable urbanizing influence on the roadway.

Landscaping would mitigate the urban appearance of the project by using natural elements to reduce the perceived scale of the bridge, filter cumulative views of the ramps, frontage roads and other project features, and provide a natural transition from the adjacent agricultural landscape to the project. Contour grading would result in a less engineered, more natural-appearing landform consistent with the area topography. Attention to lighting, fencing and other project details would minimize visual clutter and glare, reducing the project's potential urbanizing effect.

With the implementation of the stated mitigation methods, the visual impacts of this project would be reduced and would not result in substantial changes in overall visual quality.

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

To maintain the visual quality of the project site and area and decrease the visual impact caused by the project, the following design, construction and maintenance would be included in all build alternatives:

- A. Landscaping would be included as part of the project.
- B. The community would be involved in the design of the bridge structure aesthetics and the landscaping plan through the creation of an Aesthetic Design Advisory Committee.
- C. All slopes within the project limits would include contour grading and slope rounding. Unnatural-appearing landform remnants would be removed or re-graded.
- D. All project fencing (except on the bridge structure) would be wood or metal T-post and wire.
- E. All lighting would be the minimum height and illumination allowed by applicable safety standards.
- F. All lighting on the bridge structure would be hooded or include cut-off shields to reduce visibility of the light source from off-site locations.
- G. All metal beam guardrail beams and posts would be darkened by acid-etching.
- H. Native shrubs or tall grasses would be planted between the Highway 1 mainline and the county frontage road to the west. Shrubs would be 1.0 to 1.2 meters (3 to 4 feet) tall at maturity and planted to appear as naturally occurring vegetation.
- I. Existing trees would be protected with use of slope-warping and timber tree wells.
- J. All trees removed would be replaced onsite at a ratio of five trees for every tree removed.

## **2.3 Physical Environment**

### **2.3.1 Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

The main federal law regulating water quality is the Clean Water Act. Section 401 of the act requires a water quality certification from the State Board or Regional Board when a project: 1) requires a federal license or permit (a Section 404 permit is the most common federal permit for Caltrans projects), and 2) would result in a discharge to “waters of the United States.”

Section 402 of the act establishes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit system for the discharge of any pollutant (except dredge or fill material) into waters of the United States. To ensure compliance with Clean Water

Act Section 402 the State Water Resources Control Board has issued a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Statewide Storm Water permit to regulate storm water discharges from Caltrans facilities. The permit regulates storm water discharges from the Caltrans right-of-way both during and after construction, as well as from existing facilities and operations.

In addition, the State Water Resources Control Board has issued a construction general permit for most construction activities covering greater than 0.40 hectare (1 acre), that are part of a Common Plan of Development exceeding 2.02 hectare (5 acres) or that have the potential to significantly impair water quality. Some construction activities may require an individual construction permit.

All Caltrans projects that are subject to the construction general permit require a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, while all other projects require a Water Pollution Control Program. Subject to Caltrans' review and approval, the contractor prepares both the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and the Water Pollution Control Program. The Water Pollution Control Program and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan identify construction activities that may cause pollutants in storm water and measures to control these pollutants. Since neither the Water Pollution Control Program or the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan are prepared at this time, the following discussion focuses on anticipated pollution controls.

Additional laws regulating water quality include the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act, Safe Drinking Water Act and Pollution Prevention Act. State water quality laws are codified in the California Water Code.

### ***Affected Environment***

The project area drains to the Pacific Ocean through the Pajaro River and Elkhorn Slough. The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board has listed both the Pajaro River and Elkhorn Slough as 303(d) water bodies and defined beneficial uses.

Almost all of the water used to support the agricultural industry in the Pajaro River Basin comes from underlying aquifers. Demand has exceeded supply in many parts of the watershed, resulting in overdraft and seawater intrusion. In addition, there is widespread contamination of the upper aquifers by nitrates. Seawater intrusion and nitrate contamination of ground water have been identified as a serious water quality problem in the Pajaro River ground water basin.

### **Impacts**

All build alternatives increase the amount of impervious surface within the project area, which would increase the rate and volume of storm water runoff. Sediments, petroleum distillates and metals are washed off the highway surface by rainfall and drain to the Pacific Ocean through either Elkhorn Slough or the Pajaro River in the project area. Runoff occurs mainly during heavy storms.

### **Construction Impacts**

Table 21 shows the total amount of area expected to be disturbed during construction of each build alternative.

**Table 21. Area of Construction Disturbance<sup>28</sup>**

<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Area of Disturbance</b>
1	28 hectares (70 acres)
5	28 hectares (70 acres)
7	25 hectares (62 acres)

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

All build alternatives include a storm water drainage system consisting of a series of pipes, ditches and vegetated channels to convey storm water from the highway. Pollutants are allowed to settle or are removed by filtration through vegetation. The project is about a half mile from both the Pajaro River and Elkhorn Slough and, with the inclusion of the storm water drainage system, no impacts on the assigned beneficial uses are anticipated from the project.

Because the total disturbed soil area is estimated to be greater than 0.40 hectare (1 acre), the contractor would be required to develop and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan must evaluate the minimum required Best Management Practices identified in the Caltrans Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan/Water Pollution Control Program Preparation Manual (March 2003). Best management practices must be implemented at all times to reduce or eliminate the potential for non-storm water discharge to occur off of the Caltrans right-of-way, to a surface body of water, drainage course, or storm drainage system. The contractor would also identify, construct, implement and maintain best

management practices in accordance with a time schedule identified in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan to reduce or eliminate pollutants in storm water discharges and authorized non-storm water discharges from the project site during construction. In addition, the General Construction permit requires a Sample and Analysis Plan for non-visible pollutants to be developed and implemented into the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan for the proposed project.

Below are project-specific concerns that should be addressed in the Storm Water Information handout and/or included in the resident engineer's file:

- A. Existing vegetation has been preserved to the maximum extent practicable. All vegetated areas that are to be protected during construction would be delineated on the project plans and included in the resident engineer's file and in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan.
- B. All disturbed soil areas would be replanted as soon as work in a specific area is completed.
- C. All storm drain inlets that would receive runoff from disturbed areas during construction would have inlet protection installed prior to the rainy season.
- D. Location of excess material stockpiles would be identified in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. The stockpiles would be put in locations where they are protected from run-off and away from concentrated flows of storm water, drainage courses and inlets.
- E. All build alternatives would include at least 1,524 linear meters (5000 feet), 1 hectare (2.5 acres) of vegetated ditches that receive highway runoff (for transferring and filtering highway water runoff). The ditches would be seeded with grasses and other low-growing vegetation to provide the greatest filtering capacity. Based on species observed growing in wetlands in the project area, the recommended planting or seeding would include creeping wild rye (*Leymus triticoides*), California oatgrass (*Danthonia californica*), tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia caespitosa* ssp. *Caespitosa*), and meadow barley (*Hordeum brachyantherum*). Other shrubs and grasses would invade the site naturally. If restoration occurred outside the vegetated ditches, the planting mix would also

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<sup>28</sup> Area calculated for each alternative includes area of existing right-of-way, right-of-way to be acquired for each build alternative and construction easements.

include yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), rush (*Juncus patens*) and willows (*Salix lasiolepis* and *S. lasiandra*).

## **2.4 Biological Environment**

### **2.4.1 Natural Communities**

This section of the document discusses natural communities of concern. The focus of this section is on biological communities, not individual plant or animal species.

Wetlands and other waters are discussed in the Wetlands and Other Waters section, 2.4.2. Habitat areas that have been designated as critical habitat under the Federal Endangered Species Act are discussed in the Threatened and Endangered Species section, 2.4.4. Appendix G contains the United States Fish and Wildlife Service list of Threatened and Endangered Species that have potential to be present in the study area.

The Salinas Road Interchange Natural Environment Study, completed in November 2004, documents the studies done to assess impacts to natural communities from the proposed project.

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

Chapter 2.3.3.A.1 of the Monterey North County Land Use Plan states that “Oak woodland on land exceeding 25% slope should be left in its native state to protect this plant community and animal habitat from the impacts of development and erosion. Development within oak woodland on 25% slope or less shall be sited to minimize disruption of vegetation and habitat loss.”

CEQA was recently amended, through Senate Bill 1334, to require counties to make a specific effort to determine whether projects under their jurisdiction would lead to a significant environmental impact as a result of the conversion of oak woodlands.

#### ***Affected Environment***

The study of the project area identified 1.54 hectares (3.81 acres) of coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) woodlands in the quadrant north of Salinas Road and west of Highway 1 (see Figure 15). Additional oak woodland extends outside the project area to the west. The woodland within the project area was made up of about 200 individual oak trees and associated understory shrubs.

### **Impacts**

Alternatives 1 and 7 would remove three oak trees, an area of approximately 0.02 hectares (0.06 acre) of the oak woodland found in the project area. The diameters of the trees are 8 inches, 12 inches and 18 inches at breast height. The oaks grow at the top of an existing cut slope, in a small string of trees that extends east from the main woodland. Due to their small stature, proximity to the highway, and the availability of more desirable habitat, they are unlikely nest trees for raptors, such as white-tailed kites (*Elanus leucurus*). Removal of the trees would not result in a significant impact.

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

- Environmentally sensitive area fencing would be placed along the project limits of temporary impacts (3 meters [10 feet] outside the cut and fill limits) to minimize encroachment of construction equipment into oak woodland that is outside and adjacent to the project limits.
- Coast live oaks removed would be replaced onsite at a ratio of five trees for every tree removed. Plantings would be monitored for three years. Success criteria would be 75%.

## **2.4.2 Wetlands and Other Waters**

### **Regulatory Setting**

Wetlands and other waters are protected under a number of laws and regulations. In the project area, wetlands fall under two jurisdictions: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and California Coastal Zone. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulates wetlands and other waters of the United States through the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). The Clean Water Act regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into “waters of the United States,” including wetlands. “Waters of the United States” include navigable waters, interstate waters, territorial seas and other waters that may be used in interstate or foreign commerce and tributaries to navigable waters. To classify wetlands for the purposes of the Clean Water Act, a three-parameter approach is used: the presence of hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation, wetland hydrology, and hydric soils (soils subject to saturation and inundation). All three parameters must be present, under normal circumstances, for an area to be designated as a jurisdictional wetland under the Clean Water Act.

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act establishes a regulatory program that provides that no discharge of dredged or fill material can be permitted if a practicable alternative exists that is less damaging to the aquatic environment or if the nation's waters would be significantly degraded. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with oversight by the Environmental Protection Agency, runs the Section 404 permit program.

The executive order for the protection of wetlands (Executive Order 11990) also regulates the activities of federal agencies with regard to wetlands. This executive order states that a federal agency, such as the Federal Highway Administration, cannot undertake or provide assistance for new construction located in wetlands unless the head of the agency finds: 1) that there is no practicable alternative to the construction and 2) the proposed project includes all practicable measures to minimize harm.

At the state level, wetlands and waters are regulated primarily by the California Department of Fish and Game and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards. In certain circumstances, such as with this project, the Coastal Commission may also be involved.

Sections 1600-1607 of the Fish and Game Code require any agency that proposes a project that would substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of or substantially change the bed or bank of a river, stream, or lake to notify the California Department of Fish and Game before beginning construction. If the department determines that the project may substantially and adversely affect fish or wildlife resources, a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement would be required. California Department of Fish and Game jurisdictional limits are usually defined as at the tops of the stream or lake banks, or the outer edge of riparian vegetation, whichever is wider. Wetlands under jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers may or may not be included in the area covered by a Streambed Alteration Agreement obtained from the California Department of Fish and Game and visa versa.

Regional Water Quality Control Boards were established under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act to oversee water quality. The Regional Water Quality Control Boards also issue water quality certifications in compliance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Please see the Water Quality section for more details.

The California Coastal Commission and County of Monterey regulate some of the wetlands through the California Coastal Act. To classify wetlands for the purposes of the California Coastal Act, a single-parameter approach is used that includes the presence of: hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation, wetland hydrology, or hydric soils (soils subject to saturation and inundation). At least one of the three parameters need be present, under normal circumstances, for an area to be designated as a jurisdictional wetland under the California Coastal Act.

### ***Affected Environment***

Two jurisdictional types of wetlands (see Figure 17) occur in the project study area: Coastal Commission wetlands and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wetlands. A study of the project area identified 4.12 hectares (10.19 acres) of Coastal Zone wetlands in manmade drainage ditches, a hillside seep, and on the Pajaro River floodplain. Of those, 0.11 hectare (0.28 acre) of wetlands, which is also under the Army Corps' jurisdiction, was identified in the ditch that parallels Trafton Road. Potential waters of the United States that are not wetlands were found in a swale east of Highway 1, south of Salinas Road.

All wetlands that would be affected are manmade agricultural ditches that are frequently rerouted or cleaned of vegetation to maintain their function of conveying agricultural runoff; they provide little wildlife habitat but meet the definition of Coastal Zone wetlands. The Coastal Zone wetlands in the unvegetated channel next to the fire suppression pond are frequently dredged. This channel and the Coastal Zone wetlands paralleling Highway 1 near Trafton Road are highly erosive and are estimated to contribute more sediment than they retain. The vegetated channels between strawberry fields are dredged or re-shaped continually, losing their filtering qualities following such disturbances until vegetation reestablishes.



Figure 16 Biological Resources



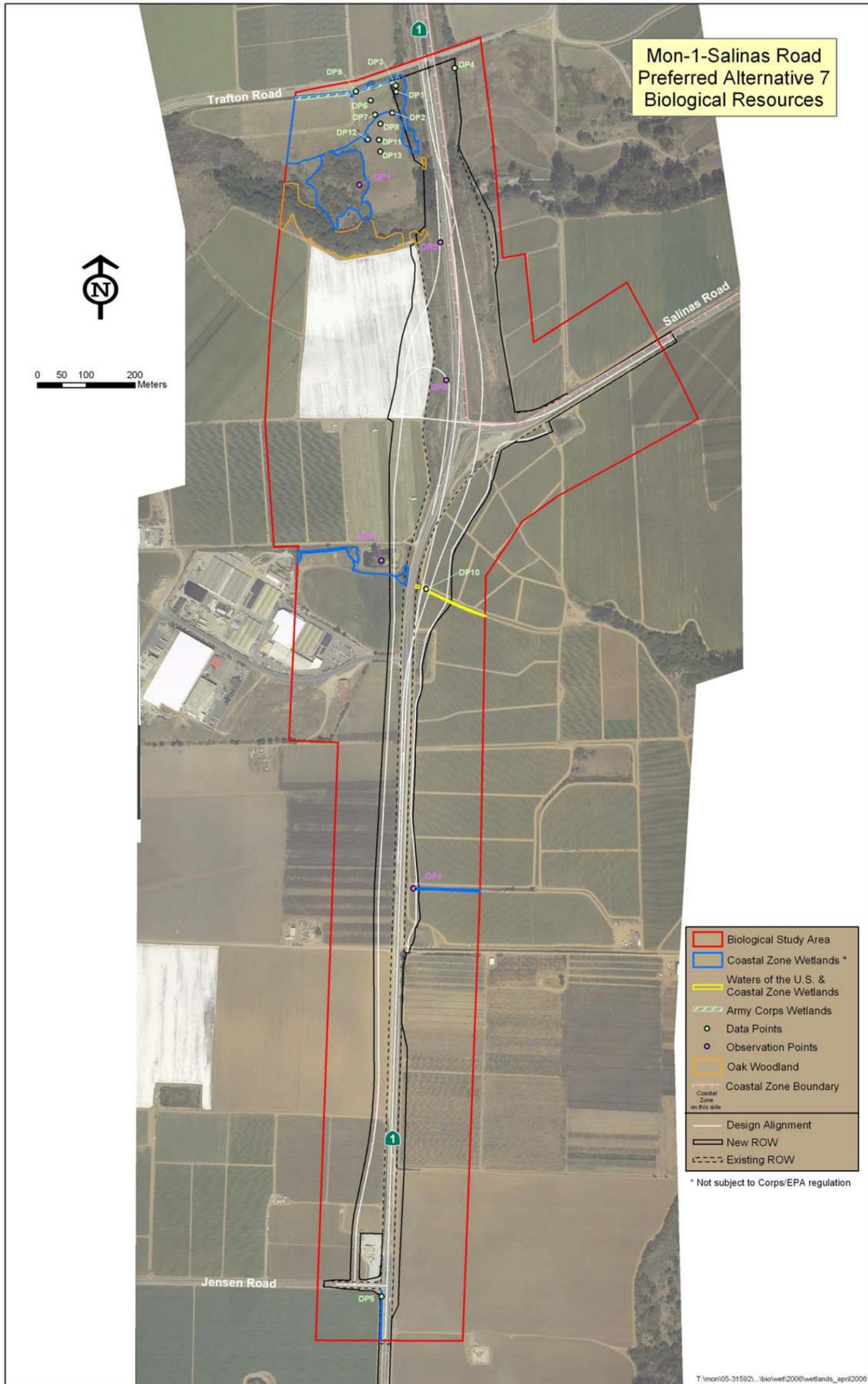


Figure 17 Biological Resources Preferred Alternative 7



**Impacts**

Table 22 summarizes the wetland impacts that would occur with each build alternative.

**Table 22. Impacts to Wetlands and Waters of the United States: Alternatives 1, 5 and 7**

Wetland Type	Type of Impact	Alternative 1	Alternative 5	Alternative 7
Corps Wetlands	Temporary	0	0	0
	Permanent	0	0	0
Other Waters of the U.S.	Temporary	<0.01 hectares (4.0 LM) <0.01 acres (13 LF*)	<0.01 hectares (4.0 LM) <0.01 acres (13 LF*)	<0.01 hectares (4.0 LM) <0.01 acres (13 LF*)
	Permanent	0.02 hectares (55.0 LM) 0.04 acres (180 LF*)	0.02 hectares (55.0 LM) 0.04 acres (180 LF*)	0.02 hectares (55.0 LM) 0.04 acres (180 LF*)
Coastal Zone Wetlands	Temporary	0.02 hectares 0.05 acres	0.03 hectares 0.07 acres	0.01 hectares 0.02 acres
	Permanent	0.01 hectares 0.06 acres	<0.01 hectares 0.01 acres	0.02 hectares 0.05 acres

\*LM = linear meters of roadside ditches; LF= linear feet of roadside ditches

Permanent impacts would result from placing highway fill and culverts in wetlands and other waters of the United States. Temporary impacts would result from equipment access and temporary fill placement.

There would be no impact to wetlands under U.S. Army Corps jurisdiction with any of the build alternatives. All build alternatives would affect the same minimal amount of other waters of the United States. The Coastal Zone wetland impacts would vary with each alternative, and all alternatives have impacts of less than a tenth of an acre.

*The Preferred Alternative*

**Table 23. Impacts to Wetlands Waters of the U.S.: Preferred Alternative**

Wetland Type	Type of Impact	Preferred Alternative 7
U.S. Army Corps Wetlands	Temporary	0
	Permanent	0
Other Waters of the U.S.	Temporary	0.001 hectares (12 m <sup>2</sup> ) 0.003 acres (129 ft <sup>2</sup> )
	Permanent	0.03 hectares (250 m <sup>2</sup> ) 0.06 acres (2691 ft <sup>2</sup> )
Coastal Zone Wetlands	Temporary	0.003hectares (26 m <sup>2</sup> ) 0.007 acres (280ft <sup>2</sup> )
	Permanent	0.08 hectares (804 m <sup>2</sup> ) 0.2 acres (8654 ft <sup>2</sup> )

The project would affect Coastal Zone wetlands and waters of the United States, primarily in the small drainage just south of the intersection. This drainage receives most of its water from agricultural runoff and from the agricultural industrial complex to the west. The drainage is managed as an agricultural drainage ditch. Other, much smaller Coastal Zone wetland impacts would occur in two agricultural drainage ditches closer to Jensen Road. There would be no impact to wetlands under U. S. Army Corps jurisdiction.

Recommended Alternative 7 would permanently affect 0.08 hectare (0.2 acre) of Coastal Zone wetland and 0.03 hectare (0.06 acre) of waters of the United States.

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

- A. To minimize temporary, construction-related impacts, environmentally sensitive area fencing would be established 3 meters (10 feet) beyond the edge of the impact area. No equipment or earthwork would be allowed in these environmentally sensitive areas.
- B. The project would create a minimum of 0.24 hectare (0.60 acre) of wetland. The proposed site would be as close to the project area as possible. Caltrans would buy the site and retain it after establishing Coastal Zone wetlands. The site would be planted with a willow overstory and suitable native understory species. It would be monitored for three years. Success criteria would be 75% cover of native vegetation.
- C. All build alternatives are expected to include at least 1,524 linear meters (5,000 feet), 1 hectare (2.5 acres) of vegetated ditches that receive highway runoff (for transferring and filtering highway water runoff). The ditches would be seeded with grasses and other low-growing vegetation to provide the greatest filtering capacity. Based on species observed growing in wetlands in the project area, the recommended planting or seeding would include creeping wild rye (*Leymus triticoides*), California oatgrass (*Danthonia californica*), tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia caespitosa* ssp. *Caespitosa*), and meadow barley (*Hordeum brachyantherum*). Other shrubs and grasses would invade the site naturally. If restoration occurred outside the vegetated ditches, the planting mix would also include yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), rush (*Juncus patens*) and willows (*Salix lasiolepis* and *S. lasiandra*).

- D. Mitigation for temporary impacts would consist of the restoration of those areas (revegetation at a 1:1 ratio) that were disturbed.

### **2.4.3 Nesting Migratory Birds**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S. C. 703 *et seq.*), Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations part 10, and California Department of Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3513, and 3800, protect migratory birds, their occupied nests, and their eggs.

#### ***Impacts***

There is a slight possibility that migratory birds, under protection of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act would select the small oak trees, identified for removal with this project, for nesting.

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

- A. The project's special provisions direct Caltrans to ensure that any oak trees removed in the nesting period (March 1 to July 31) be surveyed by a qualified biologist before removal to ensure that nesting birds are not present.

### **2.4.4 Threatened and Endangered Species**

#### ***Regulatory Setting***

The primary federal law protecting threatened and endangered species is the Federal Endangered Species Act: United States Code, Section 1531, *et seq.* See also 50 Code of Federal Regulation Part 402. This act and subsequent amendments provide for the conservation of endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

Under Section 7 of this act, federal agencies, such as the Federal Highway Administration, are required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service if the federal agency determines that a project may affect a listed species. Consultation is performed to ensure that they are not undertaking, funding, permitting or authorizing actions likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat. Critical habitat is defined as geographic locations critical to the existence of a threatened or endangered species. The outcome of consultation under Section 7 is a Biological Opinion or an "incidental take" statement. Section 3 of the

Federal Endangered Species Act defines *take* as “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect or any attempt at such conduct.”

California has enacted a similar law at the state level, the California Endangered Species Act, California Fish and Game Code, Section 2050, et seq. The California act emphasizes early consultation to avoid potential impacts to rare, endangered and threatened species and to develop appropriate planning to offset project-caused losses of listed species populations and their essential habitats.

The California Department of Fish and Game is the agency responsible for implementing the California Endangered Species Act. Section 2081 of the Fish and Game Code prohibits “take” of any species determined to be an endangered species or threatened species. *Take* is defined in Section 86 of the Fish and Game Code as “hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture or kill.” The California Endangered Species Act allows for take incidental to otherwise lawful development projects. For these actions, an incidental take permit is issued by California Department of Fish and Game.

For projects requiring a Biological Opinion under Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act, the California Department of Fish and Game may also authorize impacts to California Endangered Species Act species by issuing a Consistency Determination under Section 2080.1 of the Fish and Game Code.

### ***Affected Environment***

Biological surveys conducted for the project found California red-legged frogs (*Rana aurora draytonii*, a federally threatened species) and 0.42 hectare (1.03 acres) of California red-legged frog potential breeding and permanent aquatic habitat. California red-legged frog critical habitat was designated April 14, 2006, and did not include the project area in any critical habitat unit (Federal Register 71:19233-19346). Biological studies found no other threatened or endangered plant or animal species within the project area.

#### ***California Red-legged Frogs***

California red-legged frogs are known to occur in Coast Range watersheds from northern California to Baja California. They typically stay near year-around water sources, but may travel between water bodies, up to 2 miles, through uplands and riparian areas to breed, forage or to escape drying conditions. Breeding requires freshwater pools that hold water through summer and have no predatory fishes.

During biological surveys conducted early in the project development process, a single red-legged frog was found in the project area. Biological surveys done five years earlier for a different highway project had also found California red-legged frog within the current project area.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, several agricultural ponds, a fire suppression pond, upland and dispersal habitat were identified in the project area. Property owners have since filled the agricultural ponds.

The pond remaining in the project area is a fire suppression pond west of Highway 1 and south of Salinas Road (see Figure 17). It is surrounded by strawberry and artichoke fields, which do not provide shelter, forage, or water quality benefits. Due to routine maintenance, the pond and its banks are sparsely vegetated with one Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) and a 0.04-hectare (0.10-acre) patch of tules (*Scirpus sp.*). The cypress and tules can be seen in Figure 18, along the pond bank, behind the red pipe. The tules are potential egg-laying sites for California red-legged frogs. One adult bullfrog (*Rana catesbaeiana*) was observed at this pond. The fire suppression pond is potential breeding and permanent aquatic habitat for California red-legged frogs.



**Figure 18 Fire Suppression Pond with Tule Vegetation**

<sup>29</sup> Personal communication with Tom Edell, Caltrans Associate Biologist.

About a tenth of a hectare (0.11 hectare [0.28 acre]) of potential breeding, foraging and permanent aquatic habitat occurs here in a drainage ditch that runs parallel to Trafton Road. The ditch is within 2.01 kilometers (1.25 miles) of the Pajaro River, which provides permanent water and a potential breeding site (see Figure 18).

### **Impacts**

All build alternatives would reconfigure the fire suppression pond, but the current water volume would have to be maintained at all times during construction.

Therefore, the reconfiguration would not cause permanent loss of aquatic habitat, though there would be a temporary effect to California red-legged frogs, if they are found in the pond during pre-construction surveys.

Alternative 7 would retain the 0.04-hectare (0.10-acre) patch of tules adjacent to the fire suppression pond, while Alternatives 1 and 5 would remove that vegetation. None of the build alternatives would affect the aquatic habitat elements near Trafton Road.

The project would not affect California red-legged frog dispersal. Highway 1 and Salinas Road are existing dispersal barriers, and none of the build alternatives would block or degrade links between aquatic sites.

On May 10, 2006 the United States Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Biological Opinion for the project, in which they concluded that the preferred alternative is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the California red-legged frog when mitigation measures, listed below, are included in the project.

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

- A. No compensatory mitigation is required for Alternative 7. For Alternatives 1 and 5, mitigation for impacts to a patch of tules and other emergent vegetation would be the reestablishment of plants after construction to replace the loss of breeding habitat associated with the tules.
- B. All build alternatives would require Formal Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, under a Programmatic Biological Opinion for Federal Aid Projects that May Affect California Red-legged Frogs (completed for the preferred alternative, May 10, 2006). The following avoidance and minimization measures would be incorporated into all build alternatives:
  - C. With Alternative 7, an environmentally sensitive area would be established to avoid the fire suppression pond's emergent vegetation near the pump unit.

- D. For any build alternative, an environmentally sensitive area would be established to restrict access in the proposed aquatic habitat areas near Trafton Road.
- E. Only U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologists would participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California red-legged frogs.
- F. Ground disturbance would not begin until written approval is received from the Service that the biologist is qualified to conduct the work.
- G. A Service-approved biologist would survey aquatic and riparian areas at the project site 48 hours before the onset of work activities. If any life stage of the California red-legged frog was found and these individuals were likely to be killed or injured by work activities, the approved biologist would be allowed sufficient time to move them from the site before work activities begin. The Service-approved biologist would relocate the California red-legged frogs the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and would not be affected by activities associated with the proposed project. The Service-approved biologist would maintain detailed records of any individuals that were moved (size, coloration, any distinguishing features, photographs [digital preferred]) to assist him or her in determining whether translocated animals are returning to the original point of capture.
- H. Before any activities begin on the project, a Service-approved biologist would conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training would include a description of the California red-legged frog and its habitat, the specific measures that were being implemented to conserve the California red-legged frog for the current project, and the boundaries within which the project would be accomplished. Brochures, books and briefings may be used in the training session, provided that a qualified person is on hand to answer any questions.
- I. A Service-approved biologist would be present at the work site until all California red-legged frogs have been removed, workers were instructed, and disturbance of habitat was completed. After that time, the state or local sponsoring agency would designate a person to monitor on-site compliance with all minimization measures. The Service-approved biologist would ensure that this monitor receives the training outlined in measure 4 and in the

- identification of California red-legged frogs. If the monitor or the Service-approved biologist recommends that work be stopped because California red-legged frogs would be affected to a degree that exceeds the levels anticipated by the Federal Highway Administration and Service during review of the proposed action, they would notify the resident engineer (the engineer that is directly overseeing and in command of construction activities) immediately. The resident engineer would either resolve the situation by eliminating the effect immediately or require that all actions causing these effects be halted. If work were stopped, the Service would be notified as soon as is reasonably possible.
- J. During project activities, all trash that may attract predators would be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, all trash and construction debris would be removed from work areas.
  - K. All refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles would occur at least 18.3 meters (60 feet) from riparian habitat or water bodies and preferably, not in a location from where a spill would drain directly toward aquatic habitat. The monitor would ensure contamination of habitat does not occur during such operations. Prior to the onset of work, the Federal Highway Administration would ensure that a plan is in place for prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. All workers would be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.
  - L. Project sites would be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area. Locally collected plant materials would be used to the extent practicable. Invasive, exotic plants would be controlled to the maximum extent practicable. This measure would be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with the project, unless the Service and Federal Highway Administration determine that it is not feasible or practical. (For example, an area disturbed by construction that would be used for future activities need not be revegetated.)
  - M. Habitat contours would be returned to their original configuration at the end of project activities. This measure would be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with the project, unless the Service and Federal

Highway Administration determine that it is not feasible or modification of original contours would benefit the California red-legged frog.

- N. The number of access routes, size of staging areas, and the total area of the activity would be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project goal. Environmentally sensitive areas would be established to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete construction, and minimize the impact to California red-legged frog habitat; this goal includes locating access routes and construction areas outside of wetlands and riparian areas to the maximum extent practicable.
- O. The Federal Highway Administration would attempt to schedule work activities for times of the year when impacts to the California red-legged frog would be minimal. For example, work that would affect large pools that may support breeding would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the breeding season (November through May). Isolated pools that are important to maintain California red-legged frogs through the driest portions of the year would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the late summer and early fall. Habitat assessments, surveys, and informal consultation between the Federal Highway Administration and Service during project planning would be used to assist in scheduling work activities to avoid sensitive habitats during key times of the year.
- P. To control sedimentation during and after project implementation, the Federal Highway Administration and sponsoring agency would implement best management practices outlined in any authorizations or permits, issued under the authorities of the Clean Water Act, that it receives for the specific project. If best management practices are ineffective, the Federal Highway Administration would attempt to remedy the situation immediately, in consultation with the Service. If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes would be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.5 centimeters (0.2 inch) to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water would be released or pumped downstream at an appropriate rate to maintain downstream flows during construction. The methods and materials used in any dewatering would be determined by the Federal Highway Administration in consultation with the Service on site-specific basis. Upon completion of construction activities, any diversions or barriers to flow would be removed in a manner that would allow flow to

- resume with the least disturbance to the substrate. Alteration of the stream bed would be minimized to the maximum extent possible; any imported material would be removed from the stream bed upon completion of the project.
- Q. Unless approved by the Service, water would not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.
- R. A Service-approved biologist would permanently remove any individuals of exotic species, such as bullfrogs (*Rana catesbeiana*), crayfish, and centrarchid fishes from the project area, to the maximum extent possible. The Service-approved biologist would be responsible for ensuring his or her activities are in compliance with the California Fish and Game Code.
- S. To ensure that diseases are not conveyed between work sites by the Service-approved biologist, the fieldwork code of practice developed by the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force would be followed at all times.
- T. If California red-legged frog tadpoles are found in the fire pond, the portion of the pond that would be retained would be isolated from the portion that would be filled by placement of material that would maintain water clarity in the retained portion of the pond. Tadpoles would be relocated to the portion of the pond that would be retained until the new pond is constructed and water clarity has been established. Ultimately, tadpoles would be introduced to the new pond.
- U. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist would survey the project site before construction resumes each day during rainy weather and, if construction is conducted at night between November 1 and April 1, before construction begins each night.

## **2.4.5 Invasive Species**

### ***Regulatory Setting***

Executive Order 13112 requires federal agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. The order defines invasive species as “any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.”

Federal Highway Administration guidance issued August 10, 1999 directs the use of

the state's noxious weed list to define the invasive plants that must be considered as part of the National Environmental Policy Act analysis for a proposed project.

### **Affected Environment**

French broom (*Genista monspessulana*), included on the California Department of Food and Agriculture January 2000 Noxious Weed List, was found in the project area during biological surveys. The invasive species pampas grass (*Cortaderia sp.*) and ice plant (*Carpobrotus sp.*) were also found in the project area.

### **Impacts**

Spreading of these species from the project site is not a concern because the project would not export material. All material would be retained within the project limits.

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

To prevent new invasive species from being imported to the site, Caltrans would recommend that the contractor implement the following control measures:

- A. Only certified noxious weed-free erosion control materials would be used. All straw and seed material shall be certified weed-free by the County Agricultural Commissioner before being used at the project site. The California Department of Food and Agriculture maintains a current listing of noxious weeds.
- B. Imported fill material shall be weed-free.
- C. The invasive species jubata grass and French broom within the work area would be targeted for removal before earthwork activities.
- D. After construction, the contractor will implement a minimum 1-year plant establishment and weed control period in all areas treated with erosion control seed mixes.
- E. In highway planting areas (where trees and shrubs are planted), a minimum 3-year plant establishment and weed control period would apply.

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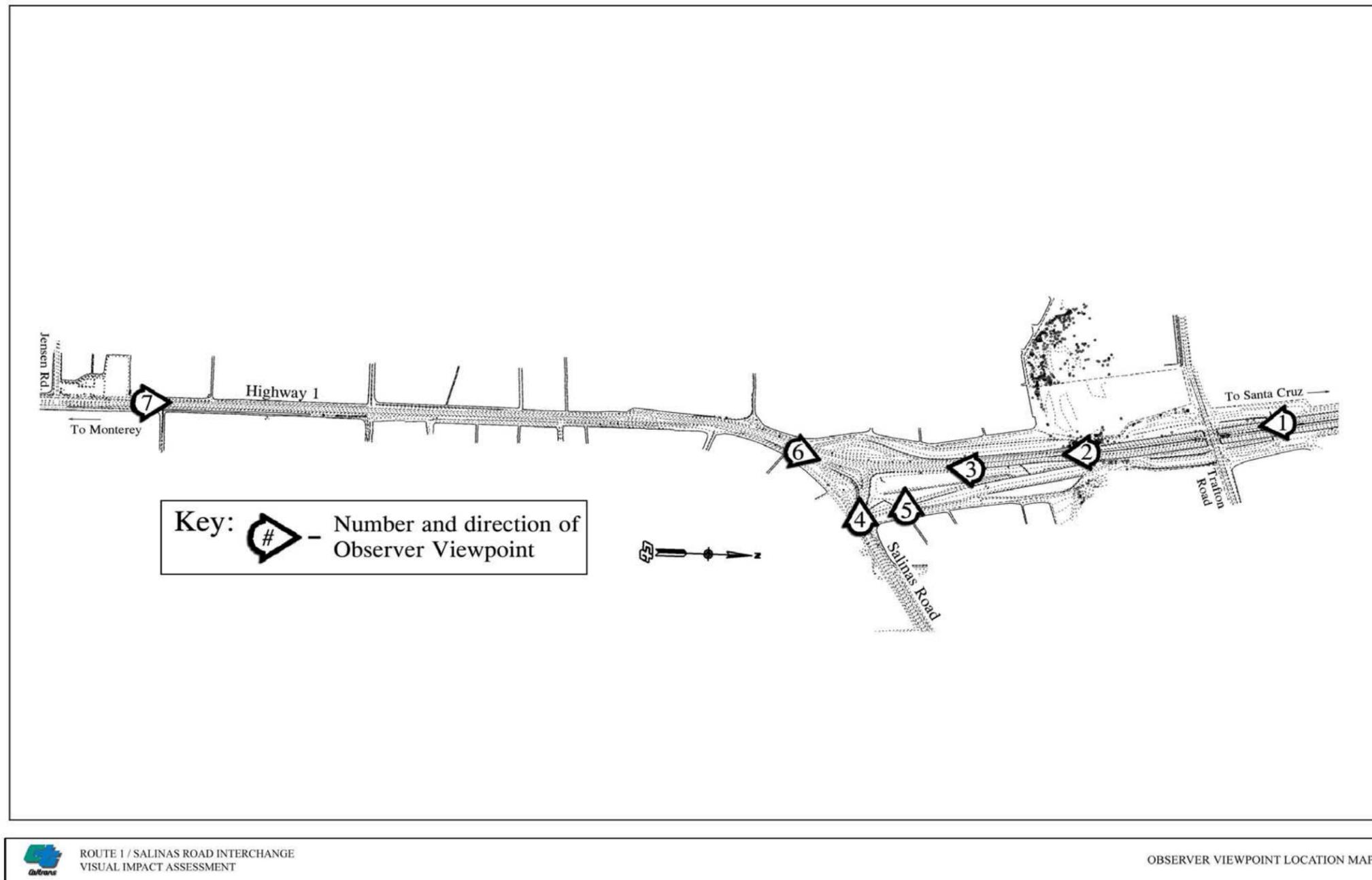


Figure 1

Figure 19 Visual Simulations





Figure 2





 ROUTE 1 / SALINAS ROAD INTERCHANGE  
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The landscaping shown in these images is generic and does not represent a proposed planting plan. Landscaping and project aesthetics will be developed with community involvement.

OBSERVER VIEWPOINT 2  
From Route 1  
500 meters north of Salinas Rd. looking south

Figure 3





 ROUTE 1 / SALINAS ROAD INTERCHANGE  
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The landscaping shown in these images is generic and does not represent a proposed planting plan. Landscaping and project aesthetics will be developed with community involvement.

OBSERVER VIEWPOINT 3  
From Route 1  
200 meters north of Salinas Rd. looking south

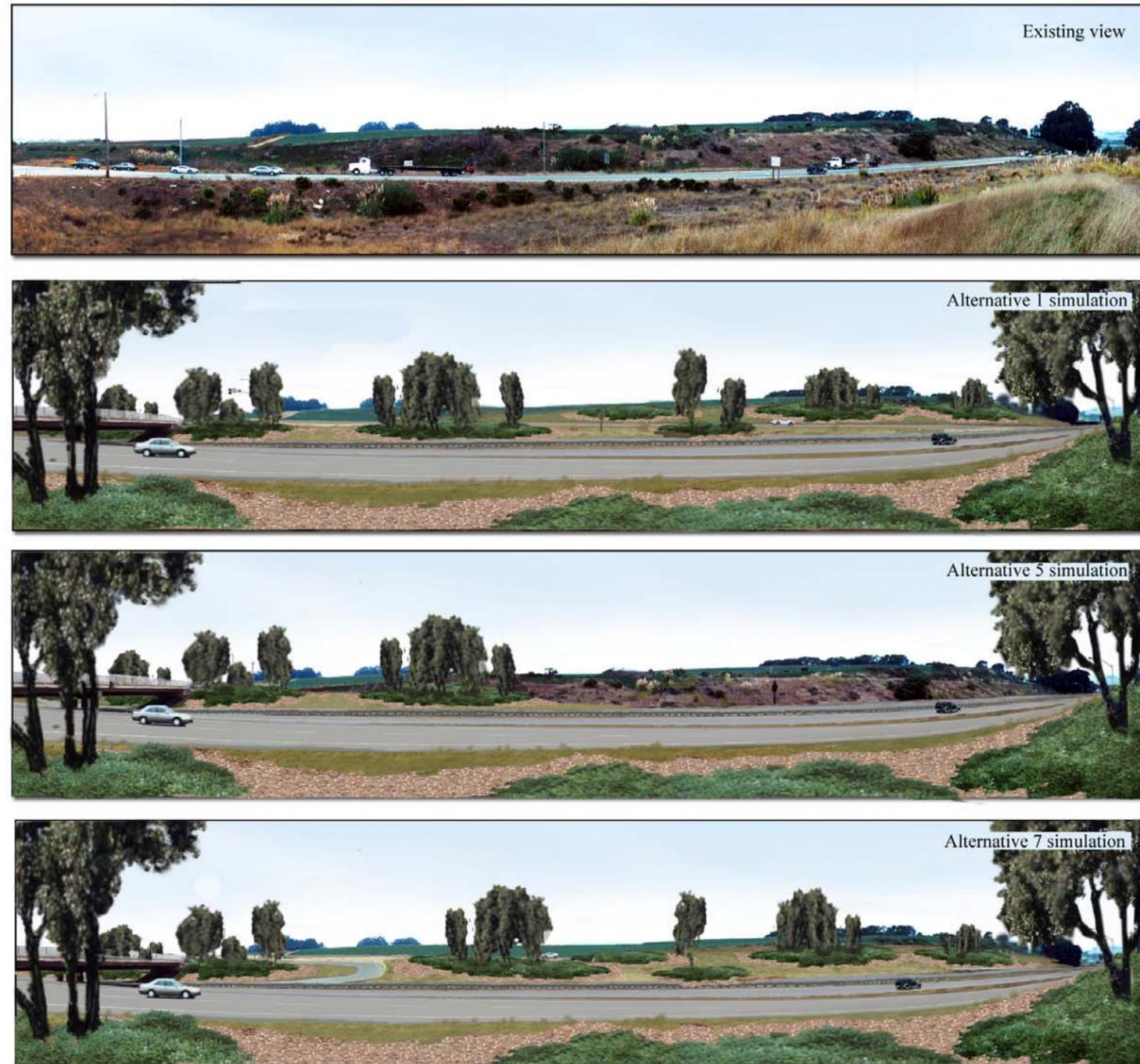
Figure 4





Figure 5





 ROUTE 1 / SALINAS ROAD INTERCHANGE  
VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The landscaping shown in these images is generic and does not represent a proposed planting plan. Landscaping and project aesthetics will be developed with community involvement.

OBSERVER VIEWPOINT 5  
From the proposed northbound on-ramp  
to Highway 1 looking west

Figure 6



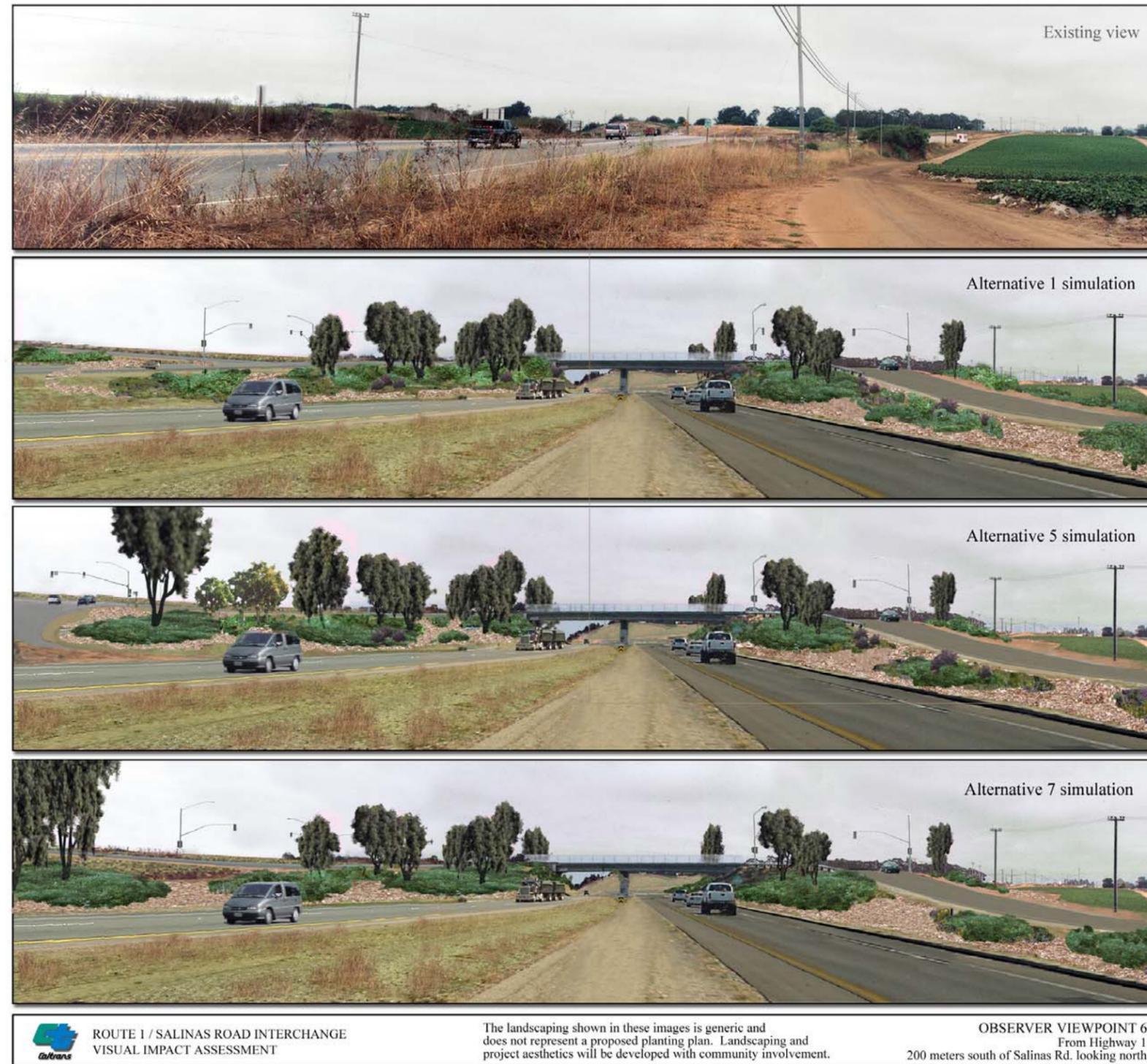


Figure 7





Figure 8



# Chapter 3      Comments and Coordination

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Early and continuing coordination with the general public and appropriate public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process to determine the scope of environmental documentation, the level of analysis, potential impacts and mitigation measures and related environmental requirements. Agency consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including project development team meetings, Citizen Advisory Group meetings and interagency coordination meetings. This section summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to identify, address and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

## **3.1      Project Development Team Meetings**

The project development team is composed of key members of the Caltrans staff and external stakeholders. The team acts as a steering committee and decision-making body in directing the course of studies required for developing and evaluating project alternatives. The team met every four to six months to review and provide direction on project progress.

External members of the Salinas Road Interchange Project Development Team included representatives from the following agencies and organizations:

- Transportation Agency of Monterey County
- Monterey County
  - Department of Public Works
  - Department of Planning and Building Inspection
  - District Supervisor's Office
- U.S. Representative Sam Farr
- Moss Landing Harbor District
- Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
- California Highway Patrol
- California Coastal Commission
- Monterey-Salinas Transit
- Monterey County Agricultural Lands Conservancy
- Salinas Road Interchange Citizens Advisory Group
- North County Fire Protection District

## **3.2 Salinas Road Interchange Citizens Advisory Group**

A citizens advisory group was formed in October 2001 to assist Caltrans in the early project planning stages and to advise the project development team on the project purpose and need, community values, the range of alternatives, potential environmental impacts and avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures.

This group was made up of 12 representatives from residential, business, agricultural and environmental interests. The group developed a charter and chose two members to serve as co-chairs and representatives on the project development team. The group also identified alternates to serve in a member's absence. The group met every two to four months for three and a half years. The group met to:

- identify and become informed on important project issues
- gather information from and disseminate information to the community
- develop a common understanding of the project's purpose statement
- share perspectives and requirements unique to each community
- discuss alternative solutions
- provide comment on suggested proposals
- discuss avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures for environmental impacts

Community, agency and interest group representatives also participated in the group's discussions.

In the community, there is strong support for the project. Community members use the existing intersection most frequently and are substantially affected by the safety concerns, delay and congestion. Most concerns raised by the group involved issues related to farmlands, traffic and scenic resources impacts.

## **3.3 Interagency Coordination**

### ***Monterey County***

#### ***Monterey County Agricultural Commission***

On November 7, 2002, a Williamson Act parcel list was requested for the project area from the Monterey County Agricultural Commission; the list was received on November 11, 2002. On November 14, 2002, Caltrans staff met with the Assistant

Agricultural Commissioner to discuss Williamson Act contracts, impacts to agricultural lands, and potential mitigation approaches.

On October 25, 2005, the following individuals met to identify mitigation measures for impacts to farmland that would result from the preferred alternative:

- Monterey County Dept of Planning and Building: Carl Holm, Coastal Planner
- Monterey County Agricultural Commission: Bob Roach, Director
- Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Conservancy: Sherwood Darington, President
- Monterey County Supervisor's Office: Lou Calcagno, Supervisor and Tisha Hutchins, Assistant
- City of Watsonville: David Koch, City Public Works Director
- Coastal Commission: Lee Otter, Planner
- Local Land Owner: Elio Rodoni, Sunset Farms, Inc.
- Caltrans: Wendy Waldron and John Luchetta, Environmental Planners

**Create or Restore Agricultural Lands:** Mitigation measures were identified and prioritized by effectiveness. The most effective mitigation measure would be to create or restore degraded parcels to coastal irrigated agricultural use. This could be accomplished by transferring the top 18 inches of topsoil from Coastal Agricultural Preservation lands that would be affected by the project onto degraded Coastal Agricultural Preservation lands or onto lands not currently zoned for irrigated agricultural use. Created and restored parcels would be required to remain in agricultural use in perpetuity. An organization such as the Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Conservancy would monitor the success of the mitigation over a three- to five-year period. The participants noted that this method has been used successfully in the past and that it provides the additional value of enhancing rural visual qualities. Using this method, the mitigation ratio could be 1:1 or less, depending on the other associated enhancements. The Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Conservancy identified parcels for consideration in creating coastal agricultural lands.

**Buy Development Rights and Enter into Conservation Easements:** The group indicated the purchase of development rights and establishment of conservation easements was the second priority approach for mitigating impacts to farmland. Development rights are calculated by comparing the value of the land when used for agriculture and its value when used for development. The difference is the value of the development right. Currently, there are nearby communities that need to establish conservation easements. Mitigation ratios for this project would be 3:1.

*Monterey County Office of Planning and Building*

On October 5, 2004, Caltrans discussed wetlands mapping with county staff. On April 13, 2005, Caltrans met with county staff at the project location to discuss the build alternatives and visual, biological and farmlands impacts and mitigation.

On November 2, 2005, Carl Holm, Monterey County Office of Planning and Building Planner and Lee Otter, Coastal Commission Planner, met with Caltrans to discuss amendments to the Local Coastal Program that may be required for the project. These are documented in Appendix I and Appendix J.

*Monterey County Assessor's and Recorder's Office*

Research on the history of the project area was conducted at these offices by Caltrans cultural resources staff.

**California Coastal Commission**

On May 19 and October 5, 2004, Caltrans staff discussed wetlands definitions, impacts and potential mitigation measures. Lee Otter of the Coastal Commission attended most citizens advisory group and project development team meetings.

Caltrans staff biologist (Dave Hacker) and Coastal Commission staff (John Dixon and Lee Otter) visited the project site on November 21, 2005 to review and revise the wetland delineation.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

A species list for the project area was requested from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on March 8, 2002; the list was received on May 6, 2002. On July 15, 2004 and October 27, 2004, Caltrans contacted the Service to discuss impacts and mitigation for California red-legged frog critical habitat. On May 10, 2006 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided a Biological Opinion for the project, which concluded that the preferred project alternative is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the California red-legged frog.

### ***Natural Resources Conservation Service***

On November 14, 2002, Caltrans staff discussed the approach used by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to assess farmland impacts. On April 6, 2004, a request was made to the Natural Resources Conservation Service to complete a farmland conservation impact rating sheet for the project; the completed rating sheet was received on April 10, 2004.

### ***Historical Societies***

Letters were sent and research was conducted at the Pajaro Valley Historical Association, the Monterey County Historical Society, the Castroville Historical Society and the Moffett Field Historical Society requesting information on the history of the project area.

### ***Native American Groups***

Letters describing the project were sent to the following Ohlone representatives on March 14, 2003: Charlie Higuera, Juanita Ingalls, Jakki Kehl, Ed Ketchum, Quirina Luna, Marion Martinex, Paul Mondragon, Pat Orozco, Ella Mae Rodriguez, Rudy Rosales, Anne-Marie Sayers, Linda Yamane and Irene Zweirlein.

### ***Native American Heritage Commission***

A letter describing the project was sent to the Native American Heritage Commission on March 14, 2003.

### ***Monterey-Salinas Transit***

On January 20, 2005, Caltrans contacted Monterey-Salinas Transit to discuss relocation of bus stops.

### ***Pajaro Valley Unified School District***

On January 20, 2005, Caltrans contacted the Pajaro Valley Unified School District to discuss relocation of bus stops.

## **3.4 Public Meetings**

A public hearing was held to meet California Environmental Quality Act and National Environmental Policy Act requirements as part of the circulation of the draft Salinas Road Interchange Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/ Environmental Assessment, which was circulating for comment. The Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/ Environmental Assessment was made available

to the public starting July 14, 2005. Comments were due to Caltrans by August 12, 2005.

### **Notice of the Public Hearing**

The public notice announcing availability of the environmental document and advertising the hearing ran on July 14, 2005, in the *Monterey Herald*, *The Californian* and *Register-Pajaronian*, and on July 16, 2005, in the Spanish language newspaper, *El Sol*. In addition, the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* published an article on the project and hearing on July 20, 2005.

The Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/ Environmental Assessment was available for review during the public comment period at the Monterey County and Santa Cruz County clerk offices, and the following libraries:

- Watsonville County Library, 310 Union St., Watsonville, CA
- Seaside Branch, 550 Harcourt Ave., Seaside, CA
- Castroville Library, 11266 Merritt St., Castroville, CA

It was also available online at the Caltrans web site:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist05/projects/#mon>

The Initial Study with Proposed Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment was sent to 31 entities, including federal, state and local agencies, interest groups and individuals. A notice of the availability of the document and the public hearing was also sent to 40 additional federal, state and local agencies, interest groups and individuals. The Transportation Agency of Monterey County sent notices to an additional dozen local partner agencies as well. Members of the citizens advisory group informed their communities of the public hearing.

The Caltrans Public Affairs office sent press releases announcing the public hearing to all local and regional media outlets (including multi-cultural) as well as state, county and local agencies, including the California Highway Patrol, emergency services (police, fire and ambulance), regional transportation planning agencies, and the metropolitan planning organization.

### **The Public Hearing**

The public hearing was held from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on July 28, 2005 at the Ohlone School Auditorium at 21 Bay Farms Road in Watsonville, California. The purpose of the hearing was to provide information and solicit comment on the proposed interchange project before the final design was selected.

Sixty-six people signed in at the public hearing. Informational display boards with maps, cross-sections and graphics were set up around the room. Project team members were available to explain the displays, answer questions and receive public input. Staff attended from the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and the California Department of Transportation.

The meeting began with a two-and-a-half hour open house review of project maps, alternatives and poster displays. At 6:30 p.m., the open house session was temporarily suspended while a presentation and question/answer session was held. The presentation concluded at 7:30 p.m., and the meeting format changed back to the open house for the remainder of the evening, ending at 8:00 p.m.

Staff encouraged attendees to fill out comment cards (available at the meeting) or submit them by mail or e-mail to Caltrans. A court reporter was also on hand to record dictated comments at the hearing. Caltrans provided Spanish language translation.

The following media outlets covered the hearing: KION, Channel 46 (CBS), Univision, Channel 67 and the *Register-Pajaronian*.

### **Response**

At the close of the comment period, Caltrans had received 52 written comments from individuals, and federal, state and local agencies. See Appendix H, which contains the comments received.

The majority expressed strong support for the project. Of those noting a preference for a design alternative, 10 identified Alternative 7, three identified Alternative 1, and one identified Alternative 5. Some people noted they would like to see interim improvements at the Salinas Road intersection, as the project would not be completed for some time.

Staff from Monterey County Planning and the Coastal Commission indicated there might be a need to amend the Local Coastal Plan to allow for a zoning change of agricultural lands to public/quasi public lands.

## Chapter 4 List of Preparers

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The following Caltrans Central Region staff prepared this document:

Bob Carr, Landscape Associate. B.S., Landscape Architecture; 15 years experience in visual impact analysis and landscape architecture. Contribution: Visual Impact Analysis.

Paula Juelke Carr, Associate Environmental Planner in Architectural History. M.A., an interdisciplinary history program from the University of California, Santa Barbara; 20 years experience researching California history. Contribution: Historical Resources Evaluation Report and Historic Properties Survey Report.

Eric Covington, Transportation Engineer. B.S., Environmental Engineering; 6 years experience in environmental engineering studies. Contribution: Initial Site Assessment for Hazardous Materials.

Rajeev L. Dwivedi, Engineering Geologist. M.S., Geology; M.S., Civil Engineering; Ph.D., Environmental Sciences; 17 years experience in conducting water quality research and analysis. Contribution: Water Quality Report.

Tom Garibay, Transportation Engineer. B.S., Civil Engineering; 42 years experience in civil engineering. Contribution: Design Engineer.

David Hacker, Associate Environmental Planner/Natural Sciences. B.S., Natural Resource Management; 7 years experience in biotic resource inventories and impact assessment. Contribution: Natural Environment Study.

Allison Kirk, Transportation Planner. M.A., Urban Planning; 3 years experience in travel demand forecasting for project level analysis. Contribution: Travel Demand Forecast.

John Luchetta, Senior Environmental Planner. B.S., Natural Resources Management; 16 years experience in environmental analysis and document preparation. Contribution: Supervision and review of Initial Study/Environmental Assessment and various technical studies.

Ruth A. McCuen, Graphic Designer III. Fine Art/Design major; 35 years experience in graphics arts and design. Contribution: Created graphic illustrations and mapping.

David Ewing, Graphic Designer III. B.A. Graphic Design; 12 years experience in graphic arts and design. Contribution: Created graphic illustrations and mapping.

Wayne W. Mills, Transportation Engineer. B.A., Earth Science; B.A., Social Sciences; 21 years experience in air quality and noise studies; 8 years experience in paleontology studies. Contribution: Air Quality, Noise and Paleontology Study.

Robert M. Navarro, Senior Transportation Engineer. B.S., Civil Engineering, Professional Engineer (P.E.); 18 years experience in transportation engineering. Contribution: Senior Design Engineer.

Richard Rosales, Senior Transportation Engineer. B.S., Civil Engineering; 19 years experience in transportation engineering and project management. Contribution: Project Manager.

Ed Schefter, Senior Transportation Surveyor, GIS/GPS Specialist; 20 years experience surveying, impact analysis and mapping. Contribution: Impact analysis and mapping.

Wendy Waldron, Associate Environmental Planner. B.A., Anthropology; 12 years experience in environmental analysis and documentation; 20 years experience in California archaeology. Contribution: Initial Study/Environmental Assessment preparation and analysis.

Michael P. Wallace, Graduate Student Assistant. B.S., Civil Engineering; M.S., Civil and Environmental Engineering; 2 years experience in travel demand forecasting for project level analysis. Contribution: Travel Demand Forecast.

Thomas Wheeler, Associate Environmental Planner in Archaeology. M.A., Anthropology; 40 years experience in California archaeology. Contribution: Archaeological Survey Report.

Bing Y. Yu, Transportation Engineer. B.S., Civil Engineering; 3 years experience in traffic analysis and micro simulation. Contribution: Traffic Operations Analysis.

## **APPENDIX A CEQA Checklist**

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The following checklist identifies physical, biological, social, and economic factors that might be affected by the proposed project. The California Environmental Quality Act impact levels include “potentially significant impact,” “less than significant impact with mitigation,” “less than significant impact,” and “no impact.”

The California Environmental Quality Act requires that environmental documents determine significant or potentially significant impacts. In many cases, background studies performed in connection with the project indicate no impacts. A mark in the “no impact” column of the checklist reflects this determination. Any needed explanation of that determination is provided at the beginning of Chapter 2.



Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
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**AESTHETICS** - Would the project:

- |   |                          |                                     |                                     |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 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 building within a state scenic highway? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input 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"/>            |

**AGRICULTURE RESOURCES** - In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:

- |  |                          |                          |                                     |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**AIR QUALITY** - 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:

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 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"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
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b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

c) 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 (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentration?

e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

**BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES - Would the project:**

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

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

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

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

Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
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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"/>
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**COMMUNITY RESOURCES** - Would the project:

a) Cause disruption of orderly planned development?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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b) Be inconsistent with a Coastal Zone Management Plan?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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c) Affect lifestyles or neighborhood character or stability?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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d) Physically divide an established community?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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e) Affect minority, low-income, elderly, disabled, transit-dependent, or other specific interest group?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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f) Affect employment, industry, or commerce, or require the displacement of businesses or farms?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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g) Affect property values or the local tax base?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

h) Affect any community facilities (including medical, educational, scientific, or religious institutions, ceremonial sites or sacred shrines)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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i) Result in alterations to waterborne, rail, or air traffic?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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j) Support large commercial or residential development?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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k) Affect wild or scenic rivers or natural landmarks?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

l) Result in substantial impacts associated with construction activities (e.g., noise, dust, temporary drainage, traffic detours, and temporary access, etc.)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------

**CULTURAL RESOURCES** - Would the project:

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"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
--------------------------------	--	------------------------------	-----------

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

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

d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

**GEOLOGY AND SOILS - Would the project:**

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

iv) Landslides?

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

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

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

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

Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
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**HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS -**  
Would the project:

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 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 type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous material, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, 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"/> |
| g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -** Would the project:

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                                     |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
--------------------------------	--	------------------------------	-----------

b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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e) 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?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

**LAND USE AND PLANNING - Would the project:**

a) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
--------------------------------	--	------------------------------	-----------

b) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**MINERAL RESOURCES** - Would the project:

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

<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"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

**NOISE** - Would the project:

a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

<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 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"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, 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"/>
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Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
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**POPULATION AND HOUSING -** Would the project:

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**PUBLIC SERVICES -**

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Police protection?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Schools?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Parks?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Other public facilities?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**RECREATION -**

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

<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"/>
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Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
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**TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC - Would the project:**

a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patters, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incomplete uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**UTILITY AND SERVICE SYSTEMS - Would the project:**

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Potentially significant impact	Less than significant impact with mitigation	Less than significant impact	No impact
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e) Result in determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE -**

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, or cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>
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# APPENDIX B Title VI Policy Statement

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
1120 N STREET  
P. O. BOX 942873  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001  
PHONE (916) 654-5266  
FAX (916) 654-6608  
TTY (916) 653-4086



*Flex your power!  
Be energy efficient!*

January 14, 2005

## TITLE VI POLICY STATEMENT

The California Department of Transportation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes, ensures that no person in the State of California shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity it administers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will Kempton".

WILL KEMPTON  
Director

*"Caltrans improves mobility across California"*



## APPENDIX C Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary

Section Number Reference	Mitigation Reference Number	Mitigation Commitments
2.2.3 Farmlands	A	Minimizing the widening of Highway 1 the minimum length necessary to improve safety. Additional lanes would be extended only between Salinas Road and the existing four-lane highway, just south of the Trafton Road undercrossing.
	B	Minimizing the area needed for frontage roads. Frontage roads have been designed as close as possible to the ultimate highway alignment and slopes have been made steeper (revised from 4:1 to 2:1) to minimize impacts to farmland.
	C	Alternative 7 includes a design exception to allow the western frontage road to intersect Salinas Road, at an intersection with traffic signals at the southbound off-ramp.
	D	During the project development phases subsequent to approval of the final environmental document, Caltrans would continue to incorporate design features that further minimize impacts to farmland.
	E	To minimize temporary construction-related impacts, environmentally sensitive area fencing would be established 3 meters (10 feet) beyond the edge of the permanent impact area. No equipment or earthwork would be allowed in these environmentally sensitive areas.
	F	During construction, provisions for adequate access would ensure that agricultural operations are not impaired and that the roadside produce stand, important to the surrounding farm operations, remains viable.
	G	In the event that an excess parcel of farmland results from construction, adequate access to water for irrigation of crops would be established and a permanent easement would be attached to ensure agricultural land use of the parcel in perpetuity.
	H	Mitigation for temporary impacts to farmlands would consist of the restoration of those areas that were disturbed. Caltrans would direct the construction contractor to stockpile topsoil from areas of coastal agricultural preservation lands for eventual replacement on parcels subject to temporary impacts.
	I	Pursuant to the Farmland Protection Policy Act, no mitigation would be required because conversion of farmland by the build alternatives was rated as minor.
	J	Neither Monterey County's North County Land Use Plan, which includes the Local Coastal Program, nor its Implementation Plan establishes mitigation guidelines for impacts to agricultural lands. However, during informal consultation, California Coastal Commission and Monterey County staff indicated that mitigation for farmland impacts would be a condition of the local coastal permit for the project.
	K	On October 2, 2005, Caltrans met with members of the agricultural community to identify mitigation measures for impacts to farmland that would result from the preferred alternative. Refer to Section 3.3 for details. Caltrans will mitigate impacts to farmland by creating or restoring degraded farmland to irrigated coastal agricultural preservation land use at a ration of 1:1.
	L	The contractor will be directed to stockpile the top 18 inches of soil from agricultural preservation lands and use the amount, in excess of that needed to offset temporary impacts, to create or restore degraded parcels within the coastal zone.
	M	Caltrans would enter into an agreement with the Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Conservancy to monitor and report o success of the agricultural land creation/restoration for a three-year period.

Section Number Reference	Mitigation Reference Number	Mitigation Commitments
2.2.5 Traffic and Transportation	A	<p>A Traffic Management Plan would be developed to accommodate local traffic patterns and reduce delays, congestion and collisions. The plan would be coordinated with Commute Alternatives in Monterey County and Commute Solutions in Santa Cruz County and include the following elements:</p> <p>Public awareness through brochures, mailers, media releases and information centers.</p> <p>Motorist awareness through road signs, including changeable message signs.</p> <p>Incident management through the Construction Zone Enhanced Enforcement Program and traffic surveillance stations.</p>
2.2.6 Visual	A	Landscaping would be included as par to f the project.
2.2.6 Visual	B	The community would be invloved in the design of the bridge structure aesthetics and the landscaping plan through the creation of an Aesthetic Design Advisory Committee.
2.2.6 Visual	C	All slopes within the project limits would include contour grading and slope rounding. Unnatural-appearing landform remnants would be removed or re-graded.
2.2.6 Visual	D	All project fencing (except on the bridge structure) would be wood or metal T-post and wire.
2.2.6 Visual	E	All lighting would be the minimum height and illumination allowed by applicable safety standards.
2.2.6 Visual	F	All lighting on the bridge structure would be hooded or include cut-off shields to reduce visibility of the light source from off-site locations.
2.2.6 Visual	G	All metal beam guardrail beams and posts would be darkened by acid-etching.
2.2.6 Visual	H	Native shrubs or tall grasses would be planted between the Highway 1 mainline and the county frontage road to the west. Shrubs would be 0.9 to 1.2 meters (3 to 4 feet) tall at maturity and planted to appear as naturally occurring vegetation.
2.2.6 Visual	I	Existing trees would be protected with use of slope-warping and timber tree wells.
2.2.6 Visual	J	All trees removed would replaced on site at a ratio of five trees for every tree removed.
2.3.1 Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff	A	Existing vegetation has been preserved to the maximum extent practicable. All vegetated areas that are to b protected during construction will be delineated on the project plans and included in the resident engineer's file and in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.
2.3.1 Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff	B	All disturbed soil areas will be replanted as soon as work in a specific area is completed.
2.3.1 Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff	C	All storm drain inlets that would receive runoff form disturbed areas during construction will have inlet protection installed.
2.3.1 Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff	D	Location of excess material stockpiles should be identified in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. The stockpiles will be put where they are protected from run-off and are located away from concentrated flows of storm water, drainage courses and inlets.

Section Number Reference	Mitigation Reference Number	Mitigation Commitments
	E	All build alternatives would include at least 1,524 linear meters (5000 feet), 1 hectare (2.5 acres) of vegetated ditches that receive highway runoff (for transferring and filtering highway water runoff). The ditches would be seeded with grasses and other low-growing vegetation to provide the greatest filtering capacity. Based on species observed growing in wetlands in the project area, the recommended planting or seeding would include creeping wild rye ( <i>Leymus triticoides</i> ), California oatgrass ( <i>Danthonia californica</i> ), tufted hairgrass ( <i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i> ssp. <i>Caespitosa</i> ), and meadow barley ( <i>Hordeum brachyantherum</i> ). Other shrubs and grasses would invade the site naturally. If restoration occurred outside the vegetated ditches, the planting mix would also include yarrow ( <i>Achillea millefolium</i> ), California blackberry ( <i>Rubus ursinus</i> ), rush ( <i>Juncus patens</i> ) and willows ( <i>Salix lasiolepis</i> and <i>S. lasiandra</i> ).
2.4.1 Natural Communities	A	Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing would be placed along the limits of temporary impacts, 3 meters (10 feet) beyond the cut and fill limits, to minimize encroachment of construction equipment in to oak woodland that is adjacent to the project limits.
	B	Coast live oaks removed would be replaced on site at a ratio of five trees for every tree removed. Plantings would be monitored for three years. Success criteria would be 75%.
2.4.2 Wetlands and Other Waters	A	To minimize temporary, construction-related impacts, environmentally sensitive area fencing would be placed 3 meters (10 feet) beyond the edge of impact. No equipment of earthwork would be allowed in these areas.
	B	The project would create a minimum of 0.60 acre of wetland as close as possible to the project. Caltrans would buy the site and retain it after establishing Coastal Zone wetlands. The site would be planted with a willow overstory and suitable native understory species. It would be monitored for three years. Success criteria would be 75% cover of native vegetation.
	C	All build alternatives are expected to include at least 1,524 linear meters (5000 feet), 1 hectare (2.5 acres) of vegetated ditches that receive highway runoff (for transferring and filtering highway water runoff). The ditches would be seeded with grasses and other low-growing vegetation to provide the greatest filtering capacity. Based on species observed growing in wetlands in the project area, the recommended planting or seeding would include creeping wild rye ( <i>Leymus triticoides</i> ), California oatgrass ( <i>Danthonia californica</i> ), tufted hairgrass ( <i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i> ssp. <i>Caespitosa</i> ), and meadow barley ( <i>Hordeum brachyantherum</i> ). Other shrubs and grasses would invade the site naturally. If restoration occurred outside the vegetated ditches, the planting mix would also include yarrow ( <i>Achillea millefolium</i> ), California blackberry ( <i>Rubus ursinus</i> ), rush ( <i>Juncus patens</i> ) and willows ( <i>Salix lasiolepis</i> and <i>S. lasiandra</i> ).
	D	Mitigation for temporary impacts would consist of the restoration of those areas (revegetation at a 1:1 ratio) that were disturbed.
2.4.3 Nesting Migratory Birds	A	The project's special provisions direct Caltrans to ensure that any oak trees removed in the nesting period (March 1 to July 31) are surveyed by a qualified biologist prior to removal to ensure that nesting birds are not present.
2.4.4 Threatened and Endangered Species	A	0.04 hectare (0.10 acre) of emergent vegetation, which serves as California red-legged frog habitat, would be replaced.
	B	Water would be retained in the fire suppression pond during reconfiguration.
	C	With Alternative 7, an Environmentally Sensitive Area would be established to avoid the fire suppression pond's emergent vegetation near the pump unit.

Section Number Reference	Mitigation Reference Number	Mitigation Commitments
	D	For any build alternative, an Environmentally Sensitive Area would be established to restrict access in the proposed aquatic habitat areas near Trafton Road.
	E	Only Service-approved biologists would participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California red-legged frogs.
	F	Ground disturbance would not begin until written approval is received from the Service that the biologist is qualified to conduct the work.
	G	A Service-approved biologist would survey aquatic and riparian areas at the project site 48 hours before the onset of work activities. If any life stage of the California red-legged frog was found and these individuals were likely to be killed or injured by work activities, the approved biologist would be allowed sufficient time to move them from the site before work activities begin. The Service-approved biologist would relocate the California red-legged frogs the shortest distance possible to a location that contains suitable habitat and would not be affected by activities associated with the proposed project. The Service-approved biologist would maintain detailed records of any individuals that were moved (size, coloration, any distinguishing features, photographs [digital preferred]) to assist him or her in determining whether translocated animals are returning to the original point of capture.
	H	Before any activities begin on the project, a Service-approved biologist would conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training would include a description of the California red-legged frog and its habitat, the specific measures that were being implemented to conserve the California red-legged frog for the current project, and the boundaries within which the project would be accomplished. Brochures, books and briefings may be used in the training session, provided that a qualified person is on hand to answer any questions.
	I	A Service-approved biologist would be present at the work site until all California red-legged frogs have been removed, workers were instructed, and disturbance of habitat was completed. After that time, the state or local sponsoring agency would designate a person to monitor on-site compliance with all minimization measures. The Service-approved biologist would ensure that this monitor receives the training outlined in measure 33 and in the identification of California red-legged frogs. If the monitor or the Service-approved biologist recommends that work be stopped because California red-legged frogs would be affected to a degree that exceeds the levels anticipated by the Federal Highway Administration and Service during review of the proposed action, they would notify the resident engineer (the engineer that is directly overseeing and in command of construction activities) immediately. The resident engineer would either resolve the situation by eliminating the effect immediately or require that all actions causing these effects be halted. If work were stopped, the Service would be notified as soon as is reasonably possible.
J	During project activities, all trash that may attract predators would be properly contained, removed from the work site, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, all trash and construction debris would be removed from work areas.	

Section Number Reference	Mitigation Reference Number	Mitigation Commitments
	K	All refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles would occur at least 18.3 meters (60 feet) from riparian habitat or water bodies and preferably, not in a location from where a spill would drain directly toward aquatic habitat. The monitor would ensure contamination of habitat does not occur during such operations. Prior to the onset of work, the Federal Highway Administration would ensure that a plan is in place for prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. All workers would be informed of the importance of preventing spills and of the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.
	L	Project sites would be revegetated with an assemblage of native riparian, wetland, and upland vegetation suitable for the area. Locally collected plant materials would be used to the extent practicable. Invasive, exotic plants would be controlled to the maximum extent practicable. This measure would be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with the project, unless the Service and Federal Highway Administration determine that it is not feasible or practical. (For example, an area disturbed by construction that would be used for future activities need not be revegetated.)
	M	Habitat contours would be returned to their original configuration at the end of project activities. This measure would be implemented in all areas disturbed by activities associated with the project, unless the Service and Federal Highway Administration determine that it is not feasible or modification of original contours would benefit the California red-legged frog.
	N	The number of access routes, size of staging areas, and the total area of the activity would be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project goal. Environmentally sensitive areas would be established to confine access routes and construction areas to the minimum area necessary to complete construction, and minimize the impact to California red-legged frog habitat; this goal includes locating access routes and construction areas outside of wetlands and riparian areas to the maximum extent practicable.
	O	The Federal Highway Administration would attempt to schedule work activities for times of the year when impacts to the California red-legged frog would be minimal. For example, work that would affect large pools that may support breeding would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the breeding season (November through May). Isolated pools that are important to maintain California red-legged frogs through the driest portions of the year would be avoided, to the maximum degree practicable, during the late summer and early fall. Habitat assessments, surveys, and informal consultation between the Federal Highway Administration and Service during project planning would be used to assist in scheduling work activities to avoid sensitive habitats during key times of the year.

Section Number Reference	Mitigation Reference Number	Mitigation Commitments
	P	To control sedimentation during and after project implementation, the Federal Highway Administration and sponsoring agency would implement best management practices outlined in any authorizations or permits, issued under the authorities of the Clean Water Act, that it receives for the specific project. If best management practices are ineffective, the Federal Highway Administration would attempt to remedy the situation immediately, in consultation with the Service. If a work site is to be temporarily dewatered by pumping, intakes would be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.5 centimeters (0.2 inch) to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pump system. Water would be released or pumped downstream at an appropriate rate to maintain downstream flows during construction. The methods and materials used in any dewatering would be determined by the Federal Highway Administration in consultation with the Service on site-specific basis. Upon completion of construction activities, any diversions or barriers to flow would be removed in a manner that would allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate. Alteration of the stream bed would be minimized to the maximum extend possible; any imported material would be removed from the stream bed upon completion of the project.
	Q	Unless approved by the Service, water would not be impounded in a manner that may attract California red-legged frogs.
	R	A Service-approved biologist would permanently remove any individuals of exotic species, such as bullfrogs ( <i>Rana catesbeiana</i> ), crayfish, and centrarchid fishes from the project area, to the maximum extent possible. The Service-approved biologist would be responsible for ensuring his or her activities are in compliance with the California Fish and Game Code.
	S	If California red-legged frog tadpoles are found in the fire pond, the portion of the pond that would be retained would be isolated from the portion that would be filled by placement of material that would maintain water clarity in the retained portion of the pond. Tadpoles would be relocated to the portion of the pond that would be retained until the new pond is constructed and water clarity has been established. Ultimately, tadpoles would be introduced to the new pond.
	T	A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-approved biologist would survey the project site before construction resumes each day during rainy weather and, if construction is conducted at night between November 1 and April 1, before construction begins each night
2.4.5 Invasive Species	A	Only certified noxious weed-free erosion control materials would be used. All straw and seed material shall be certified weed-free by the County Agricultural Commissioner before being used at the project site. The California Department of Food and Agriculture maintains a current listing of noxious weeds.
	B	Imported fill material shall be weed-free.
	C	The invasive species jubata grass and French broom within the work area would be targeted for removal prior to earthwork activities.
	D	After construction, the contractor will implement a minimum 1-year plant establishment and weed control period in all areas treated with erosion control seed mixes.

# APPENDIX D Correspondence with State Historic Preservation Officer

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA – THE RESOURCES AGENCY

GRAY DAVIS, Governor

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

P.O. BOX 942896  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94296-0001  
(916) 653-6624 Fax: (916) 653-9824  
calshpo@ohp.parks.ca.gov  
www.ohp.cal-parks.ca.gov



10 July 2003

In Reply Refer To  
FHWA030611B

Gary N. Hamby  
Division Administrator  
California Division  
Federal Highway Administration  
980 Ninth Street, Suite 400  
Sacramento, California 95814-2724

RE: HDA-CA, FILE NO. 05-MON-1 KP 160.8/163.3, SALINAS ROAD INTERCHANGE PROJECT, 05-315920, DOCUMENT NO. P 45141 [SECTION 106 CONSULTATION ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GRADE-SEPARATED INTERCHANGE AT STATE ROUTE 1 AND SALINAS ROAD, MONTEREY COUNTY]

Dear Mr. Hamby,

You have provided me with the results of your efforts to determine whether the project described above may affect historic properties. You have done this, and are consulting with me, in order to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and implementing regulations codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that the following properties are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP):

- Equipment shed – 1310 Highway 1
- Petersen shed – 1260 Highway 1
- Blimp Mooring Circle of the former Watsonville Naval Auxiliary Air Station, 1260 Highway 1
- P-27-002568 – Knoll Top Trash Site
- P-27-002566 – Hillside Homestead Site

I concur with the foregoing determinations.

Before I can concur that the FHWA's effort to identify historic properties in the undertaking's APE is adequate pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.4(b)(1), I would appreciate knowing

- (1) where and to what horizontal and vertical extent the implementation of the undertaking will disturb natural ground in the APE,
- (2) how the visibility of the ground surface varied across the Archaeological Survey Area (Figure 3 of the HPSR) at the time of the FHWA's 6 February, and 11 and 12 March 2002 pedestrian survey,
- (3) how the FHWA took into consideration the potential presence of archaeological deposits on the surface of the Archaeological Survey Area in areas where surface visibility may have been relatively poor, and,

GARY N. HAMBY  
10 July 2003  
PAGE 2 of 2

FHWA030611B

- (4) using the results of the record search for the undertaking and any other pertinent data, including the information cited in item (1) above, the likelihood of discovering subsurface archaeological deposits (predictive assessment) within areas of the APE subject to ground disturbance. In cases where data limitations preclude a useful predictive assessment, and the undertaking involves ground disturbance, information about the historical geomorphology and the stratigraphy of the APE should be used to prepare the predictive assessment.

I have elected not to address FHWA's finding of "no historic properties" for this undertaking pending my receipt of the additional information requested under items (1) - (4), above.

Thank you for considering historic properties during project planning. If you have any questions, please contact Natalie Lindquist at (916) 654-0631 and e-mail at [nlind@ohp.parks.ca.gov](mailto:nlind@ohp.parks.ca.gov) or Michael McGuirt at (916) 653-8920 and e-mail at [mmcgu@ohp.parks.ca.gov](mailto:mmcgu@ohp.parks.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Dr. Knox Mellon  
State Historic Preservation Officer

FEB-23-2004 10:19

P. 02/05

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY

GRAY DAVIS, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
50 HIGUERA STREET  
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401-5415  
TELEPHONE: (805) 549-3233  
TDD (805) 549-3259  
http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist05

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DEC - 2003

OHP



November 25, 2003  
FHWA030611B

Post-it* Fax Note	7671	Date	2/19	# of pages	4
To	Dana Supernowicz	From	Natalie Lindquist		
Co./Dept		Co.	OHP		
Phone #		Phone #	654-0631		
Fax #	653-6126	Fax #			

Dr. Knox Mellon  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Office of Historic Preservation  
P.O. Box 942896  
Sacramento, California 94296-0001

ATTENTION: Mike McGuirt

Dear Dr. Mellon:

Subject: HDA-CA, FILE NO. 05-MON-1 KP 160.8/163.3, SALINAS ROAD INTERCHANGE PROJECT, 05-315920, DOCUMENT NO. P.45141 [SECTION 106 CONSULTATION ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GRADE-SEPARATED INTERCHANGE AT STATE ROUTE 1 AND SALINAS ROAD, MONTREY COUNTY]

Thank you for your letter of July 10, 2003 regarding the Historic Property Survey Report for the Salinas Road Interchange Project. On behalf of the FHWA, I am writing to respond to your request for additional information.

The FHWA submitted a Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) to the SHPO in April of 2003. The FHWA requested concurrence that the following properties were not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP):

- Equipment shed - 1310 Highway 1
- Petersen shed - 1260 Highway 1
- Blimp Mooring Circle of the former Watsonville Naval Auxiliary Air Station, 1260 Highway 1
- P-27-002568 - Knoll Top Trash Site
- P-27-002566 - Hillside Homestead Site

The SHPO concurred with FHWA's determination that the foregoing properties were not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

However, before the SHPO may concur that the FHWA's effort to identify historic properties in the undertaking's APE is adequate pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.4(b)(1), the SHPO requested the following information. The information provided below is to assist the SHPO in addressing FHWA's finding of "no historic properties affected" for this undertaking.

**Where and to what horizontal and vertical extent will the implementation of the undertaking disturb natural ground in the APE?**

The horizontal extent of the project lies in the area depicted on the Area of Potential Effect (APE) map, included in the previously submitted Historic Property Survey Report. Please also see the enclosed plan sheet for further reference (Attachment 1). The APE for Alternate 1, the largest footprint of the project, begins on the south side of Jensen Road at its intersection with Highway 101, KP 160.8 (PM 99.9), and runs north 2.5 KM to KP 163.3 at Trafton Road. The project

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varies from 65 to 130 m wide along its length widening to 229 m at its northern end at Trafton Road. Its maximum width is 800 m at the intersection of Highway 101 and Salinas Road. Maximum cuts range between 0.8 and 9.5 meters in depth along the length of the project but reach a maximum depth of 9.5 m at the bottom of a cut at the north end of the project, south of Trafton Road (Attachment 1).

**How did the visibility of the ground surface vary across the Archaeological Survey Area (Figure 3 of the HPSR) at the time of the FHWA's February 6, 11, and 12 March 2002 pedestrian survey?**

The archaeological survey for this project occurred on planted and unplanted agricultural land. On February 6, 2002 ground visibility in areas between Jensen Road and the edge of the marine terrace above the Pajaro River flood plain (HPSR Figure 3), varied from recently tilled soils to areas planted in peppers, strawberries, or artichokes. Black plastic covered the top of some rows, while others were recently cultivated leaving soils clearly visible. In the area between Petersen's Shed and Highway 101 (HPSR Figure 3), the ground was almost completely obscured by artichoke plantings. The survey area between the terrace edge and Trafton Road varied in slope from 5 to 15 degrees. This area was overgrown with grasses, berry bushes, poison oak and oak trees. Ground visibility on the steeper slopes was poor to fair but was only partially obscured on gradual slopes.

**How did the FHWA take into consideration the potential presence of archaeological deposits on the surface of the Archaeological Survey Area in areas where surface visibility may have been relatively poor?**

The project area on the terrace between Jensen Road and the edge of the marine terrace above the Pajaro River flood plain was surveyed in 10 to 20 meter transects depending upon the degree of soil exposure. Areas that were completely exposed from tilling were surveyed in 20 meter increments. Where the tops of rows were covered in plastic, the sides and bottom of the furrows were exposed affording excellent opportunity to assess the type, color, and content of the soils. Although visibility was good, these areas were transected in 10 m increments to ensure appropriate coverage. In all instances, the ground surface was thoroughly examined, as were all road cuts and areas of disturbance (e.g., rodent burrows, banks of agricultural ditches and ponds, plowed furrows, and plowed soils. In areas where crops were planted, soil visibility in the furrows and bottom of rows was excellent, permitting a clear examination of the soil and its contents below the cultivated surface.

Areas in which the soils were completely covered in vegetation and plastic, as noted above, were resurveyed on September 4, and October 21, 2002, after crops had been harvested and soils were clearly visible. The area between the terrace edge and Trafton Road in the Pajaro River flood plain were also surveyed several times in 10 m transects or less on September 4, and October 21, 2002. The survey was thorough and provided many opportunities for the examination of surface soils.

**Using the results of the record search for the undertaking and any other pertinent data, including the information cited in item (1) above, the likelihood of discovering subsurface archaeological deposits (predictive assessment) within areas of the APE subject to ground disturbance. In cases where data limitations preclude a useful predictive assessment, and the undertaking involves ground disturbance, information about the historical geomorphology and the stratigraphy of the APE should be used to prepare the predictive assessment.**

#### Archaeological Site Patterns

To develop a predictive assessment of the potential for buried archaeological sites in the project area a review of record search information, soil studies, and the project area's history of past disturbances was used to identify locations sensitive for archaeological sites. This review identified over 197 surveys carried out within four miles north and eight miles south of the project. These surveys have recorded a minimum of 70 archaeological sites within this region (Attachment 2). Thirty-three of these sites, within a area 2 k (.125 miles) north of the project area to 8 k (5 miles) south, were assessed. These sites consisted of bluff top middens adjacent the project area (e.g., CA-MNT-1894, -413) and midden sites located in the flood plain of the Pajaro River (CA-MNT-638) and Elkhorn Slough (CA-MNT-477). Thirty-two (99%) of these sites contained surface shellfish remains. Shellfish is a common component of all these sites in close proximity to the Pacific Ocean littoral zone. There is a high expectancy that sites occurring within the project area, adjacent to the ocean, will include marine resources, primarily shellfish.

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Previous archaeological studies within one half mile of the project have shown a low potential for buried archaeological sites. Twenty-four cultural resource surveys have previously been conducted within this area, and no archaeological sites have been located. A survey carried out by Cabrillo College in 1974 identified three dark shell midden sites on the top and at mid-slope of the western terrace of Elkhorn Slough (CA-MNT-413, -414, and -415). These were located just over one half-mile east of the project area. Of all the sites recorded within the region, all except CA-MNT-413 are adjacent to the margins of Elkhorn Slough or the Pajaro River flood plain.

The marine terraces and valleys of this area of the central coast have sustained a long history of soil disturbance. Within the project area and its surrounding environment, substantial agricultural cultivation has been ongoing for more than 100 years. Notable for the effect of its construction, Highway 1 north of Salinas Road included the excavation of a 17 m wide, 680 m long cut to a depth of 42 m. Any propensity for buried sites in the area should have been apparent from this excavation yet none were discovered. Due to the high public visibility of this area, it is unlikely that archaeological material would go undetected during the course of agricultural or construction activities.

In addition to the record search data, Caltrans has access to a large body of data from studies recently carried out by Caltrans in the vicinity of this project. These include an intensive archaeological survey of the project area and Phase II testing of sites in the Monterey Bay area immediately south of the project area. These studies allow for further understanding of the archaeological site distribution patterns of the region.

An intensive archaeological survey of the project area was carried out by Sneathcamp and York in 1991. This study is particularly revealing, providing a regional transect from Castroville almost to the Monterey/Santa Cruz County line. The study identified four previously recorded prehistoric sites (CA-MNT-228, -229, -731, and -1382) and three new historic sites. This information combined with record search data reveal approximately 48 sites in the surrounding area, primarily in the vicinity of the communities of Castroville, Moss Landing, and the adjacent coastline. In general, these sites are situated along the margins of Mero Cojo, Tembladero, and Elkhorn sloughs as they empty into the ocean. In particular, sites near Moss Landing and Castroville contain a high density of rich archaeological material. These sites range from Early Period (5455-2555 B.P.) and Middle Period sites (2555-755 B.P.) (MNT-228, -229) to Late Period sites (755-180 B.P.) (1382/H, -1765). Site density north and west of Elkhorn and other sloughs declines rapidly the further west one travels from these sloughs.

Phase II test excavations carried out by Jones (1993) in the Monterey Bay area immediately south of the project area defined settlement patterns for that area which are pertinent to this study. Jones indicated that the preferred location of Early Period (10,000-3500 B.C.) settlements in the Monterey Bay were on estuaries and lakes such as MNT-228, and 229 (Jones et al. 1996). These settings afforded a non-intensive collector strategy focused on the highest ranked resources in the environment. By the mid Holocene, population size and territorial circumscription resulted in an intensification of resource procurement and the establishment of villages along the rocky shoreline. This intensification continued until 800-1000 A.D. when stresses on the carrying capacity of the land, exacerbated by drought, resulted in social disequilibrium and a movement east into the southern Santa Clara Valley (Jones et al. 1993, Hildebrandt and Mikkelsen 1993).

We are confident that the above patterned distribution of archaeological sites precludes the occurrence of archaeological sites within the project area. Clearly, the prehistoric sites in this region occurred in the vicinity of sloughs and flood plains to the north and south of the study area.

#### Geomorphology

In order to identify the archaeological deposits that may lie beneath the surface of the marine terrace, the geomorphology and archaeological site patterns of the study area was analyzed. Previous archaeological studies indicate that the Salinas Interchange Project is in an area of very low archaeological sensitivity. This is based on the results of extensive survey data from the current project, examination of previous alignments, other large studies in the area, and an analysis of the soils within the study area. An analysis of the project area's geomorphology using the Geologic Map of California-Santa Cruz, and the Soil Survey of Monterey County further supports the position that the project area has a low potential to contain buried archaeological sites.

The project study area lies on a marine terrace of the Bolsa de San Cayetano between the Pajaro River flood plain and Elkhorn Slough. Elevation varies between 20 to 190 feet amsl. The terrace portion of the project area consists of quaternary non-marine sedimentary deposits. Various soil types are found in this region, with those from the Elkhorn variant of the Elkhorn Series predominating. The Elkhorn Variant is an Elkhorn fine sandy loam that

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occurs on marine terraces and dunelike hills with slopes ranging from 5-15%. This soil is a fine sandy loam 25 to 45 inches deep, underlain by weakly consolidated sandy sediments, soft sandstone, or a dense compact clay layer. These soils have a moderate erodability. For the most part, these soils are formed in place in material underlain by weakly consolidated sandy sediments or ferruginous sandstone on terraces above the Pajaro River and Elkhorn Slough flood plains. Consequently, they have a very low potential to contain buried archaeological sites.

Summary

Studies of the various design alternatives for this project suggests that this area did not play a major role in prehistoric settlement compared to the resource rich coastal zone, and the sloughs and lakes in the vicinity of Castroville and Moss Landing, or the flood plain of the Pajaro River. The project area, on a marine terrace above the Pajaro River, is located in a low sensitivity area for archaeological sites, based on a review of the project geomorphology, previous studies, archaeological site pattern, and Phase II studies; coupled with our careful examination of the ground surface, stream banks, and road and land exposures, which resulted in negative findings.

In conclusion, we request the following:

FHWA has ensured that reasonable and good faith identification efforts were made for the Salinas Interchange Project, including extensive background research, consultation with knowledgeable individuals and organizations, and comprehensive field investigations. The FHWA has made a reasonable and good faith effort to identify any archaeological sites within the proposed project limits. Based on the low likelihood of finding any additional resources the agency seeks concurrence that the requirements under 36 CFR 800.4(b)(1) are complete and no additional inventory effort is necessary.

Your concurrence in the foregoing determinations may be evidenced by your dated signature in the signature block provided below.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Please contact Thomas Wheeler at (805) 549-3777 if you require additional information or clarification.

Sincerely,

*Valerie A. Revulet*  
Valerie A. Revulet, Technical Studies Branch Chief  
D5 Heritage Resource Coordinator

Concur: *[Signature]*  
Dr. Knox Mellon  
California State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: *1/22/2004* that the requirements of 36 CFR 800.4(b) have been met and that pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1), this undertaking will affect no historic properties.

cc: CT-HQ  
FHWA

## **APPENDIX E** List of Technical Studies that are Bound Separately

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Air Quality Report

Noise Study Report

Water Quality Report

Natural Environment Study

Historical Property Survey Report

    Historic Study Report

    Historic Resource Evaluation Report

    Historic Architectural Survey Report

    Archaeological Survey Report

Hazardous Waste Report

    Initial Site Assessment

Scenic Resource Evaluation/Visual Assessment

Initial Paleontology Study

Traffic Forecasting Memo

Traffic Operations Analysis

Salinas Road Interchange Citizens Advisory Group Charter



# APPENDIX F Farmland Conversion Rating Form and Scores Explanation

U.S. Department of Agriculture <b>FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING</b>						
<b>PART I</b> (To be completed by Federal Agency)			Date Of Land Evaluation Request: 4/6/04			
Name of Project: <i>Salinas Road Interchange</i>			Federal Agency Involved: FHWA			
Proposed Land Use: Transportation			County and State: Monterey, CA			
<b>PART II</b> (To be completed by NRCS)			Date Request Received By NRCS: 4/7/04		Person Completing Form: Dorothy Dowling	
Does the site contain Prime, Unique, Statewide or Local Important Farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form)			YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Average Farm Size 1,277	
Major Crop(s) Lettuce, Artichokes, Strawberries		Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 388,633      % 18.2		Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 224,718      % 10.6		
Name of Land Evaluation System Used		Name of State or Local Site Assessment System NA		Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS 4/21/04		
<b>PART III</b> (To be completed by Federal Agency)			Alternative Site Rating			
			Site A Alt. 1	Site B Alt. 5	Site C Alt. 7	
			38.7	41.9	36.0	
			6.0	6.0	3.4	
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly			44.7	47.9	39.4	
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly						
C. Total Acres In Corridor						
<b>PART IV</b> (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information						
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland			6.4	6.0	7.4	
B. Total Acres Statewide Important or Local Important Farmland			30.4	34.9	26.8	
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted			0.009	0.01	0.009	
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value			NA	NA	NA	
<b>PART V</b> (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)			69.6	70.7	69.8	
<b>PART VI</b> (To be completed by Federal Agency) Site Assessment Criteria (Criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5 b. For Corridor project use form NRCS-CPA-106)		<b>Maximum Points</b>	Site 1	Site 5	Site 7	
1. Area In Non-urban Use		(15)	15	15	15	
2. Perimeter In Non-urban Use		(10)	10	10	10	
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed		(20)	10	12	11	
4. Protection Provided By State and Local Government		(20)	20	20	20	
5. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average		(10)	0	0	0	
6. Creation Of Non-farmable Farmland		(25)	0	0	0	
7. Availability Of Farm Support Services		(5)	5	5	5	
8. On-Farm Investments		(20)	20	20	20	
9. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services		(25)	0	0	0	
10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use		(10)	0	0	0	
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS		160	80	82	81	
<b>PART VII</b> (To be completed by Federal Agency)						

*Appendix F Farmland Conversion Rating Form and Scores Explanation*

Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)		100	69.9		
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or local site assessment)		160	80	82	81
<b>TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)</b>		260	149.9	152.7	150.8
Site Selected:	Date Of Selection	Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>			
Reason For Selection:					
Name of Federal agency representative completing this form:				Date:	

*(See Instructions on reverse side)*

**Form AD-1006-CPA 106 (03-02)**

**Farmland Conversion Impact Rating Form Scores Explanation**

Form 1006 Question #	Evaluation Methods Applied	Score			Comments
		Alt 1	Alt 5	Alt 7	
1. How much land is in non-urban use within a radius of 1.0 mile from where project is intended? 0-15 pts	Using Monterey County Zoning maps and topographic maps, outlined a 1-mile radius area and roughly calculated amount of ag land, and urban land within.	15	15	15	More than 90% of the land within a 1- mile radius is ag land.
2. How much of the perimeter of the site borders on land in non-urban use? 0-10 pts	Using Monterey County Zoning maps, roughly calculated use of perimeter area. Roughly 95% of all alternatives' perimeter are non-urban.	10	10	10	
3. How much of the site has been farmed more than 5 of the last ten years? 0-20 pts	Each site (or alternative) includes a large percentage of existing right-of-way as well as ag land. According to the University of California at Davis farm advisor, Mark Bolda, all of the ag lands within each alt have been cultivated for at least 50 years.  Using Arcview, calculated sum of acreage for all land uses within each alt and sum of exiting right-of-way plus developed lands for each alternative. Calculated percentage of alt being farmed currently.	10	12	11	Alt 1 contains 68.6 acres exist ROW + D lands = 33.5 acres; % farmed = 52%  Alt 5 contains 69.6 acres exist ROW + D lands = 29.25 5 acres; % farmed = 58%  Alt 7 contains 68.0 acres exist ROW + D lands = 31.45 acres; % farmed = 54%
4. Is the site subject to state or other policies to protect farmland? 0-20	Referred to Monterey County North County Local Coastal Plan to determine farmland type. Contacted Monterey County for identification of parcels with Williamson Act Contract.	20	20	20	More than half the parcels for each alternative are eligible for Williamson Act contracts. One parcel in each alternative is in Williamson Act contract. This question is either all or nothing.
5. Is the farm unit(s) containing the site as large as the average size farm unit in the county? 0-10 pts	NRCS notes average-sized farm unit in Monterey County = 1277 ac. Ave. sized farm unit in project area is 75 acres.	0	0	0	All parcels are far less than 50% of the average farm unit in the county.

		Score			
6. How much of the remaining land on each ag parcel would become non-farmable? 0-10 pts	For each alternative, less than 1% of each parcel would become non-farmable.	0	0	0	Per the local farmers, currently, small parcels are combined with larger to maximize farming. If any of the alternatives left small parcels, they would be combined through lease with others to enable continued farming.
7. Does the site have available adequate supply of farm support services and markets. 0-5 pts	All ag parcels have all required services available	5	5	5	
8. Does site have substantial and well-maintained on-farm investments? 0-20 pts	Not all parcels have on-farm investments, but each combined ownership or lease does.	20	20	20	
9. Would the project at this site, by converting farmland to non-ag use, reduce the demand for farm services so as to jeopardize the continued existence of these services? 0-25 pts	There would be no reduction in demand for farm services.	0	0	0	
10. Is the project anticipated to conflict with or encourage conversion of surrounding farmland to non-ag use? 0-10 pts	The project is expected to support use of ag land by providing improved and safer transportation facilities. The project is not anticipated to encourage conversion of ag land to non-ag use.	0	0	0	
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>81</b>	

# APPENDIX G United States Fish and Wildlife Service Species List<sup>30</sup>

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**LISTED, PROPOSED, AND CANDIDATE SPECIES WHICH MAY OCCUR IN OR NEAR THE PROPOSED HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**  
(Updated April 22, 2002)

<u>Amphibians</u>		
California red-legged frog	<i>Rana aurora draytonii</i>	T, CH
Santa Cruz long-toed salamander	<i>Ambystoma macrodactylum croceum</i>	E
California tiger salamander	<i>Ambystoma californiense</i>	C
<u>Plants</u>		
Monterey spineflower	<i>Chorizanthe pungens</i> var. <i>pungens</i>	T, PCH
Robust spineflower	<i>Chorizanthe robusta</i> var. <i>robusta</i>	E, PCH
Yadon's wallflower	<i>Erysimum menziesii</i> ssp. <i>yadonii</i>	E
Monterey gilia	<i>Gilia tenuiflora</i> ssp. <i>arenaria</i>	E
Contra Costa goldfields	<i>Lasthenia conjugens</i>	E
Coastal dunes milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus tener</i> var. <i>titi</i>	E
Yadon's piperia	<i>Piperia yadonii</i>	E
Hickman's potentilla	<i>Potentilla hickmanii</i>	E
Santa Cruz tarplant	<i>Holocarpha macradenia</i>	T

**Key:**

E - Endangered      T - Threatened      CH - Critical habitat  
 PCH - Critical habitat which has been proposed  
 C - Candidate species for which the Fish and Wildlife Service has on file sufficient information on the biological vulnerability and threats to support proposals to list as endangered or threatened.

The updated Monterey County list of federally listed species included a change in status, from candidate to threatened, for the California tiger salamander.

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<sup>30</sup> Updated June, 2004 per  
[http://www.fws.gov/pacific/ventura/es/spplists/species\\_monterey.cfm](http://www.fws.gov/pacific/ventura/es/spplists/species_monterey.cfm).



# APPENDIX H Public Comments and Responses

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SCCasa@aol.com To: wendy\_waldron@dot.ca.gov, lisa@actionpajarovalley.org  
07/28/05 01:32 PM cc:  
Subject: Salinas Rd Interchange

Dear Wendy Waldron and Lisa Rheinheimer,

I will not be able to attend the public meeting at Ohlone this afternoon(Thurs July 28th) on this very important subject/project; however, I want to express my personal support

I am the Director of the Casa de la Cultura in Pajaro offering a variety of services to the local surrounding Communities---Throughout the years, I have personally known several families that have been involved in near fatal traffic accidents in that area of the Highway/Salinas Rd turn--it is a very dangerous turn area that has good possibilities of being corrected----

I am sure you will receive many suggestions about what can be done; however, one of my reflections is: since the road approaching that area is not a "highway" of 2 lanes on either side, perhaps "warnings" (blinking lights)of stopping /traffic lights can be posted and road bumpers to slow down traffic can be temporarily be done until a more permanent solution can be found--- the other reflection is an overpass from Highway 1 to Salinas Rd---

Whatever happens, please listen/reflect to opinions that can contribute to positive outcomes and results for the betterment of the area---already the Signal lights in Las Lomas have made quite a difference in the traffic flow(I travel that area everyday)---Thank you for asking our input---Peace Sr Rosa Dolores-----Was unable to email www.tamcomonterey.org(too long--what is the correct one

Response:

Refer to Section 1.2.2.7, flashing beacons are currently in place north of the intersection. Refer to Section 1.3.7 for a discussion of why a signal at the intersection would not meet the project's purpose and need.



August 12, 2005

Wendy Waldron  
Central Coast Management Branch  
California Department of Transportation  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Transmitted by e-mail to: [wendy\\_waldron@dot.ca.gov](mailto:wendy_waldron@dot.ca.gov)

Re: comments on Draft Environmental Document on Salinas Road-Highway 1 Interchange Project

Dear Ms Waldron:

The Monterey County Hospitality Association (MCHA) has reviewed above captioned document and offers these comments.

We find no fault with the environmental assessment and analysis in the document. As to the alternative projects we favor Alternative 5 but would be pleased to see accelerated progress on any of the three alternatives under active consideration. Although Alternative 7 offers slightly better levels of service at a marginally lower cost, the requirement for formal Section 7 consultation with the United States Department of Fish and Wildlife Service could entail delays in accomplishing the much-needed improvements to the Salinas Road interchange.

MCHA is the trade association for the travel and tourism industry in Monterey County. Our industry generates \$2 billion annually in direct spending, generates in excess of \$50 million in local taxes and employs over 25,000 workers in Monterey County. Automobile travel accounts for a large portion of the visitors our industry serves so we have had vital concerns with highway and roadway efficiency and safety. Making the safety and circulation efficiency improvements critically needed at this interchange are a high priority for us.

Thank you for your progress on this important project; please do what you can to move this improvement along expeditiously.

Sincerely,

Mike Oprish  
President

cc: Transportation Agency for Monterey County  
Monterey County Supervisor Lou Calcagno  
Santa Cruz County Supervisor Tony Campos

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
OCEAN & MISSION • SUITE 201 • P O BOX 223542 • CARMEL, CA • 93922  
PHONE: 831-626-8636 • FAX: 831-626-4269 • EMAIL: [badams@adcomm4.com](mailto:badams@adcomm4.com)

Response.

Alternative 7 has been identified as the preferred alternative. Section 7 consultation has been completed for this alternative and was facilitated with the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Federal Aid Projects that May Affect California Red-legged Frogs.



August 10, 2005

Wendy Waldron  
Central Coast Management Branch  
Caltrans  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

RE: Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment for the Salinas Road Interchange Project

Dear Ms. Waldron:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment for the Salinas Road Interchange Project

The proposed Salinas Road Interchange Project estimates the build alternatives will be under construction for 24 months. During that two-year period, the project's construction will impact the estimated 23,600 vehicles daily that currently travel on HWY 1. A Traffic Management Plan is proposed to mitigate this impact. As described on page 77 of the Salinas Road Interchange Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment, "A Traffic Management Plan would be developed to accommodate local traffic patterns and reduce delays, congestion and collisions." In addition to incident management and scheduling work during off-peak periods, the Traffic Management Plan proposes public and motorist awareness campaigns.

It is not stated in the environmental document whether there is an intent or commitment to coordinate the public and motorist awareness campaigns with Commute Alternatives in Monterey County (a program of the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments) and Commute Solutions in Santa Cruz County (a program of Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission.) Both of these Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs have regular and ongoing outreach to employers and the general public. The mission of these programs since their creation in the 1970's is to

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SERVING OUR REGIONAL COMMUNITY SINCE 1968  
445 RESERVATION ROAD, SUITE G ♦ P.O. BOX 809 ♦ MARINA, CA 93933-0809  
(831) 883-3750 ♦ FAX (831) 883-3755 ♦ [www.ambag.org](http://www.ambag.org)

reduce traffic congestion and air pollution through the promotion of alternatives to driving alone, such as carpools, vanpools, transit, telecommuting, and bicycling. In addition to outreach, a carpool/vanpool-matching database is maintained to facilitate the development and continuation of carpools and vanpools.

Coordination with Commute Alternatives and Commute Solutions should be specified as a component of the Traffic Management Plan. Coordination should include:

- Highlighting Commute Alternatives and Commute Solutions on all marketing material as the source for information on carpools, vanpools, etc;
- Including Commute Alternatives' and Commute Solutions' phone numbers and web addresses on motorist awareness highway signs erected on either end of the project limits;
- Supporting targeted outreach to employers affected by the project; and
- Supporting and coordinating with annual TDM campaigns.

When developing the Salinas Road Interchange Traffic Management Plan, the appropriate staffs to coordinate with are:

Shelley Gesicki  
AMBAG  
P.O. Box 809  
Marina, CA 93933  
(831) 883-3750  
[sgesicki@ambag.org](mailto:sgesicki@ambag.org)

Cory Caletti  
SCCRTC  
1523 Pacific Ave  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 460-3201  
[ccaletti@scrtc.org](mailto:ccaletti@scrtc.org)

If you have questions about this comment letter please contact Todd Muck or Shelley Gesicki of AMBAG staff.

Sincerely,

  
Nicolas Papadakis  
Executive Director

cc: Pat Dellin, SCCRTC  
Bill Reichmuth, TAMC

Response:

Refer to Section 2.2.5. The environmental document has been revised to state that the Traffic Management Plan will be developed in coordination with Commute Alternatives and Commute Solutions.



**MONTEREY BAY**  
Unified Air Pollution Control District  
serving Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties

AIR POLLUTION CONTROL OFFICER  
Douglas Quistin

24580 Silver Cloud Court • Monterey, California 93940 • 831/647-9411 • FAX 831/647-8501

DISTRICT  
BOARD  
MEMBERS  
  
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Lou Calciagno  
Monterey County  
  
VICE CHAIR:  
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County

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Butch Lindley  
Monterey County  
  
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McCulchon  
Marina  
  
Rob Monaco  
San Benito  
County  
  
John Myers  
King City  
  
Dennis Norton  
Capitola  
  
Ellen Pire  
Santa Cruz  
County  
  
Jerry Smith  
Monterey County

August 3, 2005

Ms. Wendy Waldron  
California Department of Transportation  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

SUBJECT: MND FOR HIGHWAY 1 / SALINAS ROAD INTERCHANGE PROJECT

Dear Ms. Waldron:

Staff has reviewed the referenced document and has the following comments:

1. PP. 50-51. Air Quality

Because the project is included in the 2005 MTP, the project is consistent with the most recent update of the Air Quality Management Plan of the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, which was approved in September 2004.

2. P. 51. Dust Control during Construction

The MND/EA states that CalTrans Standard Specification for dust control would be followed. If the project includes grading in excess of 8.1 acres per day or grading and excavation in excess of 2.2 acres per day, the District's threshold of significance would be triggered. In that event, CalTrans standard dust control measures should be assessed to determine if the impact would be reduced to a less than significant level.

3. Diesel Exhaust during Construction

The document should discuss the exposure of sensitive receptors to diesel exhaust during construction

4. P. 129. Air Quality (CEQA Checklist)

The document specifies in the response to subsection "b" that without mitigation, there would be a less than significant impact to a violation of any air quality standard or substantial contribution to an existing or projected air quality violation. The North Central Coast Air Basin is Nonattainment for the State PM<sub>10</sub> standard. Accordingly, the District suggests that if the impacts of construction are significant, they be mitigated as specified in Comment 2, above.

5. Appendix C. Minimization and/or Mitigation Summary

If the project is determined to have a significant impact on air quality, mitigation measures would have to be included in the Summary.

The District's CEQA Air Quality Guidelines are available on the District's website at [www.mbuapcd.org](http://www.mbuapcd.org)

Thank you for the opportunity to review the project. Please do not hesitate to call if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Jean Getchell  
Supervising Planner  
Planning and Air Monitoring Division

cc: David Craft, Engineering Division

Response:

1. Project is in 2005 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and is consistent with September 2004 Air Quality Management Plan. Refer to Section 2.1.
2. *If the project exceeds 8.1 acres per day grading, or 2.2 acres per day grading and excavating, it may exceed threshold. Air quality report requires that less than 6*

acres per day be graded. Table 4 of the air quality report estimates daily grading based on 70 acres graded in 12 months (about ½ the life of project).  
 $70 \text{ acres} \times 4 = 280 \text{ acres}$  divided by 12 months  $\times$  22 days (260 working days) = average daily grading of 1.06 acres per day. This is well within the Monterey Bay United Air Pollution Control District's strictest threshold.

3. *Document should discuss the exposure of sensitive receptors to construction diesel exhaust.* The Monterey Bay United Air Pollution Control District has noted that all particulate emissions from diesel exhaust are toxic. The impact of these emissions is measured based on a 70-year exposure. The air quality report, Table 2, notes that total tons of PM<sub>10</sub> from diesel exhaust is 1.7 tons. Over the 2-year construction period (528 working days) this equates to 6.25 pounds per day of diesel particulate. The closest receptors to the proposed construction area are about 52 meters (171 feet) from the edge of pavement.

Beyond supplying this information, it has been determined that project level analysis of toxic air contaminants is not required.

4. *If impacts of construction are significant, they must be mitigated as specified in Comment 2 above.* The air quality report has shown that because daily grading is well within the Air Pollution Control District's Guidelines, construction impacts from particulate matter would not be significant. Caltrans Standard Specifications require daily watering of all disturbed areas. This would further minimize dust emissions. In addition dust control measures from the Monterey Bay United Air Pollution Control District CEQA Guidelines are included in the resident engineer's instructions for implementation if daily watering does not satisfactorily reduce dust emissions from the project site.
5. *If the project is determined to have a significant impact on air quality, mitigation measures would have to be included in the Summary.* See response to #4 above. No significant impacts have been identified.



"Jim Warner"  
<warner@ucsc.edu>  
08/11/05 06:22 PM

To: wendy\_waldron@dot.ca.gov  
cc: warner@ucsc.edu, info@tamcmonterey.org  
Subject: Salinas Road EIR Comments : 05-315920

I attended the July 28 public meeting on the Salinas Road Interchange Project at the Ohlone school. While I am neither a resident of Monterey County nor a frequent user of Hwy 1, the importance of this project is nonetheless very clear to me. But when I saw the estimated cost of the interchange on the TAMC plan I found myself saying that I wanted to attend the public meeting to find out why this project was so expensive. Sometimes things just cost a lot. And sometimes maybe they don't have to.

I believe that the alternates were poorly chosen. Among the alternates presented in the draft EIR as well as other alternates presented as pre-rejected at the public meeting, all of them accepted the present alignment of Salinas Road. I asked the engineers and officials about this at the meeting:

Why not move the end of Salinas Road where it intersects Hwy 1 North? The bridge could then cross Hwy 1 without changing its current elevation by crossing at a point where Hwy 1 is lower than the hills that flank it.

The advantage of this approach is that it works with the existing topography instead of against it. Vastly less dirt would move and no temporary Hwy would need to be constructed because the elevation of Hwy 1 would not change. Construction would probably be faster and cost substantially less.

I urge that EIR approval be withheld and sent back for additional studies on the basis that the alternatives considered have been poorly selected and that superior alternatives have not been considered. Again, to be clear, my objection is to the EIR, not to the project which I hope will proceed, but in a more effective and efficient manner than has been offered so far.

=====

While my email address belongs to the University of California, the views expressed here are solely my own. As far as I can determine, the University of California has no opinions.

-jim warner  
215 trescony st.  
Santa Cruz, Ca. 95060  
warner@ucsc.edu

Response:

The option of moving the intersection north was reviewed as part of the project and was found to have a greater cost than any of the three build alternatives presented and was rejected for that reason. If the intersection were moved north, Highway 1 would have to be raised to provide a design speed of 110 kilometers per hour (68 miles per hour.) Highway 1 would have to be raised at two locations by 3.2 and 2.9 meters

(10.5 and 9.5 feet). Besides increasing costs for the fill material, raising the profile would have increased traffic handling cost and could have delayed construction of the overcrossing until the profile were raised. To provide vertical clearance for the falsework with a raised Highway 1, the interchange would have to be moved north, which would have affected more farmland and required more right-of-way than what was proposed in any of the three build alternatives considered in the environmental document.



matoschi@att.net  
08/11/05 11:55 PM

To: wendy\_waldron@dot.ca.gov  
cc:  
Subject: Comments on the environmental document for the Salinas Road Interchange Project.

Dear Wendy,

I just had some comments on the environmental document for the Salinas Road Interchange Project. The alternative that my comments are related to is Alternative 7 because I heard from Richard Rosales that it is the alternative that you are so far looking into because the construction will take the least amount of land and is cheaper.

These are my comments:

- Install and activate ramp meters on the Highway 1 Northbound on-ramp with an HOV bypass lane.
- Install and activate ramp meters on the Highway 1 Southbound on-ramp with an HOV bypass lane.
- Build a dedicated right turn lane to Jensen Road from the Highway 1 Southbound on-ramp.
- Build an auxiliary lane on Highway 1 Northbound from Jensen Road to the Salinas Road off-ramp.
- End the right lane on Highway 1 Southbound as an auxiliary lane to the Salinas Road off-ramp.
- Make the proposed frontage county road an extension of Salinas Road.
- Build two dedicated left turn lanes to Salinas Road, and one dedicated straight lane to the frontage county road on the Highway 1 Southbound off-ramp.
- On the frontage county road Northbound at the Salinas Road intersection, build one dedicated straight lane to the Highway 1 Southbound on-ramp, one dedicated right turn lane to the dedicated left turn lane for the Highway 1 Northbound on-ramp, and one dedicated right turn lane to Salinas Road.
- Build on the Highway 1 Northbound off-ramp one dedicated left turn lane to Salinas Road, one straight lane to the Highway 1 Northbound on-ramp, and two dedicated right turn lanes to Salinas Road.
- End the right lane as an auxiliary lane to the Highway 1 Southbound on-ramp on Salinas Road Westbound.
- End the right lane on Salinas Road Eastbound as a dedicated right turn lane to the proposed Park and Ride Lot.
- Build the Highway 1 Northbound on-ramp to end as its own lane and an auxiliary lane to the West Riverside Drive Northbound off-ramp.

Those are my comments for the Salinas Road Interchange Project environmental document. I know it sounds like a lot of comments for project features. However, what I have noticed about State Highway projects these days is that later, engineers go back and spend a lot of money and take up a lot of land anyway. So if I were you guys, I would make as many improvements as you guys can so that way engineers don't have to go back later and make a lot of improvements at the new interchange.

Please let me know what you guys think of my comments. My e-mail address is [matoschi@att.net](mailto:matoschi@att.net)

Sincerely,

Michael Toschi

Response:

*Install and activate ramp meters on the Highway 1 Northbound on-ramp with an HOV bypass lane.* There does not appear to be a need for ramp meters at this location. Ramp meters are considered when the hourly traffic volume reaches 900 vehicles per

hour. The northbound on-ramp is projected to have 550 vehicles per hour by the year 2030. HOV lanes are provided only if ramp meters are authorized.

*Install and activate ramp meters on the Highway 1 Southbound on-ramp with an HOV bypass lane.* There does not appear to be a need for ramp meters at this location. Ramp meters are not installed until the hourly traffic volume reaches 900 vehicles per hour. The southbound on-ramp is projected to have 290 vehicles per hour by the year 2030. HOV lanes are provided only if ramp meters are authorized.

*Build a dedicated right-turn lane to Jensen Road from the Highway 1 Southbound on-ramp.* This proposal is beyond the scope of work of this project, which is to improve safety at the intersection of Highway 1 and Salinas Road. The intersection of Jensen Road and Highway 1 is being improved to provide standard truck turn improvements.

*Build an auxiliary lane on Highway 1 Northbound from Jensen Road to the Salinas Road off-ramp.* This proposal is beyond the scope of work of the project, which is to improve safety at the intersection of Highway 1 and Salinas Road.

*End the right lane on Highway 1 Southbound as an auxiliary lane to the Salinas Road off-ramp.* The Highway 1 southbound right lane is being moved left to merge with the through southbound traffic lane south of the southbound off-ramp to Salinas Road.

*Make the proposed frontage county road an extension of Salinas Road.* This idea was considered early in the project development process, but was rejected because the design would have required 260-meter (850-foot) radius curves, requiring more right-of-way and affecting more farmland to the west of the interchange.

*Build two dedicated left-turn lanes to Salinas Road, and one dedicated straight lane to the frontage county road on the Highway 1 Southbound off-ramp.* The project proposes two lanes on the highway southbound off-ramp intersection with Salinas Road. One lane is dedicated to left turns only; the other lane is for both left turns and through traffic to the frontage road. The proposed design would handle the projected traffic volumes for the year 2030 with a Level of Service of A. Adding another lane is unnecessary and would increase the farmland and oak woodland impacts on the west side of the southbound off-ramp.

*On the frontage county road northbound at the Salinas Road intersection, build one dedicated straight lane to the Highway 1 Southbound on-ramp, one dedicated right turn lane to the dedicated left turn lane for the Highway 1 Northbound on-ramp, and one dedicated right turn lane to Salinas Road.* The idea of providing a dedicated lane for vehicles turning right from the frontage road to Salinas Road was considered, but rejected as it would create the need for an additional lane on the overcrossing. Based on traffic volumes projected for 2030, the proposed design would have enough green signal time to handle all projected traffic moves and provide a Level of Service of A.

*Build on Highway 1 Northbound off-ramp one dedicated left-turn lane to Salinas Road, one straight lane to the Highway 1 Northbound on-ramp, and two dedicated right-turn lanes to Salinas Road.* Currently, there are two lanes at the northbound off-ramp and Salinas Road intersection. One lane is for left turns and through traffic; the other lane is for right turns only. Based on projected traffic volumes, this design is adequate to handle traffic with a Level of Service of A.

*End the right-turn lane as an auxiliary lane to the Highway 1 Southbound on-ramp on Salinas Road Westbound.* Due to comments received regarding safety for pedestrians and bicycles, the design has been changed to extend the westbound lane on Salinas Road to make a either a left- or right-turn at the southbound Highway 1 loop on-ramp. The Level of Service would remain at A with the change.

*End the right-turn lane on Salinas Road Eastbound as a dedicated right-turn lane to the proposed Park and Ride Lot.* The project is not proposing to construct a Park and Ride.

*Build the Highway 1 Northbound on-ramp to end as its own lane and an auxiliary land to the West Riverside Drive Northbound off-ramp.* This proposal is outside the scope of this project, which is to improve safety at the intersection of Highway 1 and Salinas Road.

Major projects like this one have to plan for traffic conditions 20 years after the project is completed. Assumptions are made at the beginning that may or may not become reality. Any additions beyond what is needed within the 20-year projections would be viewed as growth-inducing and would need to be addressed and justified.

**MONTEREY COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND HISTORICAL  
LAND CONSERVANCY**

P O Box 1731, Salinas CA 93902

August 4, 2005

Wendy Walden  
Central Coast Management Research  
California Department of Transportation  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Ms. Walden:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment for the Salinas Road Interchange Project in Monterey County.

Of special interest is the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use as described under section 2.1.2 Farmlands. The proposed project would permanently convert 30 to 35 acres of irrigated farmland to non-agricultural use depending on the alternative selected.

It appears that both the California Coastal Commission and Monterey County intend to require mitigation of the farmland conversion. It is the intent of the Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Land Conservancy to recommend that mitigation be required by one or two methods.

The preferred method would be to restore degraded parcels of land so that they become viable farmland so that the project does not reduce the total amount of farmland in Monterey County. The Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Land Conservancy owns property that faces on Highway 1 south of the proposed project that could be utilized for a one to one restoration mitigation project and would be willing to cooperate with the Department of Transportation if this method were selected. If you would like I would be willing to provide you with a fieldtrip to show you the possible restorable property.

The second method to mitigate the loss of farmland by the proposed project is to preserve other farmland in perpetuity through participation in funding agricultural conservation programs to purchase permanent agricultural conservation easements on other irrigated farmland throughout Monterey County where three acres of other farmland is preserved for every one acre that is converted from agricultural use. If this method is selected, the Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Land Conservancy can assist the Department of Transportation by accepting funds to purchase agricultural conservation easements on other farmland in Monterey County. The Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Land Conservancy has completed 46 other projects that has protected over

Contributions are tax-deductible under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code

15,000 acres of farmland in Monterey County and has nine other projects in process at this time of which five have already been funded

It is important to serve the public through improved road infrastructures such as the proposed project, however it is also important to protect the basic industry of Monterey County, agricultural, not only for the residents who make their living from agricultural, but for the benefits that agricultural provides to the state and the nation.

Please indicate in your remarks to the public questions and comments which mitigation method that you propose to utilize

If I can be of assistance, please contact me at (831) 449-2743.

Sincerely,

  
Sherwood Darlington  
Board President

Contributions are tax-deductible under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code

Response: Caltrans proposes to create or restore degraded parcels to coastal agricultural preservation land use, at a ratio of 1:1, as mitigation for impacts from the preferred alternative on agricultural lands. Refer to Sections 2.2.3 Farmlands and 3.3 Interagency Coordination. Caltrans is conducting environmental studies of the Monterey County Agricultural and Historical Land Conservancy parcels, discussed in your comment letter, for their suitability as agricultural mitigation parcels. We look forward to future cooperation with your organization to facilitate agricultural mitigation for this project.

# NORTH COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

of Monterey County

August 2, 2005

Wendy Waldron  
Central Coast Management Branch  
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93041

Dear Ms. Waldron:

This letter is in response to the 'Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Salinas Road Interchange Project'

The North County Fire Protection District endorses and applauds the proposals. To augment the statement regarding the impact this project will have on response times, we anticipate that it will greatly improve our response times both north and south on Highway One. We also anticipate that the project will decrease the number and severity of traffic accidents in the intersection.

The fire suppression pond should be maintained with an adequate volume of water and the amount of plant material and detritus that might produce a hindrance to fire suppression should be limited.

Also, any of the alternatives are acceptable, but Alternative #1 is preferred. We would require that all signal lights be installed with an 'opticom' type of control device.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Chris W. Orman  
Fire Chief

- Serving
- Castroville
- Elkhorn
- Las Lomas
- Moss Landing
- Oak Hills
- Pajaro
- Prunedale
- Royal Oaks

11200 Speegle Street, Castroville, CA 95012-2546 • (831) 633-2578 or 722-7833 Fax (831) 633-2572



Response:

The volume of the fire suppression pond is required to be 1,000,000 gallons. This volume would be maintained at all times.

Plant material and detritus will be limited by using sandbags to separate the volumes of water.

Alternative 7 has been selected as the preferred alternative.

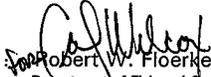
The request for an emergency vehicle detector was directed to the County of Monterey and the Transportation Agency of Monterey County, who agreed to fund the detectors.

State of California

**M e m o r a n d u m**

To : Ms. Wendy Waldron  
California Department of Transportation  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Fax: (805) 549-3233

Date: August 12, 2005

From :  Robert W. Floerke, Regional Manager  
Department of Fish and Game - Central Coast Region, Post Office Box 47, Yountville, California 94599

Subject : Salinas Road Interchange Project Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment, SCH# 2005071059, Monterey County

Department of Fish and Game (DFG) personnel have reviewed the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment for the Salinas Road Interchange Project dated June 2005. The project is located on Highway 1 in northern Monterey County, and lies between Jensen and Trafton roads, south of the Monterey/Santa Cruz county line and south of the City of Watsonville. The project includes a variety of alternatives which propose to add an over-crossing and off ramps to Highway 1 to improve access conditions to and from Salinas Road. Most of the current land use in the proposed project area is for agricultural crops. Limited wetland (0.10-acre) and oak woodland (3 trees on 0.06 acre) would be impacted by the project. Potential breeding habitat for Federally threatened California red-legged frog (CRLF) (*Rana aurora draytoni*) exists within the project boundary. In addition, one CRLF was found on site during surveys five years ago, but habitat conditions have been diminished in the area as a by product of agricultural maintenance activities.

The document identifies sensitive resources and offers effective mitigation for the protection of existing resource values. There are a few areas where the document needs clarification regarding mitigation ratios for potential impacts to wetland habitat. Please see our comments listed below.

The mitigation listed on page 87 is acceptable to DFG for the loss of three oak trees. DFG also recommends removing the oak trees outside the bird nesting season to further reduce potential impacts to birds. The nesting season is defined as the period March 1 to July 31 annually.

According to the document, total wetland impacts of the project would be approximately one-tenth of an acre and the mitigation offered would be in the 1:1 to 3:1 range. DFG recommends that mitigation for wetland impacts be 1.5:1 given the

Ms. Wendy Waldron

2

August 12, 2005

degraded nature of the "maintained drainage ditches" which provide wetland habitat. Any other wetland habitat proposed to be impacted is recommended to be mitigated at 3:1.

Page 88, under the "Wetlands and other Waters, Regulatory Settings" section, acknowledges that a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) will likely be needed for this project. The applicant should contact DFG at (707) 944-5520 for an SAA package. You may also visit the DFG website at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/1600> for the SAA package.

The "Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation Measures" listed starting on page 98 for the protection of CRLF are acceptable to DFG and include consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under a Programmatic Biological Opinion for Federal Aid Projects.

Page 102, section 2.3.4 "Invasive Species," indicates that clean seed sources and fill material will be used on site to control importation of exotic plant species. The document also states that iceplant, pampas grass and French broom can be found on the project site. Enhancement in the form of controlling/removing these species should also be incorporated into this project. This is consistent with measure number ten of the Avoidance, Minimization and/or Mitigation measures in the document

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. If you have further questions, please contact Mr. Jeff Cann, Associate Wildlife Biologist, at (831) 649-7194; or Mr. Scott Wilson, Habitat Conservation Supervisor, at (707) 944-5584.

cc: David Pereksta  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
293 Portola Road, Suite B  
Ventura, CA 93003-7726

State Clearinghouse

Response:

We have included a migratory bird provision in the project's special provisions that would require that any oak trees to be removed in the nesting period (March 1 to July 31) be surveyed by a qualified biologist before they are removed to ensure that nesting birds are not present. Refer to Section 2.4.3.

Refer to Section 2.4.2, which proposes to create 0.24 hectares (0.6 acres) of wetlands for 0.08 hectares (0.2 acres) of impacts.

The invasive species jubata grass and French broom within the work area would be targeted for removal before earthwork activities. After construction, a minimum 1-year plant establishment and weed control period would be implemented by a contractor in all areas treated with erosion control seed mixes. In highway planting areas (where trees and shrubs are planted), a minimum 3-year plant establishment and weed control period would apply.

# MONTEREY COUNTY

## PLANNING AND BUILDING INSPECTION DEPARTMENT

- 168 W ALISAL STREET SECOND FLOOR SALINAS, CALIFORNIA 93901 PLANNING: (831) 755-6026 BUILDING: (831) 755-5027 FAX: (831) 757-9516  
 COASTAL OFFICE, 2620 FIRST AVENUE MARINA CALIFORNIA 93933 PLANNING: (831) 883-7500 BUILDING: (831) 883-7501 FAX: (831) 384-3261  
 KING CITY OFFICE 522 N SECOND STREET KING CITY CALIFORNIA 93980 BUILDING: (831) 385-8315 FAX: (831) 385-8387



<http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/pbi/>

August 23, 2005

California Department of Transportation  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Attn: Wendy Waldron

**SUBJECT: SALINAS ROAD (PD041231)  
Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental  
Assessment**

Dear Ms. Waldron;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the subject CEQA document for the Salinas Road Interchange project. Also thank you for extending the comment period from August 12 to August 26, 2005. Recognizing the long process that has occurred to bring this important safety project to the environmental review stage, staff is anxious to complete the Monterey County permit processing requirements in order to have this project constructed as soon as possible. To that end staff has provided comments below that will address our primary regulatory issues as the process continues, and will enable us to efficiently incorporate your environmental review document into our approval process. We look forward to meeting with you soon to work through the points addressed below and where possible provide assistance responding to them in a timely manner.

As a Responsible Agency, Monterey County's planning staff has reviewed the document relative to:

- consistency with the adopted Monterey County General Plan for policy issues related to noise, housing, energy and human resources that are not addressed in LCP.
- consistency with the Monterey County Local Coastal Program (LCP) as it relates to projects contained in the Coastal Zone and specifically the North County Coastal Land Use Plan (LUP) and Coastal Implementation Plan (CIP); and
- impact analysis and mitigation;

Following a site visit to review the project with you, we may provide an addendum to these comments.

### A. GENERAL PLAN

On page 56 there is an explanation regarding the relationship between the Monterey County General Plan and the Local Coastal Program. At the end of the first full paragraph of this page the sentence concludes with: "Where the two plans conflict, the more restrictive plan applies." This statement is in error. The Monterey County Local Coastal Program (LCP) is the determining plan and regulation for areas in the Coastal Zone for those topics that it addresses. For topics that are not

addressed in the LCP (Noise and many issues related to Housing for example) the General Plan policies apply.

The IS should note the jurisdiction of the Monterey County General Plan related to the policy areas of noise, housing, energy and human resources. Upon this recognition, the IS should address the noise policies and confirm consistency with County noise thresholds.

**Clarification of Ag Conversion:**

As noted below, there is a policy inconsistency in the Coastal Zone regarding the conversion of agricultural uses to public/quasi-public (PQP) uses. To determine the exact number of acres converted the IS needs to determine where the existing Caltrans right of way is located and then determine the amount of new conversion that will occur outside of that right of way. We request that the document include detailed illustrations showing existing right of way in relation to proposed improvements.

The County has historically interpreted the Caltrans right of way as an existing public/quasi-public use to allow for on-going maintenance and repair activities. Those areas that are currently being farmed within the Caltrans right of way should not be considered designated as an agricultural use for purposes of LUP consistency analysis. However, the IS should acknowledge that an LCP amendment changing the land use from Ag to PQP is required for the areas outside of the right of way and the amount of acreage to be converted. Areas located between Highway One and the new frontage roads will no longer be considered viable agriculture and need to be included in the calculation of agricultural acres lost/converted.

**B. COASTAL ZONE**

As noted above in the first paragraph the project appears to be entirely contained in the Coastal Zone. This is premised on an interpretation of the LCP Coastal Zone maps that all of the improvements on the northeast corner of the project adjacent to Salinas Road and Highway 1 are within existing Caltrans right of way. Staff has historically interpreted the Coastal Zone extending to the edge of the Highway 1 right of way.

In the Coastal Zone the North County Land Use Plan (LUP) and related Coastal Implementation Plan (CIP - Chapter 20.144) and the Zoning Ordinance (Title 20) constitute the applicable planning and regulatory documents that apply to the subject project.

**General Comments:** The document needs to provide a matrix review of applicable LUP and IP policies and provide some discussion on how the project is either consistent or inconsistent based on some brief explanation. As the current table provided on page 58 only addresses the overall policy section introduction and not the specific policies.

**Visual Resources:** There needs to be recognition that the project is designated as a scenic corridor on the LUP map. Analysis should address specific policies. In lieu of safety and engineering requirements, the project needs to the maximum extent feasible, avoid conversion of the scenic rural qualities of this area into an urbanized area. The text recognizes this potential conversion although evidence that the mitigation will avoid urbanization needs to be more comprehensive because it appears that the result will still be a conversion to urbanization.

**Environmentally Sensitive Habitats:** There needs to be recognition that development in Environmentally Sensitive Habitat (ESHA) is prohibited pursuant to Policy 2.3.2 of the LUP except for resource dependent uses. Currently there is the potential for direct impacts to coastal wetlands which meets the definition of ESHA and would be prohibited pursuant to this policy section of the LUP. Staff has contacted the Coastal Commission staff and discussed the possibility that some of the identified ESHA wetlands may be mis-identified. If there are direct impacts to ESHA then there needs to be a discussion of alternative designs to avoid ESHA. Analysis should address specific policies.

**Diking, Dredging, Filling and Shoreline Structures:** There needs to be specific discussion regarding how the project appears to meet the consistency test related to allowing the filling of wetlands as allowed in Policy 2.4.2.1 for the protection of public health and safety. The discussion should also recognize that these policies appear to provide an exception to the environmentally sensitive habitat policies related to wetlands as addressed above. Analysis should address specific policies.

**Water Resources:** Analysis should address specific policies and that the project is located in sub-watershed 22 as defined in the LUP. With mitigation, there appears to be the ability to make a consistency finding for this policy section with a specific explanation for each policy. In addition, the report should reference the Monterey County Erosion Control and Grading Ordinances (16.08 and 16.12 respectively) and show that the project will comply with the requirements of these ordinances.

**Agriculture:** There is no provision in the North County Land Use Plan for the conversion of designated Agricultural Preservation and Agricultural Conservation lands to Public/Quasi Public uses such as public highway and roadway improvements as articulated in Policy 2.6.2.1 and supported by policies 2.6.3.2-5 of the LUP. To remedy this inconsistency and in light of the strong policies in Section 3.1 to improve the highway network, staff suggests recognizing this inconsistency and propose a LUP amendment changing the project area to a Public/Quasi Public designation to accommodate the project. The proposal would also need to provide specific mitigation proposals and alternatives to offset the reduction in productive farmlands.

**Transportation:** As stated above there is strong policy supporting improving the highway network. Analysis should address specific policies and this section should be more detailed.

**Land Use and Development:** In contrast to the statement Page 58, the project is not an allowed use in land use plan areas designated Agricultural Preservation and Agricultural Conservation as explained in Policy 4.3.1 E and F. As stated above, staff recommends that Caltrans submit an application to change the land use designation to Public/Quasi Public to remedy the current inconsistency concurrently with the Coastal Development Permit application to permit the proposed project. As stated above, justification would include consistency with transportation policies and public health and safety reasons. Caltrans would also need to provide a realistic and viable plan to mitigate the loss of productive agricultural lands. Analysis should address specific policies and this section should be more detailed.

**Archeological Resources:** There should be some recognition of the LUP policies addressing this issue and that the project is located in the "High Archeological Sensitivity Zone" as mapped on County resource maps and that requires a report per County guidelines and needs environmental

assessment per County CEQA Guidelines. Also, there is a report for a developed parcel (APN 117-062-017-000) in the Hilltop Industrial Park adjacent to the project that identifies a known archeological site within 1 kilometer of that parcel. This issue and analysis should be specifically addressed in the impact section of the initial study.

### C. CEQA

**Rivers/Physical Environment/Other Waters:** Page 49 states that there are no wild and scenic rivers within the project area. In order to accurately describe the setting, this document needs to identify the proximity of the project to major bodies of water including the Pajaro River, Salinas River, Elkhorn Slough and Pacific Ocean. The impact discussion on page 84 needs to be expanded to clarify how water gets to the major water bodies in order to assess if there may be off-site impacts.

**Biological:** There is no discussion of the California Tiger Salamander (CTS) in this document. As a listed species identified in the project area, this needs to be addressed with proper mitigation. Although the document includes discussion of oak tree policies in the LCP, it does not address compliance with recent State Law addressing oak woodlands (SB1334-Oak Woodlands Conservation, Conversion & Environmental Review).

**Archeological:** See comments above

**Mitigation:** Mitigation Measures generally lack identification of who is responsible and the timing necessary to measure success of completion. In addition, and there are a number of deferred mitigation. Some examples include:

- (a) Reference to "greatest extent feasible", but nothing states who gets to determine what is feasible and if that level of measure has been met.
- (b) Replanting makes no mention of required success criteria to evaluate if mitigation is met. Timing is stated as "ASAP", so there is no way to evaluate if this has been met.
- (c) Pg 73, second and fourth bullets defer mitigation of farmland impacts to when the CDP is processed. If these types of issues are not resolved here, the County may need to complete a supplemental CEQA review with the Coastal Development Permit to assess those impacts and provide proper mitigation. Caltrans needs to identify mitigation for the removal of prime agricultural lands pursuant to the LCP. The third bullet point says mitigation "*could be used*". Please clarify what that means, when this would be decided, and by whom. We suggest a meeting between Caltrans, the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner, County Planning, and Coastal Commission staff to discuss how to accomplish this prior to finalizing this document.
- (d) Pg 78 "*some*" work will be scheduled off -peak. How much is "*some*"? The MND/EA needs to identify specifically what is needed to reduce impact to a less than significant level.
- (e) Pg 82 and 87 says trees removed will be replaced at a ratio of 1:5, and goes on to defer by saying "*as agreed by Monterey County*". CEQA requires agreeing to mitigation as part of assessment and the LCP requires a minimum 1:1 replacement of trees removed.
- (f) There is discussion of inlet protection required, but no mention of where and how that would be required. Similarly stockpiles are to be in "*locations protected from*

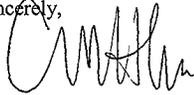
runoff". The mitigation needs to provide more details as to what constitutes "protect from runoff".

- (g) Wetland mitigation is expressed as a range 1:1 to 3:1. First of all, there needs to be a minimum threshold, and that has been established as 4:1 for other coastal projects. That is a minimum and the mitigation language must be revised to assure this is met (e.g.; success criteria)

CEQA requires that formulation of mitigation measures not be deferred until some future time and they must be fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or incorporated into the project design.

If you have any questions, or if you would like further clarification, please feel free to contact myself at 831-755-5103 / holmcp@co.monterey.ca.us, or Jeff Main at 831-755-5195 / mainj@co.monterey.ca.us. We look forward to receiving a final document that addresses the issues we have noted.

Sincerely,



Carl P. Holm, AICP  
Senior Planner



Jeff Main, AICP  
Planning & Building Services Manager

Cc: Sup. Calcagno  
S. Hennessy, PBI Director  
A. Knaster, PBI Chief Asst Director  
D. Ellis, PBI Asst Director

Response:

### **A. General Plan**

**General Plan:** Refer to Section 2.1: Noise and Vibration and Appendix I: Monterey County Coastal Policy Analysis for a discussion of County noise policies and consistency with the County noise thresholds.

Section 2.2 has been revised to accurately reflect the relationship between the Monterey County General Plan and the Local Coastal Program.

**Clarification of Ag Conversion:** Refer to Figure 15 and to Section 2.2.3 for a more detailed depiction of the impacts the preferred alternative would have on agricultural lands. All calculations of impacts to agricultural lands have assumed that lands in the existing Caltrans right-of-way are zoned public/quasi-public and, therefore, were not included when calculating total impacts to agricultural lands. Refer to Section 2.2.3 for calculations of impacts to agricultural lands from the preferred alternative.

### **B. Coastal Zone**

**General Comments:** Refer to Appendix I: Monterey County Coastal Policy Analysis for a matrix review of applicable Land Use Plan and Implementation Plan policies. Section 2.2.2 has been revised to summarize the policy matrix.

**Visual Resources:** Section 2.2.6 has been revised to note that Highway 1 is designated as a scenic corridor on the Land Use Plan map and reference is made to specific policies. Refer to Appendix I: Monterey County Coastal Policy Analysis.

**Environmentally Sensitive Habitats:** At the request of the California Coastal Commission, live oak woodlands are no longer referred to as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas.

Section 2.4.2(1) of the Monterey County North County Land Use Plan provides for filling wetlands for health and safety purposes, and the project meets the definition of a health and safety project. Therefore, the project is consistent with this section of the Monterey County Land Use Plan.

Section 2.3.2 of the Monterey County North County Land Use Plan prohibits development in Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas, including wetlands. However, discussion with Monterey County Coastal Planning and California Coastal Commission staff, acknowledges that the Coastal Zone wetlands that would be affected by the project are of inconsequential habitat value due to their function as agricultural drainage ditches and regular removal of vegetation. Furthermore, the project would affect less than 0.08 hectare (0.2 acre) of coastal wetlands. Mitigation of impacts to these wetlands would be at a ratio of 3:1; resulting in an overall enhancement of coastal wetlands in the project area.

Wetland impacts would result from placing permanent fill where agricultural drainage channels cross the highway. The existing culverts would be extended, so hydrologic connectivity would be maintained. On balance, the project substantially conforms to the Monterey County North County Land Use Plan.

**Diking, Dredging, Filling and Shoreline Structures:** Refer to Appendix I: Monterey County Coastal Policy Analysis for analysis of how the project meets the consistency test related to allowing the filling of wetlands as allowed in Policy 2.4.2.1. The project meets the definition of a health and safety project.

**Water Resources:** Refer to Appendix I: Monterey County Coastal Policy Analysis, for specific policy analysis.

**Agriculture:** Refer to Appendix I: Monterey County Coastal Policy Analysis, for specific policy analysis. Policy 2.6.1 allows for conversion of Coastal Agricultural land uses where there is a need to protect the public health and safety. The project is a safety project and is consistent with this policy. Section 2.2.3 of this document demonstrates that project would not affect the land's long-term agricultural viability nor does it diminish the agricultural use of parcels. The project would improve transport of agricultural products, providing a benefit to this industry. Impacts to agricultural lands would be in the form of restoration of degraded parcels or creation of coastal agricultural preservation land at a 1:1 ratio. The project substantially conforms to the Monterey County Coastal Plans.

**Transportation:** Refer to Appendix I: Monterey County Coastal Policy Analysis.

**Land Use and Development:** Refer to Appendix I: Monterey County Coastal Policy Analysis. When policies 4.3.2 E and F, are viewed in conjunction with Policies 2.6.1, 2.6.2(1-3), and 2.6.3.5, the project substantially conforms to the

Monterey County Coastal Policies. Refer also to Section 2.2.3 in this document and to the discussion regarding **Agriculture**, above.

**Archaeological Resources:** An Historic Properties Survey Report was prepared for the proposed project, in keeping with requirements included in Monterey County coastal policies 2.9.1 and 2.9.2. This report did not identify cultural resources within the project study area. The State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with these findings, as noted in Appendix D. Refer also to Appendix I: Monterey County Coastal Policy Analysis.

### **CEQA**

**Rivers/Physical Environment/Other Waters:** Currently, water drains from the highway through a series of concrete lined ditches that drain the highway and adjacent agricultural fields. The water eventually enters the Pajaro River and Elkhorn Slough.

**Biological:** California tiger salamander was addressed in the project's Natural Environment Study and Biological Assessment. The Natural Environment Study determined that the project would not affect California tiger salamander because no suitable habitat was found. The nearest known breeding sites are about 4 miles away, while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considers the species' maximum dispersal distance to be about 1.2 miles. No potential breeding locations were identified any nearer to the project than the known locations 4 miles away. Additionally, all of the affected uplands are unsuitable habitat, being either row crops or areas isolated by row crops.

**Archaeological:** The State Historic Preservation Officer has reviewed cultural resources studies prepared by Caltrans and concurred that the project would not affect cultural resources. Paleontological studies concluded that the project would affect paleontological resources. The Historic Properties Survey Report, which provides details of the cultural resources surveys done for this project, will be provided to Monterey County during the local coastal permit process.

### **Mitigation:**

- a) Refer to Sections 2.2.5 and 2.3.1 for revised language.
- b) Refer to Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 for revised language.

- c) Refer to Section 3.3 for a discussion of the meeting held between agricultural representatives to define appropriate mitigation for this project. Refer to Section 2.2.3 for specific mitigation measures that are included in the project to mitigate impacts to farmlands.
- d) Refer to Section 2.2.5 for revised language.
- e) Refer to Sections 2.2.6 and 2.4.1 for revised language. Replanting ratios for all trees removed would be five trees for every one removed.
- f) Refer to Section 2.3.1 for revised language. Specific locations of inlets and excess material stockpiles will be provided when Caltrans applies for the local coastal development permit.
- g) Refer to Section 2.4.2 for revised language. Wetlands in the project area will be enhanced through mitigation measures included in the project. The project will create a minimum of 0.60 acre of high functioning wetland, that would be protected in perpetuity, for impacts to 0.2 acre regularly maintained and reconfigured agricultural ditches which act as low functioning wetlands, and which meet the definition of coastal wetlands. Monitoring and success criteria are presented in section 2.4.2.

# MONTEREY COUNTY



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

168 W Alisal St., 2nd Floor, Salinas, CA 93901-2680 • (831) 755-4800 • FAX (831) 755-4958

Ronald J. Lundquist, P.E., Interim Public Works Director

August 12, 2005

Wendy Waldron  
Associate Environmental Planner  
Central Coast Management Branch  
California Department of Transportation  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

**SUBJECT: SALINAS ROAD INTERCHANGE PROJECT INITIAL  
STUDY WITH PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE  
DECLARATION/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Salinas Road Interchange Project Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment*. The project proposes a new highway interchange on Highway 1 at Salinas Road, and operational improvements to the highway between Jensen Road and the Trafton Road undercrossing in the north area of Monterey County. As the Public Works Department for Monterey County, we are interested in your project and its potential impacts on the County roadway system. We have reviewed the initial study, and offer the following comments.

- Because the proposed frontage road between Jensen Road and the interchange will be relinquished to the County, the frontage road design should be consistent with Monterey County Standards. The County requests the proposed frontage road be consistent with the County's modified standard secondary street section, paved 40 feet wide, and include 8-foot shoulders along its entirety. A 2:1 slope along the frontage road would be acceptable to the County (a 4:1 slope has been indicated by Caltrans) in an effort to reduce the footprint required for the roadway.
- The County does not support a phased approach of this project. This matter has been mentioned previously and has been included in Value Analysis discussions; however, the County is not in favor of phasing the improvements included within this project.

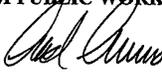
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WENDY WALDRON, ASSOCIATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNER  
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
AUGUST 12, 2005  
PAGE TWO

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration. Should you have any further questions regarding this matter, please feel free to call me at (831) 755-4937.

Sincerely,

**RONALD J. LUNDQUIST, P.E.**  
**INTERIM PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR**

By   
Chad Alinio, P.E.  
Transportation Engineer

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Response:

The western frontage road has been designed with 40 feet of pavement, which includes 8-foot shoulders. Slopes for the frontage road have been increased from 1:4 to 1:2 where safety would not be compromised. Phasing of the project is no longer proposed.



Regional Transportation Planning Agency • Congestion Management Planning  
Local Transportation Commission • Monterey County Service Authority for Freeways & Expressways

August 24, 2005

Wendy Waldron  
Environmental Planner  
Caltrans, District 5  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

**RE: Additional Comments on SR 1 - Salinas Road Interchange Project  
Environmental Document**

Dear Ms. Waldron *Wendy*

The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) submits the following additional comments on the Initial Study and Environmental Assessment on the SR 1 - Salinas Road Interchange project:

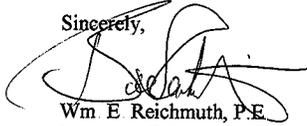
- 1 TAMC recommends Alternative 7 as preferred because the alternative provides the best traffic circulation and least environmental impact. The project has the least impact to agricultural resources, lowest required right-of-way acquisition, minimal impacts to biological resources, provides better traffic safety with a southbound on-ramp, and provides better sight distance for drivers.
- 2 One issue that remains unresolved is whether to prohibit left turns into and out of Jensen Road. TAMC and the project team agree that such left turns should be discouraged. Prohibiting these turns, however, could adversely affect Dominic's Produce Stand. TAMC requests that Caltrans further consider the option of prohibiting left turn movements into and out of Jensen Road and make that decision during the design phase of the project after evaluating the potential impacts and ways to address these impacts more carefully.
- 3 TAMC also supports the recommendation from some nearby landowners and Caltrans to have the eastside frontage road connect to Salinas Road near the interchange rather than to Jensen Road, as currently proposed. This reconfiguration will direct more traffic to the new interchange, which can accommodate greater volumes than the Jensen Road intersection.

55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas CA 93901-2902 • Tel: (831) 775-0903 • Fax: (831) 775-0897 • Website: [www.tamcmonterey.org](http://www.tamcmonterey.org)

Ms Waldron  
August 24, 2005  
Page 2 of 2

TAMC looks forward to continuing our close coordination through project completion. If you have any questions about these comments, please feel free to contact me or Lisa Rheinheimer at (831) 775-0903

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Reichmuth", written over a horizontal line.

Wm. E. Reichmuth, P.E.  
Executive Director

cc: Richard Rosales, Caltrans Project Manager

Response:

Alternative 7 has been chosen as the preferred alternative.

Upon further consideration of prohibiting left turns at Jensen Road, the project development team agreed to continue to allow left turns at the intersection. Collision rates at Jensen Road would continue to be monitored after the project were completed.

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT OFFICE  
725 FRONT STREET, SUITE 300  
SANTA CRUZ CA 95060  
PHONE: (831) 427-4863  
FAX: (831) 427-4877



September 6, 2005

Wendy Waldron  
Central Coast Management Branch  
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

**Subject: Salinas Road Interchange Project: Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment, June 2005**

Dear Wendy:

Commission staff appreciates the extended opportunity to comment on the draft CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration for improvements to the State Highway Route 1/Salinas Road interchange in northern Monterey County. We would like to preface these remarks by commending the process to date. We recall having serious concerns with some of the initial concepts for the proposed intersection improvements. These original issue topics are outlined in our comments on the Draft Project Study Report for the project (letter of May 31, 2000 from Kelly Cuffe). There has truly been a collaborative process to resolve these issues, as reflected in the CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration (ND) document. We look forward to continuing what has proven to be a productive dialog.

At this point it is important to address remaining coastal resource impacts identified in the document (primarily, habitat, agricultural land loss, and maintenance of the rural, scenic character of the area). In order to move forward, and as acknowledged in the ND document, it will be necessary to finalize the project and its mitigation measures in a manner that can be found consistent with the Monterey County Local Coastal Program. This letter amplifies some of these requirements and their ramifications.

**Agricultural land conversion.** With regard to farmland loss (ND section 2.1.2), each of the alternatives will result in a conversion of a significant amount of cultivated cropland (13.8 to 15.7 acres) to public facility use (i.e., the intersection itself and related improvements). This includes slightly more than 5 acres within the footprint of the frontage roads. We would like to explore with you further design adjustments or other measures that might avoid some of this loss—for example, narrowing the frontage road shoulders to 4 ft. instead of 8 ft., if a reasonable degree of bicycle safety can be maintained. Overall, we believe it is important to insure that all feasible methods to avoid loss of farmland acreage have been identified, and if feasible, applied. Further discussion between our office and yours would be greatly advanced by including better comparative mapping of the different acreages of farmland affected by the various components of the overall intersection project.

Salinas Rd Hwy1 interchange Neg Dec cmnt.v4 9.06.05.doc

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For those impacts that are unavoidable, the draft Negative Declaration commits to an appropriate mitigation via coordination with Monterey County through the coastal permit process. The potential techniques listed under the third bullet on page 73 are a good starting point for discussion. We would suggest first exploring those techniques, particularly: a) salvaging, stockpiling and reusing topsoil from the site, and b) participation in an agricultural land conservation program that focuses on the return to on-going productivity of farmland that has been degraded or abandoned. Such mitigation areas should obviously be ones where farming is an appropriate use and should be at least equal in size to the lands that will be converted.

Another, related issue is whether the Local Coastal Program (LCP) allows the proposed type of use within areas designated for Agriculture in the LCP's North County Land Use Plan (LUP). In our opinion, while the LUP might be interpreted to allow the proposed intersection improvements, the LCP's implementing ordinance does not appear to provide room for such an interpretation. Public uses, such as roads, are specifically not permitted in the Coastal Agricultural Preserve and Agricultural Conservation zones (Code Section 20.64 260). Therefore, a local coastal program amendment appears advisable in order to clarify, and to identify what mitigation measures would be needed. For example, the County could adopt a "no net loss" of farmed acreage standard.

Any such amendment would be submitted to the Coastal Commission, and will have to be found consistent with Coastal Act Section 30241. Thus, coordination with the Coastal Commission in addition to the County with regard to agricultural land loss and mitigation is recommended.

**Public access/bikeways.** With regard to bikeways (ND section 2.1.4), we would like to commend Caltrans for its attention to the intersection design details needed to accommodate bicycle traffic crossing Highway 1 at Salinas Road. And, the provision of the west-side frontage road with paved shoulders will greatly improve the safety and quality of the bicyclist experience between Salinas Road and Jensen Road. For the long run, we are actively supporting IAMC's efforts to establish the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) along the Monterey Bay shoreline (which in turn will function as a bicycle-friendly strand in the State-long California Coastal Trail). We envision eventual restoration of the paved Class I bikeway along the top of the Pajaro River levee as Watsonville's primary link to the MBSSI. In the meanwhile, the proposed west-side frontage road will serve as an interim route for regional southbound bicycle traffic emanating from Watsonville.

Appropriately, the document describes the Pacific Coast Bike Route—but, in a northerly direction only. In the southern direction the route is from Trafton Road via Jensen Road, then turning right onto Highway 1. While only tangential to the project limits, the overall regional context is significant and should be explained. More particularly in the vicinity of the Jensen Road intersection, design attention should be given to the transition of the bicycle route from the frontage road back to the Highway 1 shoulder. Thus, in designing the project at this intersection, bicycle travel should not be impeded and should be accommodated.

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**Scenic resources** We applaud the overpass visual concept of conforming to the visual profile of the southbound horizon, as it might have existed prior to any past highway excavation. The visual simulations graphically illustrate how this allows the bridge deck to match the elevations of the adjacent landform, thereby minimizing visual intrusion. South of the new overpass, we also recognize the design effort to smartly taper the four-lane segment of Highway 1 back to the two-lane configuration, thereby helping to protect the rural, scenic character of the highway as required by Coastal Act Section 30254.

These design responses by Caltrans clearly demonstrate the benefits of seeking and responding to community and agency input at the very earliest stages of a new project. We also are supportive of your proposal to work with a committee to advise you on the detailing of the architectural features, landscaping, and other design parameters of the project and will make ourselves available for this undertaking as staffing resources allow.

We also strongly recommend an additional design measure with respect to the west side frontage road, to minimize the visual sense of four parallel lanes of paved road. Specifically, the longitudinal profile of the frontage road should be consciously articulated in a way that matches the contour of the existing rolling landform, so that it has the appearance of "being draped lightly on the land." Further, such articulation would be deliberately distinct from that of the main, higher-speed Highway 1 roadway, thereby reducing the "four lane highway" impression.

With regard to the more specific visual impacts of the project (ND section 2.1.5), the text acknowledges that the accompanying photo simulations are devoid of landscaping. The results appear to be rather stark. Promised mitigation includes landscaping with native shrubs or tall grasses between the Highway One mainline and frontage road to the west. It appears that additional, appropriate native landscaping should be installed in the medians and alongside the rest of the highway where there are not farm fields. Views of the cultivated croplands should be protected as a visual amenity. Therefore, attention to the details of fencing and landscape species selection is important to avoid inadvertent screening of attractive farmland views.

**Water quality** With regard to water quality and stormwater runoff, the draft Negative Declaration generally describes a storm water drainage system that will be constructed under all build scenarios, consisting of a series of pipes, ditches and vegetated channels to convey storm water from the highway. It also notes that the increase in non-pervious surfaces will likely increase the rate and volume of storm water runoff containing sediments, petroleum distillates, and metals, mainly during heavy storms.

The Negative Declaration heavily relies on a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that will be prepared by a future contractor for review by Caltrans for compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Statewide Storm Water permit that has been granted to Caltrans by the State Water Resources Control Board. The SWPPP is also to identify all water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be implemented and maintained throughout the site during all phases of the project construction.

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One important element regarding water quality that appears to be missing, however, is a description and discussion of post-construction measures that Caltrans will implement to ensure that stormwater related facilities will be maintained over time in an environmentally beneficial manner. Further, Coastal Commission staff anticipates that greater detail on the design and implementation of the BMPs and overall storm water drainage system will be necessary to process a coastal development permit for the project. The Commission's Water Quality Unit may be able to be a resource for proceeding with the necessary detailing of BMPs and the overall drainage system.

**Wetlands.** With regard to wetland impacts (2.3.2), the draft Negative Declaration has a fairly complete general discussion of the regulatory setting. The text is correct in that the County's local coastal program does not establish any mitigation requirements for wetland loss. This, however, is because the filling of wetlands for nearly all activities, including road projects that are not incidental public services, is not permitted.

The "Regulatory Setting" section needs to be amplified to include other applicable County policies and standards. For example, the LCP requires a 100 foot demonstration area/setback from wetlands, as stated in County Code Section 20.144.040 B 2:

*Development on parcels containing or within 100 feet of environmentally sensitive habitats, as identified on the current North County Environmentally Sensitive Habitat resource map, other resource information, or planner's on-site investigation, shall not be permitted to adversely impact the habitat's long-term maintenance, as determined through the biological survey prepared for the project. Proposals shall be modified for siting, location, bulk, size, design, grading, vegetation removal, and/or other methods where such modifications will reduce impacts to an insignificant level and assure the habitat's long-term maintenance. Also, the recommended mitigation measures of the biological survey will be considered by the decision-making body and incorporated into the conditions of approval as found necessary by the decision-making body to implement land use plan policies and this ordinance and made conditions of project approval. (Ref. Policy 2.3.2.2)*

(Please note that an up-to-date map of Caltrans' current Right of Way (ROW) and expected future ROW will also assist us in being able to advise you as to regulatory requirements that will apply in the coastal zone, particularly with respect to wetlands issues.)

In terms of the affected environment and impact sections, we would like to see each wetland area clearly discussed separately, both in terms of all types of temporary impacts and permanent impacts as well as those areas slated for wetland restoration and/or creation. The Negative Declaration contains only a brief, aggregate discussion of anticipated impacts; namely, the placing of fill in the wetlands. However, construction could affect more than just the actual footprint of the fill. For example, would fill at one end of these swales affect their overall hydrology? Will the impacts be from removal or death of vegetation due to construction activities? Will some areas only temporarily be filled? Etc.

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Figure 15 maps five wetland areas potentially at issue in the coastal zone. From the Wetland Delineation Report it appears that:

- the wetland swale associated with Data Point 5 may be impacted by the proposed project;
- the wetland swale associated with Data Point 10 would be impacted by the proposed project (Note that this wetland swale appears to continue across the highway to the west and is mapped as wetland, although there are no data points associated with it; it thus would appear to be impacted by the proposed project );
- the wetland swale associated with Observation Point 4 may be impacted by the proposed project (Is this point currently within Caltrans' ROW?);
- the wetland associated with Data Points 1-3 and 6 -9 appears to be outside of the project area, but may be within the LCP-required 100 foot setback/demonstration area. It appears that this wetland area south of Trafton Road may be larger than mapped and should be re-delineated. (Please see enclosed August 19, 2005 memo from Coastal Commission Ecologist/Wetland Coordinator John Dixon )

In terms of mitigation, the first hurdle to overcome is to be able to find consistency with the Local Coastal Program. If the project cannot be modified to completely avoid fill in the noted wetlands nor to avoid development within 100 feet of the wetlands, the project will need to incorporate modifications will reduce impacts to an insignificant level and assure the habitat's long-term maintenance (as required by the above-cited Section 20.144.040 B.2). If this is not feasible, it appears that a Local Coastal Program amendment will be necessary for the project to move forward.

Such an amendment would need to include appropriate mitigation measures. The tentative measures listed in the Negative Declaration are a good start, but would have to be made more specific in the LCP amendment and associated coastal permit. The text suggests a mitigation ratio of up to 3:1; this is supported by Commission staff and is the ratio recommended to the County in the Commission's periodic review of the implementation of its LCP.

We encourage Caltrans to conduct the additional research and analysis requested by Dr. Dixon and this letter. With this information, Commission staff can then be available to advise you of the options and next steps that Caltrans' has available to it for meeting the necessary regulatory requirements within the coastal zone.

**Coast live oak habitat.** The protected status of oak woodlands needs to be corrected. These native woodlands are characterized as "environmentally sensitive habitat" (ND section 2.3.1, under Natural Communities/Regulatory Setting). The Monterey County LCP contains a specific definition of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat in Section 20.144.020.BE of the Zoning Ordinance. These habitats are similarly defined in LUP Section 2.3.2.1.

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However, oak woodlands are *not* defined as environmentally sensitive habitat, in either the LUP or the implementing ordinances. Instead, the LCP includes an oak woodland policy in recognition of the role of the indigenous Coast live oak forest in protecting the steep and erosive slopes of the North County area. Maintaining an intact cover of this native forest type is important for minimizing sedimentation impacts to the watersheds of Elkhorn Slough and associated wetlands.

Accordingly, on p 86 of the Initial Study document, the Land Use Plan chapter citation and first sentence of the paragraph should be clarified and corrected as follows: "The Monterey County Local Coastal Program's North County Land Use Plan considers the protection of oak woodlands that stabilize the steeper slopes of the watershed to be an important measure for avoiding disruption of environmentally sensitive habitat. For example, deforestation would subject the Elkhorn Slough system and associated wetlands or other environmentally sensitive habitats to erosion and sedimentation impacts. Section 2.3.3.A.4 of the plan states..."

Also, the draft Negative Declaration proposes replacement of any lost trees at a ratio of 1:5. Do you mean 5:1? At a minimum there should be a one to one replacement guided by a Forester's Assessment and Recommendation pursuant to the LCP standard (County Code section 20.144.050). We would anticipate that such an assessment show tree replacement occurring in an area that could function as replacement for, and preferably connecting to, existing oak woodland habitat.

**Local Coastal Program conformance.** The standard of review for this project's Coastal Development Permit (CDP) will be Monterey County LCP. Section 2.1.1.2 of the ND contains a table of selected LCP policies that would apply to the project (Table 10, on p. 58). However, the selection is limited to LUP policies, and do not encompass all of the applicable policies of the LUP nor the applicable development standards of the implementing ordinances. Furthermore, the matrix discussing applicable Coastal Act policies is also incomplete.

We believe an expanded analysis of the applicable LCP policies is absolutely essential. Such expanded analysis is important for: a) determining where impact avoidance measures will need to be incorporated in the project design; b) identifying applicable mitigation measures; c) evaluating the relative merits of the various project alternatives; and, d) identifying where LCP clarification or amendment will be needed. Some of the additional applicable policies can be gleaned from our previous correspondence on related topics—for example, see our May 17, 2000 memo to you from coastal planner Kelly Cuffe, on the subject of LCP policies applicable to potential widening of Highway 1 in the Moss Landing corridor.

Looking ahead, we offer our assistance in completing the recommended expanded analysis. We will welcome the opportunity to collaborate with Caltrans and the County staff to arrive at an agreed-upon list of applicable CDP criteria, as well as agreement on any LCP adjustments that might be identified from this process.

Caltrans  
Salinas Road Interchange Neg. Dec. comments  
September 6, 2005  
Page 7

**Conclusion: minimizing impacts, maximizing regional benefits** In conclusion, we note that in general the smaller the project footprint, the less disturbance of coastal resources. For example, common to all the alternatives is an improved farm access road inland of and paralleling Highway One at Jensen Road. We recommend its elimination, if alternative access can be identified. If such construction is unavoidable, its width should be reduced to the 12-foot County minimum standard for rural driveways and it should be left unpaved. Similarly, measures to minimize the footprint of the proposed west side frontage road need to be pursued as well. These measures should include avoidance of all non-essential cut and fill, minimization of roadway and shoulder widths, and allowing as much as possible for continued agricultural crop production along the margins of the roadway--perhaps under a specific encroachment permit.

Our work to date with you, other agencies and the public has allowed us to identify a number of appropriate, environmentally-friendly design features, and we hope to continue such progress. At this stage, the Coastal Commission's staff preference is for the alternative that most promotes the smooth and efficient flow of eastbound/southbound traffic to Highway 101, off of the Moss Landing Highway 1 corridor, and around the Elkhorn Slough watershed; and, that minimizes, to the greatest extent possible, impacts to wetlands, agricultural lands and the scenic rural character of the area. Our understanding is that would likely be a modified Alternative 7.

We hope to continue to work collaboratively with you and Monterey County as this project moves forward, and are available to answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,



Lee Otter  
Transportation and Public Access Liaison

cc: OPR Clearinghouse  
AMBAG Clearinghouse  
Jeff Main and Carl Holm, Monterey County

Enclosure: Aug 19, 2005, wetlands memo from John Dixon

Response:

**Agricultural land conversion.** In response to California Coastal Commission comments, the design of the preferred alternative, Alternative 7, has been modified from what was presented in the draft environmental document to reduce conversion of agricultural lands. These modifications reduced impacts to farmland by 2.6 hectares (6.3 acres), refer to Section 2.2.3. A more detailed map of the preferred alternative's impacts to farmland has been included as Figure 15. As the project design is finalized, Caltrans will continue to look for opportunities to minimize impacts to farmland.

Further discussion, among California Coastal Commission staff, Caltrans and other agency representatives, was conducted to identify mitigation measures for impacts to farmland. Refer to Sections 2.2.3 and 3.3.

Meetings were held among the California Coastal Commission, Monterey County Planning and Caltrans staffs to assess the need and content of policy changes to the Local Coastal Program. Refer to Section 3.3 and Appendices I and J.

**Public access/bikeways.** Refer to Section 2.2.5 for a revised description of the Pacific Coast Bike Route and for a description of how the preferred alternative would accommodate bicycle travel.

**Scenic Resources.** The profile of the west frontage road is being designed to County of Monterey standards of 80 kilometers per hour (50 miles per hour) and has been designed to conform to the natural landforms to the greatest extent possible while meeting Monterey County safety standards. Refer to Section 2.2.6 for discussion of mitigation measures for visual impacts.

**Water quality.** The project includes creation of at least 1524 linear meters (5000 linear feet) of vegetated ditches that would receive highway runoff. The ditches would be seeded with grasses and other low-growing vegetation to provide the greatest filtering capacity. Filtering capacity of the ditches would be maintained after construction. These ditches would also serve to enhance the functions of the coastal waters that would be affected with the project.

Caltrans would provide the County of Monterey greater detail on the design and implementation of the Best Management Practices and overall storm water drainage system when applying for the local coastal permit.

**Wetlands.** Caltrans, the County of Monterey and California Coastal Commission staffs have met to discuss conditions that would be required for the project to be consistent with Local Coastal Program policies. Refer to Section 3.3 and Appendices I and J. The project proposes to fill 0.08 hectare (0.2 acre) of agricultural ditches, which, because they are regularly reconfigured and cleaned of vegetation, currently contribute more sediment than they filter and do not provide biological habitat. Mitigation for impacts to the agricultural ditches, which meet the definition of coastal wetlands, would be the creation of 0.3 hectare (0.6 acre) of wetlands habitat. Furthermore the project includes creation of at least 1524 linear meters (5000 linear feet) of vegetated ditches that would receive highway runoff. The ditches would be seeded with grasses and other low-growing vegetation to provide the greatest filtering capacity. These ditches would also serve to enhance the functions of the coastal waters that would be affected with the project.

The channels that would receive fill with construction of the preferred alternative have been created by farmers to receive runoff from agricultural activities and are frequently graded and reshaped to facilitate the runoff. The County Code cited does not state that fill cannot be placed within 100 feet of wetlands, but that fill placed within 100 feet of wetlands “shall not be permitted to adversely impact the habitat’s long-term maintenance.” Placing fill in the agricultural ditches and within 100 feet of them would not adversely affect their long-term maintenance because the highway fills would be stabilized with vegetation and other erosion control measures as required by Caltrans’ National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit. All runoff from the Caltrans right-of-way would be treated before it leaves the right-of-way. Any additional sediment input resulting from the highway project would be nominal relative to the inputs from agricultural runoff and frequent channel-clearing activities. There are no buffers between the row crops and these ditches, and the farmers frequently grade and re-shape them.

**Coast Live Oak Habitat.** We have removed references to oak woodland as an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area.

Coastal Commission staff commented that the coast live oak woodland mapped in the project area is associated with a blue-line stream on the U.S. Geological Survey topographical map, and should, therefore, be considered a “coast live oak riparian” community. The blue-line stream on the U.S. Geological Survey map is actually a channeled drainage paralleling Trafton Road, about 1,000 feet north of the oak

woodland. The oak woodland is along the top of a north slope and is not associated with any aquatic features.

The oak woodland impacts (three isolated trees) are on a slope that drains toward the Pajaro River instead of Elkhorn Slough. The receiving water is the drainage channel along Trafton Road, which runs into a highly degraded, frequently maintained section through agricultural fields before eventually reaching the river. The small amount of sediment that would reach the Trafton Road channel is expected to be unappreciable in this agricultural context. Sediment would be minimized, regardless of how degraded the receiving waters may be, by implementing stormwater Best Management Practices. The new cut slope would be stabilized with vegetation and other erosion control measures as required by Caltrans' National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit.

**Local Coastal Program conformance.** Refer to Appendices I and J for revised discussion on Local Coastal Program policies.

# MST

MONTEREY-SALINAS TRANSIT

JOINT POWERS AGENCY MEMBERS:

City of Carmel-by-the-Sea • City of Del Rey Oaks • City of Marina • City of Monterey • City of Pacific Grove  
City of Salinas • City of Seaside • County of Monterey • City of Gonzales (ex officio)

August 10, 2005

Ms. Wendy Waldron  
Central Coast Management Branch  
California Department of Transportation  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

**RE: Notice of Preparation for a DEIR  
Salinas Road Interchange Project**

Dear Ms. Waldron:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation for a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Salinas Road Interchange Project. MST is pleased to see that public transit amenities are considered in each of the alternative designs (see Table 10 on page 58). It should be noted, however, that MST is eager for the completion of this project so that we can expand bus services to the City of Pajaro and enhance the use of the Park & Ride facility located at the intersection of Salinas Road and Highway 1.

MST currently operates two bus lines in the project area. Line 27 (Watsonville-Monterey) provides weekday service with five runs between 6:00 AM and 6:30 PM. Line 28 (Watsonville-Salinas) provides daily service with one-hour headways between 6:45 AM and 9:15 PM on weekdays and Saturdays as well as one-hour headways between 6:45 AM and 5:45 PM on Sundays.

Specifically, Line 27 connects the downtown Monterey Transit Plaza to the City of Seaside (along Fremont Street), the Edgewater Transit Exchange, and the cities of Marina, Castroville, Moss Landing (near a Park & Ride), and Moro Cojo via Highway 1, until it terminates at the Watsonville Transit Center. Line 28 connects the Salinas Transit Center and Amtrak Station to the cities of Castroville, Moss Landing (near a Park & Ride), and Pajaro (evenings only) via Highway 183 and Highway 1, until it terminates at the Watsonville Transit Center.

One Ryan Ranch Road • Monterey, California 93940-5795 USA • Fax 831 899 3954 • Phone 831 899 2558 or 424 7695  
www.mst.org • e-mail: mst@mst.org

Ms. Wendy Waldron  
August 9, 2005  
Page 2 of 3

Line 28 bus service to the City of Pajaro is limited to evening off-peak hours only due to the difficulty of making a left turn onto Highway 1 from Salinas Road during daytime heavy traffic periods. With the improvement of the interchange at Salinas Road, MST hopes to be able to maneuver buses through the intersection safely during regular commute hours. MST also anticipates increased use of the Park & Ride located near the interchange.

MST is of the opinion that Park & Ride facilities play a crucial role in reducing congestion and improving traffic flow as they allow the formation of rideshare groups and transfers to public transit. MST recommends that the following statement, taken from page 44 of the Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment, be reassessed in light of the above information: "The project area has a low-density population, making Transportation Systems Management stand-alone options such as ridesharing and mass transit infeasible."

Regarding the proposed bus stop relocations, MST looks forward to providing ongoing input to the master planning process to ensure safe access to/from the bus stops from destinations near the project site. As plans develop, the project designer should ensure that appropriate amenities are possible at MST bus stops. In that regard, please find the enclosed handbook *Designing for Transit* which includes schematic drawings and exact roadway geometries illustrating requirements for bus stops, shelters and other amenities. Of special note, MST would appreciate the provision of sidewalks for pedestrian access to/from the Park & Ride and the shelter-enhanced bus stops.

Also, please note that the far right column of Table 10 (see page 58) contains incorrect references to document sections.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at 393-8128.

Sincerely,



Mary Archer  
Planner

Response:

A Park and Ride, near the intersection of Highway 1 and Salinas Road was closed in 2003 due to lack of use. The project development team considered reestablishing the lot as part of the Salinas Interchange project, but determined not to because of safety

concerns at that location. There is currently a Park and Ride lot to the north, at Riverside Drive, which can be used by rideshare groups commuting in the area.

Bus stops would include landing pads and shelters, designed in coordination with Monterey-Salinas Transit. To retain the rural character of the area, the project development team discouraged placement of sidewalks along the western frontage road. The western frontage road provides 8-foot shoulders for use by pedestrians and bicyclists. Refer to Section 2.2.5: Traffic and Transportation.



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
333 MARKET STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94105-2197  
JUL 21 2005

Regulatory Branch

SUBJECT: File Number 29726S

Ms. Wendy Waldron  
California Department of Transportation  
Central Coast Management Branch  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Dear Ms. Waldron:

This letter is written in response to a request for comments on the Initial Study with Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Environmental Assessment concerning your project to build an interchange at Salinas Road and provide frontage roads and make additional operational improvements to Highway 1 between Jensen Road and Trafton Road undercrossing in Monterey County as described in the notice from California Department of Transportation received July 18, 2005. Your project is located near Elkhorn Slough and the Pajaro River in Monterey County, California. Since this activity may involve placement of fill and alteration of drainage patterns and; therefore, impact a water of the U.S., the Corps of Engineers will need to review those portions of your project.

All proposed discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States must be authorized by the Corps of Engineers pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 U.S.C. Section 1344). Waters of the United States generally include tidal waters, lakes, ponds, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), and wetlands.

Your proposed work appears to be within our jurisdiction and a permit may be required for your project. Application for Corps authorization should be made to this office using the application form in the enclosed pamphlet. To avoid delays it is essential that you enter the File Number at the top of this letter into Item No. 1 of the application. The application must include plans showing the location, extent and character of the proposed activity, prepared in accordance with the requirements contained in this pamphlet. You should note, in planning your project, that upon receipt of a properly completed application and plans, it may be necessary to advertise the proposed work by issuing a Public Notice for a period of 30 days.

Our Nationwide and Regional General Permits have already been issued to authorize certain activities provide specified conditions are met. Your completed application will enable us to confirm that your activity is already authorized. You are advised to refrain from starting

your proposed activity until we make a determination that the project is covered by an existing permit. Commencement of work before you receive our notification will be interpreted as a violation of our regulations.

The Corps also suggests that you contact the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Game Office to ensure they review your project relative to their permitting requirements for activities that may impact aquatic resources.

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please call John Yeakel of our Regulatory Branch at 415-977-8472. Please address all correspondence to the Regulatory Branch and refer to the File Number at the head of this letter.

Sincerely,



Edward A. Wylie  
Chief, South Section  
Regulatory Branch

Enclosures

Copy Furnished:  
CA DFG, Yountville, CA  
CA RWQCB, San Luis Obispo, CA

Response:

We will coordinate with ACOE regarding the 404 permit and obtain the permit before construction.

**Public Hearing Transcript**

2       ROBERT LUCERO: Since the project won't go forward  
3       until '08 and probably won't be finished until '11, we was  
4       thinking they could have better signs on the merge lane when  
5       you turn left onto Highway 1 from Salinas Road.

6       LESLIE LUCERO: Heading south.

7       ROBERT LUCERO: Turning left.

8       LESLIE LUCERO: That's what he said. We were  
9       supposed to write this up, and he said you could do it.

10       ROBERT LUCERO: Maybe they could have a sign on the  
11       opposite side, you know, along where Salinas Road comes into  
12       Highway 1, and maybe a significant sign showing -- actually  
13       showing the merge lane.

14       LESLIE LUCERO: People don't realize there's a  
15       merge lane and it's kind of short. He was saying to put a  
16       sign up and make it a little longer. That's it.

17       ROBERT LUCERO: Thank you very much.

Response: Due to the high collision rate at this intersection, it receives regular safety investigation and upgrades. In response to your comment, a safety investigation will be undertaken to assess additional signage. Our traffic safety department will contact you directly regarding the outcome of the study.

19       IKEY LITTLE: 1115 Trafton Road, Moss Landing.

20       The report shows that the Pacific Coast Bicycle

21       Trail goes down Highway 1 through the project. This is not

22 true. It is a major error.

23 The bicycle trail actually enters Highway 1 at --  
24 exits Highway 1 at Jensen Road, follows through Bluff Road,  
25 Trafton Road, McGowan Road, across the McGowan Bridge, down  
1 Thurwate Road onto West Beach, San Andreas, and exits to  
2 Highway 1 at the north entrance of San Andreas Road.

3 On a good day in the summertime, we'll have 300  
4 bicycles come by, but when we have the bicycle runs, it could  
5 be 3,000. But generally, we have a lot of traffic. These  
6 people have been absolutely forgotten in your study.

7 Since you're assuming that the bicycle trail goes  
8 down Highway 1, you're assuming that all these people will go  
9 down Highway 1. They will not, cannot. It will be five  
10 miles out of their way to do so.

11 They need to have a proper exit at Jensen Road to  
12 join the trail as it exits off Highway 1. Those coming from  
13 the north to the south will not have a problem since it's a  
14 good access on Jensen Road, but those headed north do not  
15 need -- do not need that roundabout route. You have  
16 forgotten to provide them with any convenient way of getting  
17 there. If you're not on the trail, you cannot assume that  
18 you should destroy the trail.

19 My suggestion is that the access lane coming from

20 the south to the north at Jensen Road be extended, even  
21 though you're presuming that all the traffic is going around.  
22 That is not necessarily true because it will use a lot of  
23 fuel for a lot of people. We are hoping that it will do.  
24 Definitely you do not need to close that entrance at all.

25 We are in the far northwest section of Monterey

4

1 County. We have no access for emergency vehicles if Jensen  
2 Road is not open. Our fire service comes from Castroville  
3 and must be able to get to our farm. If it has to go all the  
4 way up to Hilltop, five more miles out of the way, my place  
5 would be burned down before you get there.

6 I think that you need to rethink that there will  
7 still be need for traffic from the south to Jensen Road and  
8 on. I'm not saying people won't prefer to use it the other  
9 way, but you've got to rethink it.

10 Alternative 7 is probably the best alternative. My  
11 suggestion is to lengthen the access coming north on  
12 Highway 1 so that both bicycles and car traffic who still  
13 have to make the turn to get out into their area of the  
14 county could make that access. Thank you.

15

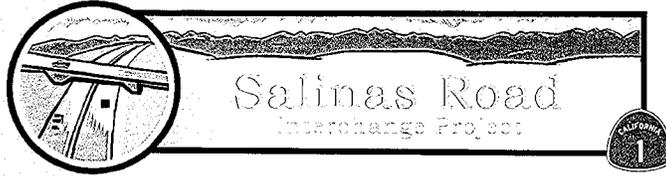
Response:

Refer to Section 2.2.5 for a corrected description of the existing and proposed Pacific Coast Bike Route through the project limits. The preferred alternative proposes no changes to the intersection at Jensen Road.

- 7           ELIO RUDONI: Sunset Farms, Inc., 194 Archer Drive,  
8           Santa Cruz, California, 93960.  
9           On the proposed private drive that's opposite  
10          Jensen Road on the east side of Highway 1, I am opposed to  
11          that. I own that property on that side and I'm for the  
12          proposed frontage road off of Salinas Highway.

Response:

Refer to Section 1.3.4.2. The location of the eastern frontage road has been revised with the preferred alternative.



### Comment Card

NAME: Javier Casillas  
 ADDRESS: 7 Bay Farms Rd. CITY: Watsonville ZIP: 95076  
 REPRESENTING: Royal Oaks Area / Watsonville

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

Our family lives about 1/2 a mile away  
from the Salinas Rd. exit on HWY 1. Do  
you (Caltrans) know what kind of traffic  
situation will occur the several years  
the project is built and finished. Our family  
expects horrible traffic, but perhaps there  
will be detours or other road changes  
in the works.

How Did You Hear About This Meeting?

newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond by August 12, 2005



Response: During construction the highway will be temporarily realigned (moved east) to allow traffic to detour around construction activities. Because the detour will retain the same lane and intersection configuration as the existing, traffic is expected to be only minimally effected. A one-week long restriction of left turns at the intersection is anticipated to allow construction activities.

*Comments that do not require responses*



Arnold  
Schwarzenegger  
Governor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
Governor's Office of Planning and Research  
State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit



Sean Walsh  
Director

August 15, 2005

Wendy Waldron  
Department of Transportation, District 5  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Subject: Salinas Road Interchange  
SCH#: 2005071059

Dear Wendy Waldron:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Negative Declaration to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on August 12, 2005, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Terry Roberts  
Director, State Clearinghouse

1400 TENTH STREET P O BOX 3044 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95812-3044  
TEL (916) 445-0613 FAX (916) 323-3018 www.opr.ca.gov

**Document Details Report  
State Clearinghouse Data Base**

**SCH#** 2005071059  
**Project Title** Salinas Road Interchange  
**Lead Agency** Caltrans #5

**Type** Neg Negative Declaration  
**Description** Caltrans, FHWA, and TAMC propose safety and operational improvements to Highway 1 at the intersection of Salinas Road in coastal, northern Monterey County. Three alternative interchange configurations are proposed. All alternatives would control access and provide frontage roads; improvements to the intersection of Jensen Road are also proposed.

**Lead Agency Contact**

**Name** Wendy Waldron  
**Agency** Department of Transportation, District 5  
**Phone** (805) 549-3118 **Fax**  
**email**  
**Address** 50 Higuera Street  
**City** San Luis Obispo **State** CA **Zip** 93401

**Project Location**

**County** Monterey  
**City** Watsonville  
**Region**  
**Cross Streets** Highway 1 and Salinas Road  
**Parcel No.**  

<b>Township</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Base</b>

**Proximity to:**

**Highways** 1  
**Airports**  
**Railways**  
**Waterways** Pajaro River and Elkhorn Slough  
**Schools** Ohlone ES, 21 Bay Farms Road, Watsonville  
**Land Use** Agricultural Preservation, Agricultural Conservation, Agricultural Industrial

**Project Issues** Aesthetic/Visual; Agricultural Land; Air Quality; Coastal Zone; Drainage/Absorption; Landuse; Noise; Soil Erosion/Compaction/Grading; Toxic/Hazardous; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Water Quality; Wetland/Riparian; Wildlife

**Reviewing Agencies** Resources Agency; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 3; Department of Parks and Recreation; Native American Heritage Commission; Department of Fish and Game, Region 3; Department of Water Resources; Department of Conservation; California Coastal Commission; California Highway Patrol; Department of Toxic Substances Control; State Lands Commission

**Date Received** 07/14/2005 **Start of Review** 07/14/2005 **End of Review** 08/12/2005

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
 1523 PACIFIC AVENUE, SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95060-3911 • 831/ 460-3200 • FAX 831/ 460-3215

SERVICE AUTHORITY  
 FOR FREEWAY  
 EMERGENCIES  
 (SAFE)

August 10, 2005

RAIL/TRAIL  
 AUTHORITY

Wm. E. Reichmuth  
 Transportation Agency for Monterey County  
 55-B Plaza Circle  
 Salinas, CA 93901

Wendy Waldron  
 Caltrans, District 5  
 50 Higuera St.  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

COMMUTE  
 SOLUTIONS

RE: Support for the Highway 1/Salinas Road Interchange Project

Dear Mr. Reichmuth and Ms. Waldron:

TRANSPORTATION  
 POLICY WORKSHOP

The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission staff has reviewed the Initial Study for the Highway 1/Salinas Road Interchange Project. The Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) would like to express its support for the safety and operational improvements proposed at this location. Located just south of Santa Cruz County's most southern border, this project provides an important interregional link to Santa Cruz County's primary transportation corridor.

BUDGET &  
 ADMINISTRATION  
 PERSONNEL  
 COMMITTEE

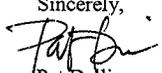
The RTC recognizes the safety issues reflected by the high collision rates at this intersection. This project will offer much needed transportation safety improvements consistent with the Regional Transportation Commission's Goals and Policies 1 6 which emphasizes the importance of safety improvements at locations with higher-than average accident records.

INTERAGENCY  
 TECHNICAL  
 ADVISORY  
 COMMITTEE

Thank you for the opportunity to review this project. If you have questions about the above comments, please contact Grace Blakeslee of my staff at 831-460-3219. Also, please continue to provide us with project updates, as appropriate, so that we may provide support for timely implementation of this project and interregional coordination as needed.

BICYCLE COMMITTEE

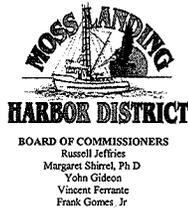
ELDERLY & DISABLED  
 TRANSPORTATION  
 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Sincerely,  
  
 Pat Dellin  
 Acting Executive Director

cc: Commissioner Tony Campos  
 Highway 1 Construction Authority  
 SCCRTC

WWW.SCCRTC.ORG  
 EMAIL:INFO@SCCRTC.ORG

MEMBER AGENCIES: SANTA CRUZ METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT, COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, CALTRANS,  
 CITIES OF CAPITOLA, SANTA CRUZ, SCOTTS VALLEY, WATSONVILLE



7881 SANDHOLDT ROAD  
MOSS LANDING, CA 95039

TELEPHONE - 831 633 5417  
FACSIMILE - 831 633 4537

GENERAL MANAGER  
HARBORMASTER  
Linda G McIntyre Esq

August 4, 2005

Caltrans, District 5  
Attn: Wendy Waldron  
Associate Environmental Planner  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

RE: Support for the Highway 1 at Salinas Road Interchange Project

Dear Ms. Waldron:

Please accept this letter as a statement of support by the Moss Landing Harbor District (MLHD) for the construction of a new interchange at Highway 1 and Salinas Road

The Moss Landing Harbor is a commercial and recreational fishing harbor with many diverse users, including residents, fishermen, researchers and tourists. We believe there is a great need for improvements to the safety and accessibility of Highway 1 in this area. These improvements will benefit the residents and employees in and around the harbor, as well as enhance the tourism that is a vital factor in the health of the regional economy.

The MLHD urges Caltrans and TAMC to pursue the construction of an interchange at Highway 1 and Salinas Road in North Monterey County.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,  
Moss Landing Harbor District

Linda G. McIntyre  
General Manager / Harbor master

LGM:rdm

C: Board of Harbor Commissioners

SERVING COMMERCIAL FISHING SINCE 1947

LETTER TO CALTRANS IN SUPPORT OF HWY 1 SALINAS RD INTERCHANGE - 2005AUG04



August 15, 2005

Ms. Wendy Waldron  
Caltrans Office  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 939403

**Re: MCH# 070529- Notice of Public Hearing  
Highway 1 and Salinas Road Interchange**

Dear Ms. Waldron:

AMBAG's Regional Clearinghouse circulated a summary of notice of your environmental document to our member agencies and interested parties for review and comment.

The AMBAG Board of Directors considered the project on **August 10, 2005** and has no comments at this time.

Thank you for complying with the Clearinghouse process.

Sincerely,



Nicolas Papadakis  
Executive Director

SERVING OUR REGIONAL COMMUNITY SINCE 1968  
445 RESERVATION ROAD, SUITE G ♦ P. O. BOX 809 ♦ MARINA, CA 93933-0809  
(831) 883-3750 ♦ FAX (831) 883-3755 ♦ [www.ambag.org](http://www.ambag.org)



## OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

August 8, 2005

Caltans, District 5  
50 Higuera St.  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

RE: CA Hwy 1 at Salinas Rd Interchange Project

Attn: Ms. Wendy Waldron

Dear Ms. Waldron:

This letter is in support of the action to improve the intersection of Highway 1 at Salinas Rd, Pajaro. With the 22 6K vehicles using Hwy. 1 each day, we are way beyond the original design specifications for that intersection. This action should reduce the number of traffic accidents at this intersection.

The letter we received on the topic was dated July 26<sup>th</sup>. This did not allow time to set and appear at the hearing scheduled for July 28<sup>th</sup>. We were glad to hear that North County Fire and the Highway Patrol did appear to support the public safety aspects of this improvement.

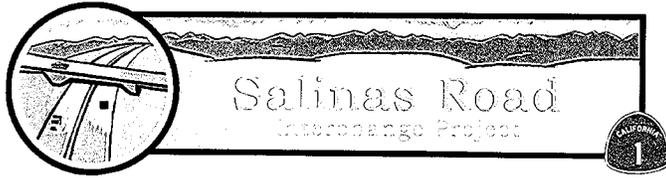
If we may be of assistance in this or other matters, our Central Station Commander for this area is Cmdr. Alan Wheelus. I am sure he will be glad to participate or assist you as necessary. You may reach him by telephone at 831.755.3807.

Sincerely,

  
Mike Kanalakis,  
Sheriff - Coroner

cc: Transportation Agency for Monterey County  
Attn: Mr. William Reichmuth, P.E.  
Executive Director  
55-B Plaza Circle  
Salinas, CA 93901-2902

Mike Kanalakis, Sheriff - Coroner - Public Administrator's Office  
(831) 755-3700 1414 Natividad Road, Salinas, CA 93906 [www.co.monterey.ca.us/sheriff](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/sheriff)



### Comment Card

NAME: Worth Brown  
 ADDRESS: 1260 Hwy 1 CITY: Moss Landing ZIP: 95039  
 REPRESENTING: Golden State Bulb Growers

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

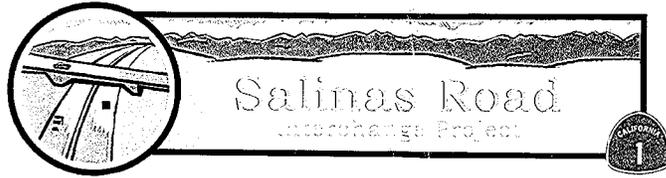
I prefer Alternative #1 as this is the most simplistic  
design and least confusing for traffic.

**How Did You Hear About This Meeting?**

- newspaper/public notice     newsletter/mailer     notice on website     word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond by August 12, 2005**





### Comment Card

NAME: Cristina Espinoza  
 ADDRESS: 208 Meghann CITY: Watsonville ZIP: 95076  
 REPRESENTING: self

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

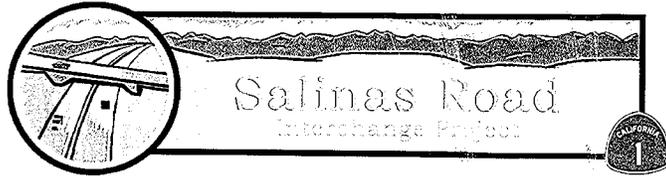
I strongly support the Hwy 1 & Salinas  
Road Project. The way it's now is so  
dangerous. We need an overpass so no more  
people are killed or badly injured.  
We need a 4 lane Hwy on 1 it would  
solve so many problems!

How Did You Hear About This Meeting?

newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond by August 12, 2005





## Comment Card

NAME: Chris Hogan  
 ADDRESS: 235 San Juan Rd. CITY: Pajaro ZIP: 95077  
 REPRESENTING: Royal Oaks Farms

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or

Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

This interchange will be a great boost to the safety of  
the community in Watsonville, Royal Oaks ETC, Pajaro. I hope  
for the people like myself who use the interchange. Caltrans  
and the people involved will make the necessary changes  
in order for this to happen. Right now in the afternoon  
to leave Watsonville from Pajaro myself + my worker's use  
Riverside Dr to enter Hwy 1 South.

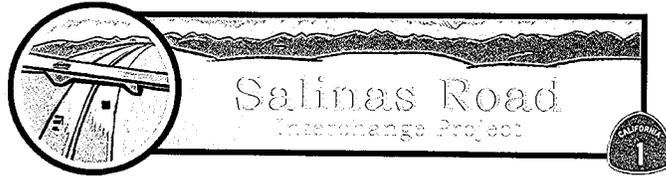
How Did You Hear About This Meeting?

newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth

other: Clint + Karen Miller

Please respond by August 12, 2005





## Comment Card

NAME: Wayne Moses  
 ADDRESS: 182<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Murphy Hill Rd. CITY: Arcamas ZIP: 95004  
 REPRESENTING: Murphy Hill Road Association

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or

Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

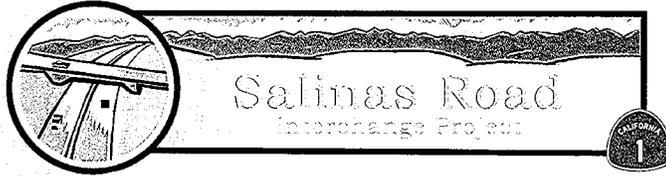
I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

Highway 1 is a major highway linking the whole of the Monterey Bay both for business and tourism. I travel to Seaside daily to my office as I am a social worker with Monterey County Department of Social & Employment Services. I have seen many accidents at Hwy 1 & Salinas Rd. This intersection is at least as dangerous as the interchange of Hwy 101 & San Miguel Canyon Rd, which

How Did You Hear About This Meeting? was corrected by construction at an overpass.  
 newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond by August 12, 2005





### Comment Card

NAME: Wendy Moses  
 ADDRESS: 18223 Murphy Hill Rd CITY: Armas ZIP: 95004  
 REPRESENTING: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

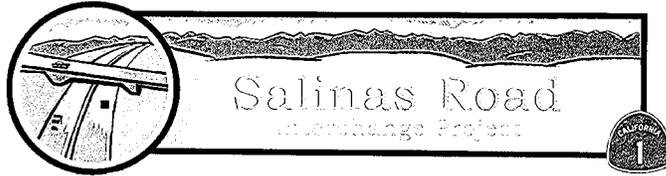
Salinas Rd. is a very dangerous  
area. An overpass would help make the  
crossing much safer, as well as save  
many lives. There have been far too many  
accidents already. Anything you could  
do to increase the safety of the area would  
be wonderful.

**How Did You Hear About This Meeting?**

newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond by August 12, 2005**





### Comment Card

NAME: GLORIA D. CAMPAS  
 ADDRESS: 10240 ROBERTA CITY: CASTROVILLE ZIP: 95012  
 REPRESENTING: SELF

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

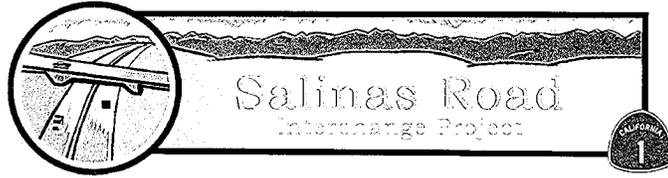
I strongly support the Hwy 1-8 Salinas Rd.  
project. the way it is now is so dangerous.  
We need an overpass so no more people are  
killed or badly injured.  
We need a 4 lane Hyw on I it would  
solve so many problems!

**How Did You Hear About This Meeting?**

newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond by August 12, 2005**





### Comment Card

NAME: Edward Campbell  
 ADDRESS: 635 Santa Monica Hwy CITY: Salinas ZIP: 93901  
 REPRESENTING: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or

Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

P.S. #7 overpass my choice.

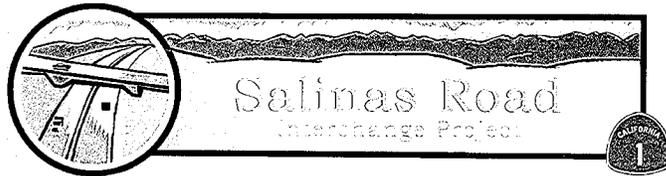
I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print): I HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THE Pajaro AREA for nine years and would like to support the new interchange at Salinas Rd & Hwy 1. It is so "dangerous" I do not travel on Hwy 1 after work. I travel the back roads through Penedale to go home. We need a four lane hwy on Hwy 1 & an overpass at Salinas Road. Also, Espinosa Road in Salinas is very dangerous it should be close down. In fact there should be a master plan to fix all the traffic problems for the future growth in our county.

How Did You Hear About This Meeting?

- newspaper/public notice     newsletter/mailer     notice on website     word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond by August 12, 2005





### Comment Card

NAME: Shelby Jones Alford  
 ADDRESS: 10 Kinman Rd CITY: Poulsbo ZIP: 98370  
 REPRESENTING: my husband & me

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

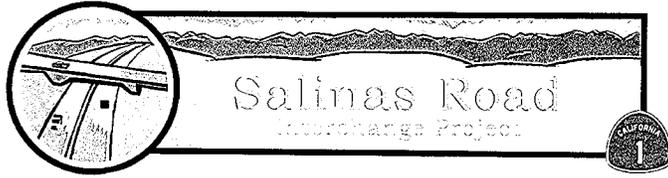
Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):  
I lived on Trafton Rd for 20 years & crossing over  
to Salinas road has always been dangerous -  
many have been injured & many have died  
because of its dangerous spot.  
It would be wonderful if this happened sooner  
rather than later, so that more people will not  
continue to get hurt.  
Please do not let too much time pass - thank you

How Did You Hear About This Meeting?  
 newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond by August 12, 2005





### Comment Card

NAME: BIBIANA Sanchez  
 ADDRESS: 12 PARKWOOD Dr. CITY: WATSONVILLE ZIP: CAUF 95076  
 REPRESENTING: Self

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or

Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

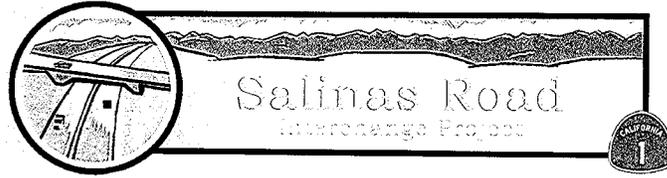
I strongly support the Hwy 1 & Salinas Road project. The way it is now is so dangerous. We need an overpass so no more people are killed or badly injured. We need a 4 line Hwy on 1 it would solve so many problems!

**How Did You Hear About This Meeting?**

newspaper/public notice     newsletter/mailer     notice on website     word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond by August 12, 2005**





### Comment Card

NAME: RICARDO JIMENEZ  
 ADDRESS: 152 CLIFFORD CITY: WATSONVILLE ZIP: 95076  
 REPRESENTING: SELF

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

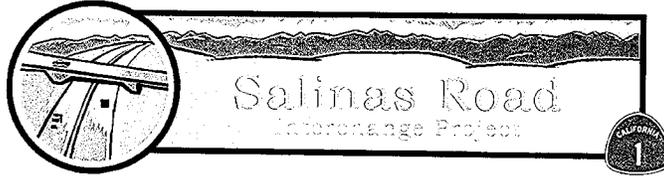
I SUPPORT THE HIGHWAY 1 & SALINAS RD. PROJECT.  
THE WAY IT IS NOW IS SO DANGEROUS.  
WE NEED AN OVERPASS, SO NO MORE PEOPLE  
ARE KILLED OR BADLY INJURED  
WE NEED MORE LANES ON HWY. 1  
BY SALINAS - CATASTROPHIC AREA IT WOULD  
SOLVE MANY PROBLEMS & ACCIDENTS.

How Did You Hear About This Meeting?

- newspaper/public notice     newsletter/mailer     notice on website     word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond by August 12, 2005





### Comment Card

NAME: Carla Sherrill  
 ADDRESS: 407 Green Valley Rd CITY: Watsonville ZIP: 95076  
 REPRESENTING: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or

Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

I fully support an overpass here - it has  
been needed for years!

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

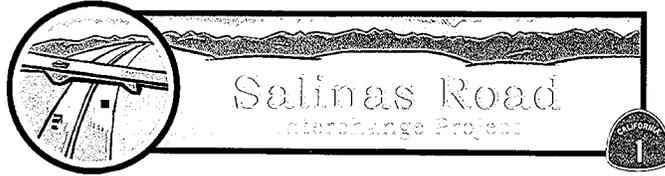
**How Did You Hear About This Meeting?**

newspaper/public notice     newsletter/mailer     notice on website     word of mouth

other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond by August 12, 2005**





### Comment Card

NAME: BARRETT BLOTHOLS

ADDRESS: 231 JENSEN ROAD CITY: MOSS LANDING ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

REPRESENTING: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or

Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Attn: Wendy Waldron  
Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

I TRAVEL WITH MY DAD TO OUR PROPERTIES - ONE  
IN MOSS LANDING AND ONE IN LAS LOMAS. I HATE THE  
SALINAS ROAD INTERCHANGE. IT'S REALLY SCARY.  
PLEASE FIX THIS BEFORE ANYBODY ELSE GETS HURT.  
I LIKE OPTION 7 - IT LOOKS THE BEST.

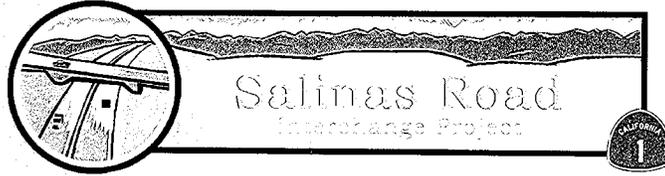
**How Did You Hear About This Meeting?**

newspaper/public notice     newsletter/mailer     notice on website     word of mouth

other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond by August 12, 2005**





### Comment Card

NAME: GEORGE BROTHERS - recently deceased  
 ADDRESS: 123 HAWKINGTON RD. CITY: WATSONVILLE ZIP: 95076  
 REPRESENTING: SELF (ALTHOUGH

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

MY FATHER USED TO TRAVEL DAILY FROM HIS HOME  
IN LAS LOMAS TO PEDECE GROVE. HE BECAME A  
"MANIAC" AT THE SALINAS ROAD INTERCHANGE. HE'D HONK  
AT PEDECE AND PULL AROUND A PARTICULARLY RODECUMT<sup>(CAUTION)</sup>  
DRIVER AND SCREECH SOUTHBOUND. YEARS OF FRUSTRATION  
LED THIS OTHERWISE MILD MANNERED 82 YR OLD TO EXTREMES  
AT THAT INTERSECTION.

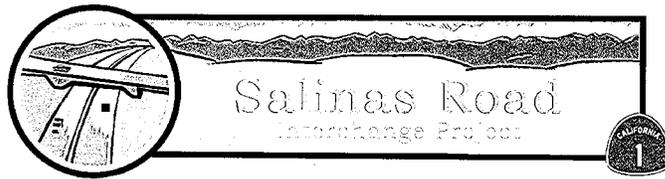
I KNOW WHOLEHEARTEDLY THAT MY FATHER WOULD LOVE  
TO SEE THIS PROJECT COMPLETED.

How Did You Hear About This Meeting?

- newspaper/public notice     newsletter/mailer     notice on website     word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond by August 12, 2005





### Comment Card

NAME: Amy Brothers

ADDRESS: 231 Jensen Road CITY: Moss Landing ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

REPRESENTING: Strawberry Hills Forever, LLC

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Attn: Wendy Waldron  
Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

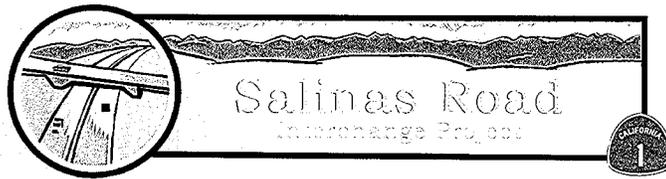
I used to live in Las Lomas. I moved my family away  
largely because of the Salinas Road Interchange. It was dreadful!  
I encourage you to expedite the construction - TO SAVE LIVES!!!  
I prefer option 7 - it makes access to Jensen Road  
much more aesthetic and logical.

**How Did You Hear About This Meeting?**

- newspaper/public notice     newsletter/mailer     notice on website     word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please respond by August 12, 2005**





### Comment Card

NAME: JEFF BROTHERS  
 ADDRESS: 231 JENSON RD CITY: MOSS LANDING ZIP: ✓  
 REPRESENTING: SELF - OWNER OF STRAWBERRY HILL FARMER, LLC

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

I HAVE LIVED MOST OF MY ADULT LIFE IN "ROYAL OAKS." I HAVE ENDURED THE SALINAS ROAD INTERCHANGE FOR FAR TOO LONG. I'VE SEEN MANY, MANY DANGEROUS INCIDENTS - FAR EXCEEDING THE INJURY AND DEATH STATISTICS. THIS INTERCHANGE FRUSTRATES DRIVERS TO THE POINT OF DOING RECKLESS MANEUVERS.

PLEASE EXPEDITE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INTERCHANGE - AND SAVE LIVES.

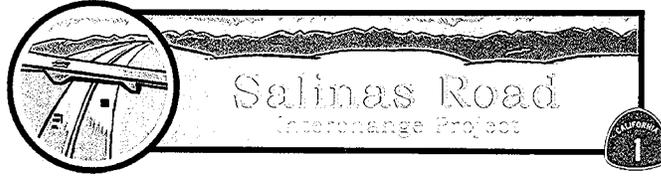
I PREFER OPTION 7.

**How Did You Hear About This Meeting?**

newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth  
monterey Herald  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond by August 12, 2005





## Comment Card

NAME: Victoria Thompson

ADDRESS: 12745 Fairway CITY: Royal Oaks ZIP: 95076

REPRESENTING: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

Thank you for your concern for our safety.  
I use this dangerous intersection everyday.  
The presentation was informative and well done.  
The plan I liked the best was Alt 7, which has the smallest  
Footprint. Hopefully it will not be intruding on the farm landscape  
Good luck in getting this important project passed!  
From a Scared Commuter,  
Victoria L. Thompson

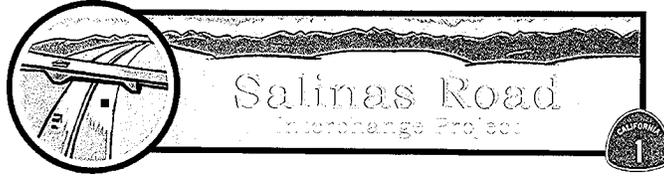
How Did You Hear About This Meeting?

newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth

other: News on the T.V.

Please respond by August 12, 2005





## Comment Card

NAME: Loren + Claudia Grossi

ADDRESS: 2473 Rifle Range Dr CITY: Watsonville ZIP: 95076

REPRESENTING: Rifle Range Drive homeowners Assoc.

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO

Please drop comments in the Comment Box or

Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Attn: Wendy Waldron  
Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):

The oral presentation with printed material was superb with  
enough time to ask questions. Other issues were brought to  
the surface which was most helpful + insightful.

As we listened and then reviewed — alternative 1 seemed  
to be the most straight forward for drivers,

The overpass will be a welcomed relief for those  
living in this area.

Thanks —

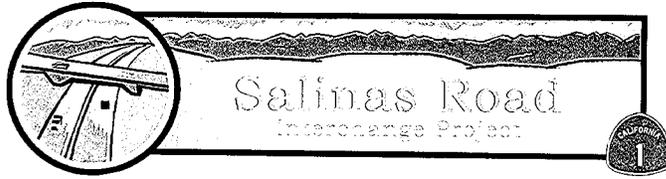
### How Did You Hear About This Meeting?

newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth

other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond by August 12, 2005





### Comment Card

NAME: Chel Robbins  
ADDRESS: 425 Fulton Way CITY: Salinas ZIP: 93907  
REPRESENTING: myself & family

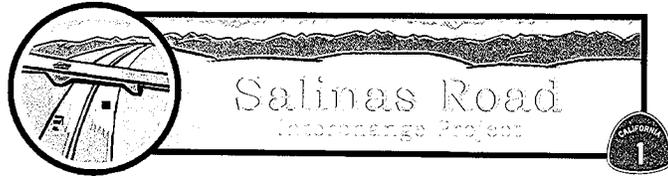
Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO  
Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Attn: Wendy Waldron  
Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):  
This intersection is not safe. I would be  
very glad to see the situation fixed

How Did You Hear About This Meeting?  
 newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond by August 12, 2005





### Comment Card

NAME: MICHAEL ROBERSON  
 ADDRESS: 11200 SPEARLE ST. CITY: CASTROVILLE ZIP: 95012  
 REPRESENTING: FIRE MARSHAL - NORTH COUNTY FIRE DIST.

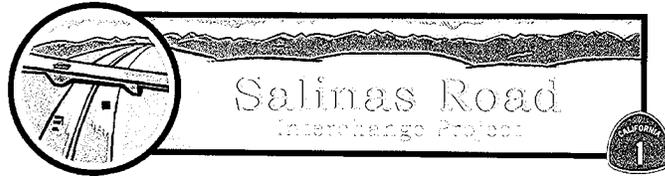
Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO  
 Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):  
One of our requirements for the signalization on the  
project will be that "Opticom" traffic light receivers  
be placed on all traffic lights

How Did You Hear About This Meeting?  
 newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond by August 12, 2005





### Comment Card

NAME: Michael A. Robertson (Fire Marshal)  
 ADDRESS: 11200 Speegle St. CITY: Orlando ZIP: 95012  
 REPRESENTING: North County Fire District

Do you wish to be added to the project mailing list?  YES  NO  
 Please drop comments in the Comment Box or  
 Mail to: California Department of Transportation  
 50 Higuera Street  
 San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
 Attn: Wendy Waldron  
 Environmental Planner

I would like the following comments filed in the record (please print):  
I FAVOR Alternative #7 BECAUSE: Our Responding engines from  
Station #3 (Haverholts Lomas area) can be better seen (CODE 3)  
travelling west bound Salinas Rd. to South bound HWY1 VIA  
THE Looping lane proposed. Alternative #5 may have more  
accidents that would be traveling too fast from South  
bound HWY1 to East bound Salinas Rd. There line of  
sight is blocked passing under the overpass and  
may not be slow enough to negotiate the loop.

How Did You Hear About This Meeting?  
 newspaper/public notice  newsletter/mailer  notice on website  word of mouth  
 other: Involved in project for fire District Approval

Please respond by August 12, 2005



1 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CALTRANS)

SALINAS ROAD INTERCHANGE PROJECT

PUBLIC HEARING

THURSDAY, JULY 28, 2005

4:00 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M.

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Location:

Ohlone School Auditorium  
Bay Farms Road  
Watsonville, California 95076

2

1 WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, THURSDAY, JULY 28, 2005, 4:00  
P.M.

16 ROD HUDSON: My name is Rod Hudson. I just want to  
17 be made aware of any changes in the proposed roads from  
18 Salinas Road to Highway 1. I am representing R & L Land  
19 Company.

20

6

13

14 DAVID WATSON: I live at 590 Lewis Road. I'd like  
15 to go on record as supporting the best alternative. I don't  
16 know which alternative that is, but whichever is the best

17 alternative. I encourage others to vote for the measure.

18

19 RICARDO JIMINEZ: 152 Clifford Avenue, Watsonville,  
20 California.

21 Well, any of the proposed changes, when they get  
22 done, to make sure there is plenty of room for traffic to go  
23 up the road, not like on the road there. There is, like, a  
24 very short distance -- after getting off of the freeway,  
25 there is a stoplight that naturally fills up really quick and

6

1 there is still traffic coming having to come to a stop. I  
2 can imagine there has to be plenty of room for cars to wait  
3 for the stoplight.

4 .

5 CLAUDIA CAMPOS DIAZ: 10240 Roberta Place,  
6 Castroville, California.

7 The only thing that I want to say is for me -- and  
8 I think for the people that have to drive in that highway, is  
9 very important to put something in there because, like me, I  
10 have to use it all the time because I work over here in  
11 Watsonville and I come from Castroville. So I think it's  
12 very important to put something in there that doesn't cause a  
13 lot of accidents.

14 I have a friend that he had an accident in there;  
15 he died. So I'm really -- is really -- for us, it's really  
16 important that they do something in there that can help us  
17 not to have a lot of accidents or to handle the heavy traffic  
18 in there because it is a lot of traffic in there all the day.

19

20 CRISTINA ESPINOZA: 208 Meghan Court, Watsonville.

21 I strongly support this overpass on Highway 1 and  
22 Salinas Road. I have seen -- I have seen many accidents and  
23 deaths happen at this intersection, and I really pray for  
24 everybody that has to cross from Salinas Road onto Highway 1  
25 going towards Castroville.

7

1 I would really, really be very happy, as a citizen,  
2 to see something done with an overpass to prevent anymore.

3

4 CHRIS HOGAN: 235 San Juan Road, Pajaro.

5 Okay. I feel that this intersection is very  
6 important for the safety and well being of the community.  
7 It's a very dangerous intersection and our -- the work that  
8 we do in this community depends upon this intersection and  
9 this road very much. (Interpreted by Susana Cruz.)

10

11 MARGARITO GARCIA: 43 Holm Road, Watsonville.

12 The comment on the project that's being considered  
13 is good for the community to avoid more accidents in the  
14 future. In the past, there have been deaths and known people  
15 have died. Co-workers, the whole -- the jobs, the whole  
16 community would benefit. That's all, just the accidents.  
17 (Interpreted by Susana Cruz.)

18

19 SALVADOR BRAVO: 11 Coffee Lane, Freedom.

20 The project that they want to do is very important  
21 because there -- in years past, there have been a lot of  
22 accidents. I imagine that for this project, all the people  
23 are going to benefit because it's very dangerous to turn  
24 left. And the reality, I see it as something positive, not  
25 negative.

8

1 Let's hope that it comes through, that's what I  
2 have to say. Thank you. (Interpreted by Susana Cruz.)

3

4 DAVID ORTIZ: 113 Amador, Watsonville.

5 The statement is that I used -- I drive a lot on  
6 this road and I have seen a lot of accidents. I think what  
7 they have, the plan they are doing to reduce the traffic and  
8 for all these other people to use this route, it's going to

9 be a benefit.

10

11 JOSE LUIS ORTIZ: 211 East High Street,

12 Watsonville.

13 The reason why I'm here is to say that we feel that

14 we do need a bridge there because there are a lot of

15 accidents. Many people have died there. Recently,

16 especially in the mornings or afternoons, there's a lot of

17 traffic, and I feel that it would be a good idea if they

18 would do, like, a bridge for everybody, for us, and for the

19 future of the family and children. I think that's all I have

20 to say. And hopefully, they will -- it will be done one day.

21 (Interpreted by Susana Cruz.)

22

23 DOMINGO GALVAN JUNIOR: 191 Bluff Road, Moss

24 Landing, California.

25 I'm a hundred percent for this project. The reason

9

1 for that is there's been quite a few accidents occurring

2 there on Jensen Road trying to get onto the freeway. One of

3 my issues is there's quite a bit of times that traffic coming

4 south stacks up trying to get onto Jensen. The reason for

5 that is traffic that's built up as I'm trying to go onto

6 Jensen Road making my signal light, the people from  
7 Dominick's Fruit Stand are cutting out in front of you  
8 thinking you're going to come into the fruit stand. It's  
9 been pretty close a few times already. It's not only myself,  
10 but my wife has had the same thing.

11 My dad's been fighting for this -- he passed away,  
12 but he's been fighting for this for quite a long time  
13 already. The reason why I'm here is, like I say, there's  
14 been quite a bit of death now. With the traffic that has  
15 occurred there on the highway, it's hard for anybody off of  
16 Jensen to get inside. We're talking maybe sometimes 30 to  
17 40-minute hold ups.

18 I notice the San Miguel/Prunedale area that has  
19 been done has helped that area, and I'm hoping this one will  
20 do the same. Thank you.

21

22 KAREN MILLER: P. O. Box 399, Watsonville  
23 95077-0399.

24 I am so happy that CALTRANS is working on this  
25 project. I've been actively involved with trying to get this  
10

1 interchange for the last 30 years. I've worked hard to get a  
2 petition. We did over 3,000 names about three years ago,

3 which helped, I think, CALTRANS realize the need -- although  
4 they knew the need already.

5 I'm just really thrilled. I can't say which  
6 alternative I like at this particular moment because I'm  
7 seeing them for the first time. But I truly support the  
8 project, and I will do anything I can to help CALTRANS  
9 succeed.

10

11 KIM OPIE: 191 Trafton Road, Watsonville.

12 My comment is that having lived here for 30 years,  
13 I am thrilled at the prospect of not having to make sure my  
14 life insurance policy is paid up before I turn from Salinas  
15 Road onto Highway 1, or from Highway 1 onto Salinas Road as  
16 I'm going south. Both left turns are often taking your life  
17 into your hands during high-peak traffic.

18 I particularly like Alternative 7 and the amendment  
19 to it, which is on the table displayed here today, that  
20 allows for the frontage road. I'll just end my comment with,  
21 I believe that safety issues, the inconvenience issues  
22 outweigh any other issues that may impede the progress of  
23 this project. Amen!

24

- (End of record, 8:00 p.m.)



# APPENDIX I Monterey County General Plan, North County Land Use Plan and Implementation Plan Policy Consistency Analysis

General Plan		
Policy #	Subject of Policy	Consistency Analysis
22.2.1	Development must conform with the noise parameters	There is one sensitive receptor within the project area. According to the Noise Analysis, the proposed project would result in a 2dBA increase to the existing noise for this receptor. The existing receptor is currently 57 dBA and will increase to 59 dBA. According to Table 6 of the County's noise thresholds the existing and proposed noise levels are in category "Noise Range II – Conditionally Acceptable." This range is between 55 and 70 Ldn and will remain in this category following construction. The project is consistent with this policy.
22.2.3	Environmental Review of all new development	A Noise Analysis was completed on this project. During the Coastal Development Permit application process, this analysis will be submitted to the County. Project is consistent with this policy.
22.2.5	Nighttime construction	No nighttime construction is anticipated.
22.3.3	County shall work with Caltrans for existing noise	There is one sensitive receptor within the project area. According to the Noise Analysis, the proposed project would result in a 2dBA increase to the existing noise for this receptor. The existing receptor is currently 57 dBA and will increase to 59 dBA. According to Table 6 of the County's noise thresholds the existing and proposed noise levels are in category "Noise Range II – Conditionally Acceptable." This range is between 55 and 70 Ldn and will remain in this category following construction. To provide noise mitigation for a less than significant impact would not meet the reasonable and feasible criteria for noise abatement. No noise abatement measures are proposed for existing noise levels. During construction activities such as pile driving and pavement breaking will require that the adjacent property owners be notified prior to these activities. The project is consistent with this policy.

North County Land Use Plan		
Policy #	Subject of Policy	Consistency Evaluation
<b>2.2 VISUAL RESOURCES</b>		
2.2.1 Visual Resources	Development should be prohibited to the fullest extent possible in beach, dune, estuary, and wetland areas. Low intensity development that can minimize visual impacts would be allowed on scenic hills, slopes, and ridgelines.	<p>The project area is located in an area of agricultural crop production and avoids all development to beach, dune and estuary areas. Avoidance and minimization measures were developed in coordination with the California Coastal Commission staff, Monterey County staff and the Citizens Advisory Group to minimize the project's overall scale and footprint of the project. The following design features have been incorporated in to the project design so that the impacts to the visual character are reduced:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The profile of the proposed bridge was sited and lowered to match the existing landforms and to reduce the scale and visibility of the structure.</li> <li>2. The proposed highway widening of 2 lanes to 4 lanes was not carried through to Jensen Road in order to reduce and narrow the overall area of new pavement through the project area.</li> <li>3. The new loop northbound on-ramp was constricted down to the smallest radius feasible to reduce the footprint of the interchange.</li> <li>4. Slopes were steepened from 1:4 to 1:2 where safety would not be compromised.</li> </ol>

North County Land Use Plan		
Policy #	Subject of Policy	Consistency Evaluation
		<p>5. A design exemption was obtained that allowed placement of the western frontage road to be directly across from the on and off-ramps rather than several hundred meters to the west of the ramp intersection. This substantially reduced the overall footprint of the interchange.</p> <p>The result of all these design changes was to reduce visual impacts and to allow the new interchange to follow as closely to the existing alignment as was feasible while still allowing the project to meet the safety standards and project purpose.</p> <p>Additional design features include slope rounding and landscaping with native plants to provide a natural appearing site.</p> <p>An Aesthetics Design Advisory Committee, made up of members of the community and local agencies will be formed during the final design phase of the project to provide direction on the aesthetic features of the project including structures design and planting.</p> <p>Impacts to 0.2 acre of maintained agricultural drainage ditches, which are coastal wetlands, were reduced using the minimization methods listed above. Mitigation of coastal wetlands, included in this project, will improve and enhance the biological function and habitat of coastal wetlands in the project area.</p> <p>The proposed project is consistent with this policy.</p>
2.2.2.1	Limits alteration of views along the shoreline from Highway 1, Molera Road, Struve Road and public beaches, and to and along the shoreline of Elkhorn Slough from public vantage points.	The project, although along Highway 1 is not within these specific view sheds. Not applicable.
2.2.2.2	Provides that coastal dunes, beaches, estuaries, and wetlands should be designated for recreation or environmental conservation land uses. Limits developments so that it is compatible with the visual character of the area.	<p>The project area is located in an area of agricultural crop production and avoids all development to beach, dune and estuary areas. Avoidance and minimization measures were developed in coordination with the California Coastal Commission staff, Monterey County staff and the Citizens Advisory Group to minimize the project's overall scale and footprint of the project. The following design features have been incorporated in to the project design so that the impacts to the visual character are reduced:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The profile of the proposed bridge was sited and lowered to match the existing landforms and to reduce the scale and visibility of the structure.</li> <li>2. The proposed highway widening of 2 lanes to 4 lanes was not carried through to Jensen Road in order to reduce and narrow the overall area of new pavement through the project area.</li> <li>3. The new loop southbound on-ramp was constricted down to the smallest radius feasible to reduce the footprint of the interchange.</li> <li>4. Slopes were steepened from 1:4 to 1:2 where safety would not be compromised..</li> <li>5. A design exemption was obtained that allowed placement of the western frontage road to be directly across from the on and off-ramps rather than several hundred meters to the west of the ramp intersection. This substantially reduced the overall footprint of the interchange.</li> </ol> <p>The result of all these design changes was to reduce visual impacts and to allow the new interchange to follow as closely to the existing alignment as was feasible while still allowing the project to meet the safety standards and project purpose.</p> <p>Additional design features include slope rounding and landscaping with native plants to provide a natural appearing site.</p>

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		<p>An Aesthetics Design Advisory Committee, made up of members of the community and local agencies will be formed during the final design phase of the project to provide direction on the aesthetic features of the project including structures design and planting.</p> <p>Impacts to 0.2 acre of maintained agricultural drainage ditches, which are coastal wetlands, were reduced using the minimization methods listed above. Mitigation of coastal wetlands, included in this project, will improve and enhance the biological function and habitat of coastal wetlands in the project area.</p> <p>The proposed project is consistent with this policy.</p>
2.2.2.3	Limits development of subdivisions in areas of scenic slopes, hills, and ridgelines.	<p>The project has been sited to match with and minimize the alteration of the natural landforms. Tree removal has been minimized (of the 3.81 acres [approximately 200 trees] of oak woodlands in the project area .06 acres [3 trees] are proposed for removal) and will be mitigated at a ratio of 5 trees replanted for every tree removed. Replacement plantings of the oak trees will be sited to achieve the greatest success in replacement of oak woodlands. Replacement plantings of vegetation other than oaks will be sited to allow the highest potential of screening of the frontage road and to protect the resources. Slope rounding and landscape planting with native plants has been incorporated into the project design. An Aesthetics Design Advisory Committee will provide input during the final design phase. The project is consistent with this policy.</p>
2.2.2.4	Development should be located in the least visually obtrusive area of the property. Structures should be located where existing topography and vegetation provide natural screening.	<p>The project has been sited to match with and minimize the alteration of the natural landforms. Tree removal has been minimized (of the 3.81 acres [approximately 200 trees] of oak woodlands in the project area .06 acres [3 trees] are proposed for removal) and will be mitigated at a ratio of 5 trees replanted for every tree removed. Replacement plantings of the oak trees will be sited to achieve the greatest success in replacement of oak woodlands. Replacement plantings of vegetation other than oaks will be sited to allow the highest potential of screening of the frontage road and to protect the resources. Slope rounding and landscape planting with native plants has been incorporated into the project design. An Aesthetics Design Advisory Committee will provide input during the final design phase. The project is consistent with this policy.</p>
2.2.2.5	Development should be limited to minimize tree removal. Disturbed areas should be restored using plantings that are complementing the native vegetation of the area.	<p>Fill slopes were designed to minimize tree removal. The three small oak trees that would be removed with the project will be replaced with 15 oak trees, monitored for three years and with an expected success rate of 75%. Native planting will be used for landscaping the facility. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.</p>
2.2.2.6	Agriculture should be preserved when on flat or rolling land as a visual resource, lands with highly erodible slopes should be discouraged for agricultural uses.	<p>The proposed conversion of agricultural land to transportation uses would not alter the view shed since the proposed conversion is adjacent to the existing highway and in narrow linear strips. The flat or rolling land, as a visual resource with the proposed design minimization features, would be consistent with the surrounding agricultural land uses. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.</p>
2.2.3.1	North County scenic areas shall be zoned scenic conservation easement.	Not Applicable
2.2.3.2	Provides that highly sensitive scenic areas that cannot be effectively protected should be considered for public acquisition and manage by the appropriate agencies.	Not Applicable
2.2.3.3	Limiting development from blocking shoreline views. Development designed to blend with shoreline views.	No shoreline views are within the project area. Not applicable.
2.2.3.4	New roads should be considered for residential, agricultural, and recreational access when common use of neighboring roads is not feasible. New roads shall be designed to minimize visual impacts.	<p>Frontage roads are included in the project to funnel traffic on existing farm roads to single access points, which improve safety. The proposed frontage roads would provide safe access for the property owners adjacent to the highway. The frontage road on the west side of the highway will also improve transit service access, bicycle route access and increase safety by providing controlled access to</p>

North County Land Use Plan		
Policy #	Subject of Policy	Consistency Evaluation
		Highway 1. Monterey County Public Works was involved with the overall planning and design of the western frontage road since ownership will eventually be relinquished to the County. In coordination with the County, the western frontage road was sited and the slopes were steepened and narrowed to minimize visual impacts. The project is consistent with this policy.
2.2.3.5	Overhead utilities and undergrounding.	No new utility poles are proposed. Not Applicable
2.2.3.6	Limits removal of native trees and other significant vegetation.	Fill slopes were designed to minimize tree removal. The three small oak trees that would be removed with the project will be replaced with 15 oak trees, monitored for three years and with an expected success rate of 75%. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.2.3.7	Restriction on advertising signs. Highway signage compatible with visual character	The number of signs will be minimized to only those signs that are necessary for the safe operation of the highway facility. The community would be involved in the design of the bridge structure, landscaping plan and highway signage aesthetics through the creation of an Aesthetic Design Advisory Committee. Community involvement for the highway sign aesthetics would be consistent with this policy.
2.2.3.8	Commercial and industrial use signage.	Transportation project, not applicable
<b>2.3 ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE HABITATS</b>		
2.3.1	Limits development in Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas including coastal wetlands.	The project would impact less than 0.2 acre of maintained agricultural ditches, which are low functioning wetlands defined as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas in this policy. The project is a health and safety undertaking. Existing County policy provides for a balancing of policies (specifically with those in section 2.3, 2.4 and 3.1) for projects that are for the health and safety of the public. The Salinas Road interchange has been identified as a major arterial that requires upgrading for safety and traffic capacity (transportation policies section 3.1). Although there are identified limitations to development within wetland areas, the preferred alternative is the least environmentally damaging alternative of those proposed. Mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects and, in sum, to enhance the biological productivity and quality of coastal wetlands in the project area. The project substantially conforms with the intent of this policy in balance with other policies within LUP.
2.3.2.1	Prohibits construction of roads and structures in wetland areas	The projects impacts to wetlands are minimal, approximately 0.2 acres, and would be restored in a manner consistent with the policies identified in Section 2.4 and 3.1. This project is a public health and safety project and this policy must be balanced with the policies identified in Section 2.4 and 3.1. The proposed project is consistent with this policy with the proposed wetland restoration.
2.3.2.2	Land uses adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitats shall be compatible for the long-term maintenance of the resource.	Areas of environmentally sensitive habitats adjacent to the project area include some areas of agricultural drainage ditches that qualify as wetlands under the Coastal Act. The project features built adjacent to these wetlands would be stabilized to prevent siltation and provide for long-term maintenance of the agricultural ditch wetlands. Existing transportation land uses have been compatible for the long-term maintenance of the resources, and the proposed project will continue to be so. The preferred alternative includes at least 5000 linear feet of bio swales (vegetated grass swales for bio-filtration of runoff), which will serve to enhance the biological productivity and quality of these coastal wetlands. The proposed project is consistent with this policy
2.3.2.3	New developments adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitats shall be compatible for the long-term maintenance of the resource.	Areas of environmentally sensitive habitats adjacent to the project area include some areas of agricultural drainage ditches that qualify as wetlands under the Coastal Act. The project features built adjacent to these wetlands would be stabilized to prevent siltation and provide for long-term maintenance of the agricultural ditch wetlands. Existing transportation land uses have been compatible for the long-term maintenance of the resources, and the proposed project will continue to be so. The preferred alternative includes at least 5000 linear feet of bio swales (vegetated grass swales for bio-filtration of runoff), which will serve to enhance the biological productivity and quality of these coastal wetlands. The proposed

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		project is consistent with this policy
2.3.2.4	Limits development on areas of large undisturbed habitat associated with environmentally sensitive habitats.	The existing land uses consist of agricultural crop production and transportation facilities. The project area consists of large areas that have been disturbed by human activity, this policy is not applicable
2.3.2.5	Requires that qualified persons for private and public development prepare the appropriate survey, analysis and recommendations to offset impacts to environmentally sensitive habitats.	As per the policies of the Department of Transportation and the requirements outlined in CEQA and NEPA, qualified personnel performed the appropriate environmental analysis to determine impact assessment, recommended avoidance and minimization measures, and the recommended restoration and long-term mitigation measures to off-set impacts to environmentally sensitive habitats. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.3.2.6	Requires that deed restrictions or dedications be established in the development review process for projects adjacent to or within environmentally sensitive habitats.	For the purposes of wetland restoration, Caltrans would either purchase the property and hold it in perpetuity or establish a conservation easement. Caltrans would fence and post "wetland restoration area", or similarly worded, signs. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.3.2.7	Limits recreational uses in environmentally sensitive habitats.	This policy does not apply.
2.3.2.8	Limits and/or minimizes the removal of indigenous vegetation in environmentally sensitive habitats.	The project has been sited to minimize the alteration of the natural landforms. Existing vegetation would be preserved to the maximum extent practicable. All vegetated areas to be protected would be delineated on the project plans. Environmentally Sensitive Habitat fencing will be placed 3 meters (10 feet) beyond the cut and fill limits to minimize encroachment of construction equipment into oak woodland that is adjacent to the project limits. Tree removal has been minimized (of the 3.81 acres [approximately 200 trees] of oak woodlands in the project area .06 acres [3 trees] are proposed for removal). The project is consistent with this policy.
2.3.2.9	Prohibits the use of non-invasive plant species in landscaping and encourages native plantings.	The proposed project would use only certified noxious weed free erosion control materials and imported fill material shall be weed free. Landscaping will consist primarily of native plantings and all landscaping plans and quantities will be submitted for approval to the County during the Coastal Development Permit Application process. Only non-invasive plant species will be considered for planting. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.3.2.10	Limits construction during the breeding and nesting seasons of protected bird species.	As per the requirements of the Migratory Bird Act, Caltrans has developed a Contract Special Provision that requires surveying for nesting birds prior to oak tree removal. This special provision will be included in the contract and identified as a "construction window." The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.3.3 A(4)	Limits developments on land containing oak woodlands.	The project has been sited to minimize the alteration of the natural landforms. Existing vegetation would be preserved to the maximum extent practicable. All vegetated areas to be protected would be delineated on the project plans. Environmentally Sensitive Habitat fencing will be placed 3 meters (10 feet) beyond the cut and fill limits to minimize encroachment of construction equipment into oak woodland that is adjacent to the project limits. Tree removal has been minimized (of the 3.81 acres [approximately 200 trees] of oak woodlands in the project area .06 acres [3 trees] are proposed for removal) and will be mitigated at a ratio of 5 trees replanted for every tree removed. The project is consistent with this policy.
2.3.3 B (1)	Setback requirements for riparian plant communities.	Project does not encroach upon any riparian plant communities. This policy does not apply.
2.3.3 B (2)	Limitations of development within stream corridors.	All wetlands that would be impacted are manmade and frequently disturbed by agricultural uses. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.3.3 B (3)	Limitation on agricultural development within intermittent and perennial streams.	Not applicable, the project would effect only maintained agricultural ditches.
2.3.3 B (5)	Protection and preservation of North County Coastal Zone wetland areas.	Impacts to the unvegetated and degraded coastal wetlands would be minimized and mitigated. The function of these wetlands would be retained and enhanced. Creation of new wetlands, at a ratio of 3:1, would preserve and enhance wetlands within the project area. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.

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2.3.3 C (2)	Protection of Critical Habitat Areas	A Biological Opinion was obtained from the USFWS for the California Red-legged Frog and its aquatic habitat. No aquatic habitat would be lost. All the measures identified by the USFWS will be followed throughout project construction. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
<b>2.4 DIKING, DREDGING, FILLING AND SHORELINE STRUCTURES</b>		
2.4.1	Limitation on filling activities.	Of the alternatives, the preferred alternative is the least environmentally damaging feasible design. It includes avoidance and minimization methods to avoid impacts to wetlands. 0.2 acre of regularly maintained and reconfigured agricultural ditches, which meet the definition of coastal wetlands, will be filled with the project. The existing coastal wetlands have low biological function and habitat value. The project will mitigate and enhance the biological function and habitat value of coastal wetlands in the project area through creation and restoration of 0.6 acre of high functioning and protected wetlands. The project would be consistent with this policy.
2.4.2.1	Limitations of alteration of natural shoreline processes.	All wetlands that would be impacted are manmade and frequently disturbed by agricultural uses. Typically the natural shoreline function associated with vegetated wetlands is to act as a filter to the highway and agricultural runoff, the existing coastal wetlands provide little habitat quality. The unvegetated wetlands impacted by the proposed project are highly erodible and are estimated to contribute more sedimentation than they retain. The proposed project includes at least 5000 feet of vegetated grass swales that would overall enhance the function of the existing natural shoreline process by cleaning highway and agricultural runoff, which the current condition does not provide. This project is a health and safety project and impacts to wetland resources must be balanced with the need to improve the safety and operations of Highway 1 as identified in Section 3.1. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.4.2.2	Requires minimization of filling in wetland habitats.	<p>The project area is located in an area of agricultural crop production and impacts to 0.2 acre of maintained agricultural drainage ditches, which are coastal wetlands. Mitigation of coastal wetlands, included in this project, will improve and enhance the biological function and habitat of coastal wetlands in the project area. Avoidance and minimization measures were developed in coordination with the California Coastal Commission staff, Monterey County staff and the Citizens Advisory Group to minimize the project's overall scale and footprint of the project. The following design features have been incorporated in to the project design so that the impacts to the coastal wetlands are reduced:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proposed highway widening of 2 lanes to 4 lanes was not carried through to Jensen Road in order to reduce and narrow the overall area of new pavement through the project area.</li> <li>2. The new loop northbound on-ramp was constricted down to the smallest radius feasible to reduce the footprint of the interchange.</li> <li>3. Slopes were steepened from 1:4 to 1:2.</li> <li>4. A design exemption was obtained that allowed placement of the western frontage road to be directly across from the on and off-ramps rather than several hundred meters to the west of the ramp intersection. This substantially reduced the overall footprint of the interchange.</li> </ol> <p>The result of all these design changes was to reduce impacts to coastal wetlands and to allow the new interchange to follow as closely to the existing alignment as was feasible while still allowing the project to meet the safety standards and project purpose.</p> <p>Mitigation of impacts to coastal wetlands will enhance the biological functions and wetland habitat in the project area. 0.6 acre of high functioning wetlands habitat will be included in the project area,</p>

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		monitored for success and retained in perpetuity.  The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.4.2.5	Area impacted by filling need to be restored to its original condition following construction.	Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration would mitigate at a ratio of 3:1 for impacts to Coastal Zone wetlands. All areas of temporary impact will be returned to pre-construction status following project completion. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.4.2.6	The least environmentally damaging alternative shall be selected when filling is anticipated with a project.	The least environmentally damaging practicable alternative, considering all resources affected and the projects purpose, (Alternative 7) has been selected for the build alternative. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.4.3.6	The County's regulations shall incorporate the Coastal Act Sections that apply to filling.	The proposed project is consistent with the policies outlined in the Coastal Act, therefore the proposed project is consistent with this policy.
<b>2.5 WATER RESOURCES</b>		
2.5.1	The estuaries and wetlands shall be protected from excessive sedimentation.	<p>The proposed project is subject to the requirements of the Caltrans NPDES permit issued by the Regional Water Quality Board. Projects that exceed one acre of ground disturbance are required to prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP establishes the types of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would be required to prevent sedimentation or discharge of materials into the water resources adjacent to the project. This plan identifies the temporary construction BMPs. Additionally the proposed project is required to provide long-term BMPs that would prevent sedimentation or erosion from occurring due to the long-term maintenance of the highway facility. The proposed project is subject to final approval from the Regional Water Quality Board following construction, and the Board will ensure that the long-term BMP's are functional before awarding approval for "close out" of the project.</p> <p>Typically the function associated with vegetated wetlands is to act as a filter to the highway and agricultural runoff, the existing coastal wetlands provide little habitat quality. The unvegetated wetlands impacted by the proposed project are highly erodible and are estimated to contribute more sedimentation than they retain. The proposed project includes at least 5000 feet of vegetated grass swales that would overall enhance the function of the existing natural shoreline process by cleaning highway and agricultural runoff, which the current condition does not provide.</p> <p>With these measures in place the project is consistent with this policy.</p>
2.5.2.1	Limitations to development to minimize erosion in the watershed of Elkhorn and Moro Cojo Sloughs.	The proposed project has a minimized footprint and long-term BMP's identified (such as the proposed 5000 feet of bio-filtration swales) that would enhance the function of the watersheds of the adjacent areas by reducing sedimentation. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.5.2.2	Non-point and point sources of pollution shall be controlled and minimized.	The project would require a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that would control and minimize point and non-point pollution during construction. The long-term BMPs would also control and minimize the point and non-point sources of pollution. The project is consistent with this policy.

North County Land Use Plan		
Policy #	Subject of Policy	Consistency Evaluation
2.5.3 B (1)	Dumping into wetland and riparian areas will be prohibited.	As part of the SWPPP the contract must identify areas for disposal of construction and other materials. The SWPPP is reviewed and approved by both the Caltrans Resident Engineer and the Regional Quality Control Board. Construction debris and other materials will not be permitted to be disposed of adjacent to a wetland or riparian area. The SWPPP establishes the types of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would be required to prevent sedimentation or discharge of materials into the water resources adjacent to the project. Environmentally Sensitive Area fencing will be installed 3 meters from all wetland and riparian areas to prevent construction activities from disturbing these areas. The project is consistent with this policy.
2.5.3 C (6)	Erosion Control Measures	The proposed project is subject to the requirements of the Caltrans NPDES permit issued by the Regional Water Quality Board. Projects that exceed one acre of ground disturbance are required to prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP establishes the types of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would be required to prevent sedimentation or discharge of materials into the water resources adjacent to the project. This plan identifies the temporary construction BMPs. Additionally the proposed project is required to provide long-term BMPs that would prevent sedimentation or erosion from occurring due to the long-term maintenance of the highway facility. The proposed project is subject to final approval from the Regional Water Quality Board following construction, the Board will ensure that the long-term BMP's are functional before awarding approval for "close out" of the project. With these measures in place the project is consistent with this policy.
<b>2.6 AGRICULTURE</b>		
2.6.1	Preservation of prime agricultural lands for agricultural use. Development adjacent to the agricultural areas must be consistent.	The project has incorporated avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures that would preserve agricultural lands to the fullest extent possible. This project is a health and safety project and impacts to agricultural resources must be balanced with the need to improve the safety and operations of Highway 1 as identified in Section 3.1 of the LUP. The new highway facility is compatible with the agricultural uses by providing for the transport of agricultural products. With the mitigation measures incorporated the proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.6.2.1	Prime and productive farmland designated for Agricultural Preservation and Agricultural Conservation land use shall be preserved for agricultural use to the fullest extent possible.	<p>The project area is located in an area of agricultural crop production; the preferred alternative would impact 25.1 acres of Agricultural Preservation and Agricultural Conservation lands. To minimize the impacts to farmland Caltrans, in coordination with the California Coastal Commission staff, Monterey County staff and the Citizens Advisory Group, were able to discuss and alter the final design of the preferred alternative to substantially reduce the overall footprint of the project. The following design changes are to be incorporated in to the final design so that the impacts to farmland will be lessened:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed widening of 2 lanes to 4 lanes was not carried through to Jensen Road to reduce and narrow the overall area of new pavement.</li> <li>• The new loop northbound on-ramp was constricted down to the smallest radius feasible to reduce the footprint of the interchange.</li> <li>• Slopes were steepened from 1:4 to 1:2.</li> <li>• A design exception was obtained that allowed placement of the frontage road to be directly across from the on and off-ramps rather than several hundred meters to the west of the ramp intersection. This reduced the overall footprint of the interchange.</li> </ul> <p>The result of all these design changes was to reduce impacts and to allow the new interchange to follow as closely to the existing alignment as was feasible while still allowing the project to meet the safety standards and project purpose. The project has incorporated avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures that preserved, to the fullest extent possible, prime and productive farmland.</p>

*Appendix I Monterey County General Plan, North County Land Use Plan  
and Implementation Plan Policy Consistency Analysis*

North County Land Use Plan		
Policy #	Subject of Policy	Consistency Evaluation
		Furthermore, there is no feasible alternative with less impact; the proposed project is consistent with this policy with the mitigation measures incorporated. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.6.2.2	Divisions of prime and productive farmland, designated as Agricultural Preservation, or Agricultural Conservation shall be permitted only when such division does not adversely affect the land's long-term agricultural viability.	The Salinas Rd Interchange project has the overriding need to protect public health and safety and, therefore allows conversion of CAP and CAC lands to other uses. Impacts have been isolated to the areas adjacent to the new highway features and the new frontage road. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.6.2.3	Conversion of uncultivated lands on steep and erodible soils.	This policy is not applicable to the proposed project.
2.6.3.5	“Conversion of Agricultural Conservation lands to non-agricultural uses shall be allowed if such conversion is necessary to: a. Establish a stable boundary between agriculture and adjacent urban uses or sensitive habitats; or b. Accommodate agriculture-related or other permitted uses which would economically enable continuation of farming on the parcel and adjacent lands.”	The proposed project is to provide improved safety and operational benefits to the intersection of Salinas Road and Highway 1. The new project features will further separate the boundaries of the highway system from local farming operations through the addition of frontage roads. This new system will provide a stable boundary between the state transportation use and the agricultural uses in the area without impacting access to the highway system. The project improves agricultural operations and provides a safe transportation facility for farm workers. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.9.1	Protection of archaeological resources.	A Historic Properties Survey Report (HPSR) and Palentological Technical Report was completed for the proposed project. These reports did not identify any eligible prehistoric or historic archaeological resources within the project area. The Office of Historic Preservation provided a concurrence letter to Caltrans in July 2003 concurring with the results of the HPSR. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.9.2.1	An evaluation of archaeological resources will be required in a timely manner	A Historic Properties Survey Report and Palentological Technical Report was completed for the proposed project. These reports did not identify any eligible prehistoric or historic archaeological resources within the project area. Copies of these reports will be submitted during the Coastal Permit application processes. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
2.9.2.2	Archaeological survey requirements in the coastal zone.	A Historic Properties Survey Report and Palentological Technical Report was completed for the proposed project. These reports did not identify any eligible prehistoric or historic archaeological resources within the project area. Copies of these reports will be submitted during the Coastal Permit application processes. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
3.1.1	State highways shall be upgraded for safety and to accommodate traffic volumes.	The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the safety and function of the intersection at Highway 1 and Salinas Road in a cost effective and timely manner, while minimizing environmental, social and economic impacts. The preferred alternative meets the projects purpose. The proposed project is consistent with this policy.
3.1.2.1	Highway 1 should be widened, barriers installed, left turn pockets included when necessary to accommodate increasing traffic and provide safety, with the following criteria: c. Mitigate for adverse wetland impacts.	Upgrading of the Salinas Road Interchange for the purpose of safety will require impacts to wetlands. The filling of these wetlands will be mitigated at a ratio of 3:1. The project is consistent with this policy.
3.1.2.5	Major arterials should be upgraded to serve the planned growth and rural roads upgraded to provide for local circulation and not through-traffic circulation.	The improvements at Salinas Road and Highway 1, major arterials in the North Coast, will accommodate anticipated increased traffic from planned growth. The project is consistent with this policy.
3.1.3.1	Priority to highway development in areas where Highway 1 provides the major transportation access.	Highway 1 provides the only major transportation access here. The project is consistent with this policy.
3.1.3.2	Salinas Road designated as a major arterial, Level of Service requirements	The improvements at Salinas Road and Highway 1, major arterials in the North Coast, will provide safe access to this area and provide Level of Service C on Salinas Road until the build year of 2025. The project is consistent with this policy.
3.1.3.5	Provide additional transit services.	The frontage road west of Highway 1 will improve transit services for the North Coast in coordination with the Monterey Salinas Transit Service (MST). The project is consistent with this policy.

North County Land Use Plan		
Policy #	Subject of Policy	Consistency Evaluation
3.1.3.7	Bike access for the Centennial Bike Race	The proposed project will provide a separation for the southbound Highway 1 bike path between Salinas Road and Jensen Road. Bike detectors will be placed at the signals to improve bicycle access through the interchange. The project is consistent with this policy.
4.3.1.E	Preservation of agricultural land for exclusive agricultural use.	The Salinas Rd Interchange project meets the definition of subdivision. It has the overriding need to protect public health and safety and, therefore allows conversion of CAP and CAC lands to other uses. Impacts to agricultural lands would be mitigated through creation of CAP lands and restoration of degraded farmland to CAP land use. Project is consistent with this policy.
4.3.1.F	Conservation of viable agricultural land is emphasized.	The Salinas Rd Interchange project meets the definition of subdivision. It has the overriding need to protect public health and safety and, therefore allows conversion of CAP and CAC lands to other uses. Impacts to agricultural lands would be mitigated through creation of CAP lands and restoration of degraded farmland to CAP land use. The project is consistent with this policy.
4.3.4	Development must be consistent with the protection of the areas resources.	Throughout the environmental review and certification of the proposed project Caltrans has designed an alternative and worked with the local community and resource agencies to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to the resources identified in the project area. In summary, impacts identified to visual resources, agricultural resources and biological resources have been avoided through design changes that reduced overall footprint, selection of an alternative that is the least environmentally damaging, and provided mitigation and restoration for the impacts to farmland and biological resources. Continued community involvement is planned as part of the Coastal Development permit application process. This involvement will include coordination with the Citizens Advisory Group, creation of an Aesthetic Advisory Committee, and on-going coordination and communication with the local government and transit authority to achieve a project that will meet the health and safety need identified in this area. The project is consistent with this policy.
4.3.5.1	Rural character shall be retained.	<p>The project area is located in an area of agricultural crop production and avoids all development to beach, dune and estuary areas. Avoidance and minimization measures were developed in coordination with the California Coastal Commission staff, Monterey County staff and the Citizens Advisory Group to minimize the project's overall scale and footprint of the project. The following design features have been incorporated in to the project design so that the essential rural character is retained:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The profile of the proposed bridge was sited and lowered to match the existing landforms and to reduce the scale and visibility of the structure.</li> <li>2. The proposed highway widening of 2 lanes to 4 lanes was not carried through to Jensen Road in order to reduce and narrow the overall area of new pavement through the project area.</li> <li>3. The new loop northbound on-ramp was constricted down to the smallest radius feasible to reduce the footprint of the interchange.</li> <li>4. Slopes were steepened from 1:4 to 1:2 where safety would not be compromised..</li> <li>5. A design exemption was obtained that allowed placement of the western frontage road to be directly across from the on and off-ramps rather than several hundred meters to the west of the ramp intersection. This substantially reduced the overall footprint of the interchange.</li> </ol> <p>The result of all these design changes was to reduce visual impacts and to allow the new interchange to follow as closely to the existing alignment as was feasible while still allowing the project to meet the safety standards and project purpose.</p>

*Appendix I Monterey County General Plan, North County Land Use Plan  
and Implementation Plan Policy Consistency Analysis*

North County Land Use Plan		
Policy #	Subject of Policy	Consistency Evaluation
		<p>Additional design features include slope rounding and landscaping with native plants to provide a natural appearing site.</p> <p>An Aesthetics Design Advisory Committee, made up of members of the community and local agencies will be formed during the final design phase of the project to provide direction on the aesthetic features of the project including structures design and planting.</p> <p>Impacts to 0.2 acre of maintained agricultural drainage ditches, which are coastal wetlands, were reduced using the minimization methods listed above. Mitigation of coastal wetlands, included in this project, will improve and enhance the biological function and habitat of coastal wetlands in the project area.</p> <p>The proposed project is consistent with this policy.</p>
6.2	Public access to the shoreline features of the North Coast	This project does not affect coastal access points.

North County Implementation Plan		
Policy #	Subject of Policy	Consistency Analysis
20.144.120(B)(1) a-e	<p>Development Standards for Highway 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The existing alignment of Highway 1 shall be used to the maximum extent feasible and practical. Any deviation shall remain as close to the existing alignment as possible.</li> <li>b. The highway shall be widened to four lanes.</li> <li>c. Barriers shall be constructed between the northbound and southbound lanes where necessary to control traffic turns and to increase traffic safety, as may be determined through a traffic study required for the project.</li> <li>d. Extra lanes shall be added, where needed to alleviate existing inadequate capacity and to facilitate safe access to existing developments with connections to the highway.</li> <li>e. The project shall be designed so as to not require wetland fill, except for piers, pilings and abutments associated with bridges or causeways where there is no less environmentally damaging alternative, and to mitigate adverse wetland impacts in conjunction with road construction, subject to the biological survey requirement pursuant to Section 20.144.040A.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The existing alignment is maintained, and design exceptions have been obtained to ensure the interchange has been designed as close to the existing alignment as possible while ensuring safety.</li> <li>b. This project will widen the highway to four lanes where necessary to ensure safety.</li> <li>c. Based on traffic studies, this project includes median barriers where necessary to ensure safety.</li> <li>d. This project widens highway 1 to four lanes where necessary to ensure safety.</li> <li>e. The project will place fill, associated with construction of a bridge, in coastal wetlands. The project is the least environmentally damaging alternative and adverse impacts to wetlands have been mitigated.</li> </ul> <p>On balance the project substantially conforms to the implementation plan.</p>



# APPENDIX J Consistency with California Coastal Act

Coastal Resources Planning and Management Policies		
Section #	Section topic	Consistency Evaluation
30210	Access: Maximum coastal access shall be provided.	Preferred alternative improves access by increasing safety for motorists on Highway 1, the primary coastal access route in northern Monterey County, and improving bicycle lanes.
30211	Access: Development shall not interfere with public's access to sea.	Does not apply.
30212 (a-c)	Access: Public access from nearest public roadway to the shoreline shall be provided with new development.	Does not apply.
30212.5	Access: public facilities distributed to mitigate overcrowding.	Does not apply
30213	Access: Lower cost facilities shall be protected.	Does not apply.
30214	Access: Appropriateness of public access	Does not apply.
30220-30224	Recreation	Does not apply.
30230	Marine Environment: Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced and restored. Protection given to areas of biological or economic significance. Use of marine environment must sustain the biological productivity of coastal waters.	Preferred alternative will permanently impact 0.2 acre of maintained agricultural drainage ditches, which have been identified as coastal wetlands. These low functioning wetlands will be replaced, at 3:1.
30231	Marine Environment: Biological productivity shall be maintained and restored.	The preferred alternative includes at least 5000 lineal feet of vegetated ditches) which will serve to enhance the biological productivity and quality of coastal wetlands.
30232	Marine Environment: Protection against hazardous waste spills during development.	The preferred alternative includes a requirement for a Storm Water Pollution Protection Plan, which includes strategies to protect the environment from hazardous spills during construction.
30233	Marine Environment: Diking, filling or dredging of coastal resources.	The project is a health and safety undertaking. Preferred alternative will permanently impact 0.2 acre of maintained agricultural drainage ditches, which have been identified as coastal wetlands. The preferred alternative is the least environmentally damaging alternative of those proposed. Mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects.
30234	Marine Environment: commercial fishing and recreational boating.	Does not apply.
30234.5	Marine Environment: commercial and recreational fishing.	Does not apply.
30235	Marine Environment: construction which alters natural shoreline	Does not apply
30236	Marine Environment: substantial alterations to rivers and streams	Does not apply
30237	Marine Environment: County of Orange	Does not apply.
30240	Land Resources: Environmentally sensitive habitat areas protected against significant disruption; only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas. Adjacent development shall be sited and designed to prevent significant impacts and compatible.	The preferred alternative does not impact any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments.
30241	Land Resources: Maintain maximum amount of prime agricultural land to assure protection of the areas agricultural economy and minimize conflicts between agricultural and urban use through all of the following: a. Establishing stable boundaries separating urban and rural areas; minimize conflicts between agricultural and urban land uses. b. Limit conversions of ag lands around the periphery of urban areas to lands where the viability of existing ag use is already severely limited by conflicts with urban uses or where the conversion of the lands would complete a logical and viable neighborhood and contribute to the establishment of a stable limit to urban development. c. Permit conversion of ag land surrounded by urban uses	The project proposes improvements to an intersection that experiences twice the number of accidents expected for a facility of its type. It currently has more collisions than any other state highway intersection in Monterey County. The preferred alternative has incorporated design exceptions and minimization efforts to reduce farmland impacts to less than half the amount originally proposed; from 53 acres to 26.1 acres. The project would improve the movement of locally produced raw and processed agricultural products with in the region, state and nation and provides improved transportation safety for farm workers. The

Coastal Resources Planning and Management Policies		
Section #	Section topic	Consistency Evaluation
	<p>consistent with 30250;</p> <p>d. Develop available lands not suited for ag prior to conversion of ag lands</p> <p>e. Assure that public service and facility expansions do not impair agricultural viability</p> <p>f. Assure that all divisions of prime ag land does not diminish the productivity of prime ag land.</p>	<p>project is contiguous with the existing facility. It will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources. The project is compatible with the long-term viability of adjacent agricultural lands. Conversion of farmland would maintain parcels of sufficient size so that agricultural use is not diminished. During construction, provisions for adequate access would ensure that operations are not impaired and agricultural use remains viable.</p>
30244	Protection of archaeological or paleontological resources.	The State Historic Preservation Officer has reviewed cultural resources studies prepared by Caltrans and concurred that the project would not effect cultural resources. Paleontological studies have concluded that the project will impact to paleontological resources.
30250	Development:	The project is contiguous with the existing facility. It will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources. The project is compatible with the long-term viability of adjacent agricultural lands. Conversion of farmland would maintain parcels of sufficient size so that agricultural use is not diminished
30251	Consider scenic and visual qualities	There are no views to the ocean from the project site. The preferred alternative has been sited to minimize alteration of natural landforms and, with slope rounding and planting, will be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding area.
30252	Facilitate transit, minimize use of coastal access roads, provide non-automobile circulation, adequate parking facilities, correlate development with local parks development to facilitate recreational opportunities.	The preferred alternative would relocate transit stops to the frontage roads to improve safety. Handicapped-accessible landing pad and shelters are part of the project.
30253	Minimize risks from geologic, flood and fire hazards. Assure stability and structural integrity, minimize erosion, retain natural landforms, consistency with State Air Resources Control Board, minimize energy consumption, and protect special communities.	The preferred alternative is not located in an area of major geologic or seismic features or in the 100-year floodplain. Erosion would be minimized through project design of adequate slopes and the project's storm water pollution prevention plan. The project is included in the 2005 Monterey Transit Plan and is consistent with the most recent update of the Air Quality Management Plan of the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District, which was approved September 2004.
30254	Limit design of new or expanded public works facilities to accommodate needs generated by permitted development. Highway 1 in rural areas of the coastal zone shall remain a scenic two-lane road. Services to coastal dependent land use, essential public services and basic industries vital to the economic health of the region, state or nation... shall not be precluded by other development.	The preferred alternative was designed to accommodate planned and permitted development for the 20-year life of the project. Except where required for route continuity and safety, Highway 1 remains a two-lane highway. Safety improvements with the preferred alternative will improve the movement of locally produced raw and processed agricultural products with in the region, state and nation and provides improved transportation safety for farm workers.
30254.5	Terms and conditions to sewer treatment plants	Does not apply
30255	Priority and siting of coastal-dependent developments	Does not apply
30260-30265.5	Industrial Development	Does not apply

# APPENDIX K U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office  
2493 Portola Road, Suite B  
Ventura, California 93003



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
PAS 473 3841 4713

May 10, 2006

Gene Fong, Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
California Division  
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 4-100  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Biological Opinion for the Salinas Road Interchange, Monterey, California, HDA-  
CA, File # 05-MON-1-99 9/101.5, (1-8-06-F-08)

Dear Mr. Fong:

This document transmits the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) biological opinion based on our review of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Salinas Road interchange project, Monterey County, and its effects on the federally threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act) (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Your request for formal consultation, dated November 14, 2005, was received on November 16, 2005. The project would be completed in conjunction with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (County). In your request for consultation, you stated that the proposed project met the suitability criteria for using the programmatic biological opinion issued to FHWA for the California red-legged frog, dated April 24, 2003 (Service 2003). We concur that the programmatic consultation is appropriate for use with this project.

This biological opinion is based on information which accompanied your request for consultation, including the biological assessment (Caltrans 2005) and information in our files. A complete administrative record for this consultation is on file at the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office.

#### CONSULTATION HISTORY

Julie Niceswanger of my staff clarified the project description with Dave Hacker, project coordinator for the Caltrans, San Luis Obispo office, in January 2006. Mr. Hacker provided an updated description of temporary and permanent impacts due to project activities on January 18,



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2006. Mr. Hacker also provided an updated project timeline for the entire project and clarified the length of time necessary for clearing the fire suppression pond on January 24, 2006. Mr. Hacker indicated that the project would take approximately 2 years to complete instead of the previously projected 1 year described in the biological assessment. Additionally, Caltrans would need to work continuously throughout the year because of extreme traffic conditions during construction which require rerouting vehicles on the heavily used Highway 1 during project implementation. Mr. Hacker explained Caltrans would be unable to implement any construction timing restrictions during the rainy season for the protection of California red-legged frogs as any delays in construction would cause major traffic problems and change the scope of the project.

The agricultural fire suppression pond would be suitable breeding habitat for California tiger salamanders or Santa Cruz long toed salamanders; however, no upland habitat exists adjacent to the pond to support these animals as an intensive agricultural complex surrounds the pond. These animals could be present within dispersal distance to the project. However, the possibility of finding these animals within the project area is low as Highway 1 presents a substantial barrier to dispersal, agricultural ponds that were potential breeding habitat have recently been destroyed, and the upland habitat between known breeding ponds and the project area is unsuitable as upland refugia because it is used as agricultural fields. A habitat assessment conducted for this project concluded that the habitat was unsuitable and no larval surveys were conducted for either species. Potentially suitable upland habitat near Trafton Road, which includes a drainage ditch with permanent aquatic habitat, would be protected as an environmentally sensitive area and avoided during project activities.

#### BIOLOGICAL OPINION

##### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The FHWA, in conjunction with Caltrans and the County, proposes safety and operational improvements to Highway 1 at the intersection of Salinas Road in northern Monterey County (postmiles 99.9 to 101.5). Additionally, operational improvements would be made to Highway 1 between Jensen Road and the Trafton Road overcrossing.

A new interchange and bridge would be constructed at the Salinas Road intersection with Highway 1. The interchange would include one-way diagonal type ramps and a loop ramp to permit unobstructed right turns from Highway 1 and allow the frontage road connection to be pulled closer to the interchange. Traffic signals would also be installed in this interchange to regulate traffic movement.

An additional southbound lane would be added on Highway 1 between the new interchange and the existing four-lane section of highway, a half mile north, at the Trafton Road overcrossing. Frontage roads would be added between Jensen Road and the new interchange, east and west of the highway, to restrict entry to Highway 1 from farm roads and driveways. Additional

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improvements at the Jensen Road intersection include widening and paving the aprons to provide room for standard sized trucks to turn.

All wetlands and waters of the United States impacted by project activities would be replaced on site. Drainage systems in the areas of construction would be modified using a combination of pipes, paved ditches, and bioswales. An existing fire suppression pond would be reconfigured, but would maintain its original size. The project would disturb a total of approximately 62 acres comprised of 40.9 acres of agricultural land, 8.4 acres of ruderal vegetation, 0.09 acre of wetland and other waters of the United States, 0.06 acre of coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) woodland, 0.39 acre of a fire control pond, and 12.2 acres of roads and road shoulders. Permanent and temporary impacts are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Permanent and Temporary Impacts of the Salinas Road Interchange Project

Cover Type	Permanent Impacts (acres)	Temporary Impacts (acres)
agricultural fields	32.4	8.5
ruderal vegetation	7.2	1.2
coastal zone wetland (not Corps jurisdiction) and waters of the US	0.09	0
coast live oak woodland	0.06	0
fire control pond	0.39	0
roads and road shoulders	12.2	0
Totals	52.34	9.7
total disturbance area = approx. 62 acres		

The project is proposed for construction in 2009. The number of working days is currently undetermined; however, construction is expected to take approximately 2 years. FHWA proposes to follow all of the measures to minimize adverse effects to California red-legged frogs described in the programmatic biological opinion (Service 2003) except limiting the timing of construction. Additional protection measures proposed for this project include:

1. Best management practices for erosion control will be followed from Caltrans' National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit.
2. An environmentally sensitive area (ESA) will be established to avoid the fire suppression pond's emergent vegetation near the pump unit.
3. If adult or juvenile California red-legged frogs are found on the project site, they will be relocated to the agricultural drainage channel along Trifton Road, west of Highway 1.
4. If California red-legged frog tadpoles are found in the fire pond that would be reconfigured, the following process will be followed:
  - a. Isolate the east half of the existing pond with sandbags, silt fence, or other

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material that will maintain water clarity in the east half while constructing the new pond.

- b. Relocate all tadpoles into the east half of the existing pond.
- c. Maintain water level in the east half until tadpoles are relocated into the new pond.
- d. Construct a new pond and fill it with water.
- e. Relocate all tadpoles into the new pond.
- f. Drain the remainder of the existing pond.

#### STATUS OF THE SPECIES

The programmatic biological opinion for the California red-legged frog (Service 2003) describes the basic ecology of the subspecies and the reasons for its listing. Since the issuance of the programmatic biological opinion, the Service designated critical habitat for the California red-legged frog on April 13, 2006 (71 Federal Register 19244). The FHWA and the Service are not consulting on critical habitat as the project does not occur within a critical habitat unit.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

The implementing regulations for section 7(a)(2) of the Act define the "action area" as all areas to be affected directly or indirectly by the Federal action and not merely the immediate area involved in the action (50 Code of Federal Regulations 402.02). For the purposes of this biological opinion, we consider the action area to be all areas where people and equipment will be working or staging as described in the Description of the Proposed Action portion of this biological opinion.

The proposed project is in a coastal agricultural area between the cities of Watsonville and Castroville. Nearly all surrounding land is in agricultural production; primarily cultivated row crops (strawberries and artichokes). An agricultural industry complex (known collectively as Hilltop Industries) lies southwest of the Salinas Road intersection. Hydrologic resources in the proposed project location consist primarily of irrigation ditches and irrigation ponds. Agricultural ditches in the southern portion of the project area (south of Salinas Road) eventually drain to Elkhorn Slough and in the northern portion of the project area to the Pajaro River.

Most of the area consists of agricultural row crops. Ruderal plant communities cover most of the existing highway right-of-way, which includes eucalyptus stands. There is an area of grassland community west of Highway 1 and south of Trafton Road. The area is currently a vacant pasture dominated by non-native harding grass (*Phalaris aquatica*) that is occasionally mowed. The area was likely a coastal prairie grassland as there are small patches of California oatgrass

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(*Danthonia californica*) and purple needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*). A coast live oak woodland occurs on the north slope of the marine terrace, just south of the grassland. Riparian communities have developed along some of the irrigation drainage ditches, which are comprised of willows (*Salix* sp.), California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), and often an herbaceous layer.

California red-legged frogs were found within the project area even though the area is primarily agricultural with only limited opportunities for breeding. A juvenile was found in approximately 0.75 inch of water that had pooled in a low spot within an asphalt drainage on the east side of Highway 1 and north of Salinas Road. An adult California red-legged frog was observed in a concrete structure south of Salinas Road and west of Highway 1 near the fire suppression pond. The concrete structure is now gone. No protocol surveys were performed for this project after identifying the presence of both adults and juveniles within the project area. California red-legged frogs were not seen in the fire suppression pond and no larval surveys were conducted, but it does provide permanent aquatic habitat and may be suitable for breeding. The pond is cleared of vegetation routinely by the private landowner and a bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) was observed at this pond. A drainage ditch near Trafton Road may hold water for periods long enough to support breeding California red-legged frogs, but most of the drainage ditches in the project area are either shallow, paved, or contain only flowing water that does not pool. With the limited opportunities for breeding and the presence of a juvenile in the area it is assumed that the fire suppression pond is the likely breeding pond. Other ponds in the area have been filled recently. Eleven records of California red-legged frogs exist from the California Natural Diversity Database within 5 miles of the project area.

#### EFFECTS OF THE ACTION

The programmatic biological opinion (Service 2003) generally describes how California red-legged frogs could be affected by actions such as safety and operational highway improvements and minor drainage improvements. For this reason, use of the programmatic biological opinion is appropriate and we will not repeat that analysis here.

The proposed action would temporarily affect a total of 9.7 acres of agricultural fields and ruderal vegetation. Approximately 52 acres would be permanently affected. However, 44.6 of the acres to be permanently affected are comprised of 32.4 acres of agricultural fields, which are low quality habitat for California red-legged frogs and 12.2 acres of roads and road shoulders, which are not considered habitat. The remaining 7.74 acres contain potentially suitable upland habitat (coast live oak woodland) and wetland habitat, which includes 0.39 acre of a fire suppression pond with permanent aquatic habitat. The fire suppression pond would be reconfigured to accommodate the new highway lane but would retain the same size and depth. It is projected that the entire project would take approximately 2 years to complete and that reconfiguring the fire suppression pond would take approximately 1 month and be completed at the beginning of the project.

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The proposed action would affect a small number of California red-legged frogs during project implementation. Because of the small amount of potentially suitable habitat in the action area and because FHWA, Caltrans, and the County have proposed to use the protective measures contained in the programmatic biological opinion, we anticipate that few, if any, California red-legged frogs are likely to be killed or injured during this work.

The FHWA, Caltrans, and the County would avoid adversely affecting water quality, and California red-legged frogs using the permanent aquatic habitat, in the project area, by: 1) screening any pumps used to dewater portions of the existing fire suppression pond during reconfiguration with wire mesh, to prevent California red-legged frogs from entering the pumping system; 2) conducting preactivity surveys; 3) moving any tadpoles to the side of the pond to be maintained with water; and, 4) moving adults or juveniles to an appropriate wetland habitat at Trafton Road. Care would be taken to preserve existing vegetation on the edge of the pond by demarcating it as an ESA and water quality would be maintained during construction.

The increased activity at the project site during year-round activities may cause California red-legged frogs to leave the action area and be subject to a greater risk of predation or desiccation. Caltrans would limit direct effects due to trampling of California red-legged frogs caused by work activities by limiting work areas to the smallest area necessary and conducting surveys prior to ground disturbing activities. Any California red-legged frogs located in areas to be disturbed would be re-located to a permanent aquatic habitat near Trafton Road. The potential habitat near Trafton Road which includes potential breeding, foraging, and permanent aquatic habitat, would be designated an ESA and avoided.

The area surrounding the existing segment of Highway 1 in the action area is currently in agricultural production and California red-legged frogs are primarily using drainage ditches, agricultural ponds, and artificial fresh water sources in the area. The FHWA, Caltrans, and the County will replace all wetlands disturbed during construction with similar or better water diversion systems. Bioswales are incorporated into this project, which may provide improved habitat compared to asphalt or concrete lined drainage systems currently existing in the action area. Highway 1 is currently a significant barrier to dispersal for California red-legged frogs in this area and will continue to be a barrier when this project is completed.

In summary, the effects from implementing the proposed action on the California red-legged frog are likely to be minimal. Only a minimal amount of California red-legged frog habitat would be affected by the project.

#### CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Cumulative effects include the effects of future State, tribal, local or private actions that are reasonably certain to occur in the action area considered in this biological opinion. Future Federal actions that are unrelated to the proposed action are not considered in this section because they require separate consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Act. We are unaware of any non-federal actions that are reasonably certain to occur in the action area.

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#### CONCLUSION

After reviewing the current status of the California red-legged frog, the environmental baseline for the action area, the effects of the proposed safety and operational highway improvements, minor drainage improvements, and the cumulative effects, it is the Service's biological opinion that the proposed project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the California red-legged frog.

We have reached this conclusion because:

1. In comparison with the amount of habitat available to the California red-legged frog elsewhere in this portion of Monterey County, only a small amount of habitat would be permanently lost or temporarily disturbed;
2. Few, if any, California red-legged frogs are likely to be killed or injured during project activities; and
3. The FHWA and Caltrans have proposed measures to reduce the adverse effects of the proposed work on the California red-legged frog.

#### INCIDENTAL TAKE STATEMENT

Section 9 of the Act and Federal regulation pursuant to section 4(d) of the Act prohibit the take of endangered and threatened species, respectively, without special exemption. The Act defines take as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. The Service defines harm to include significant habitat modification or degradation that results in death or injury to listed species by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, or sheltering. The Service defines harass as intentional or negligent actions that create the likelihood of injury to a listed species by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering. The Service defines incidental take as take that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity. Under the terms of section 7(b)(4) and section 7(o)(2), taking that is incidental to and not intended as part of the agency action is not prohibited taking under the Act provided that such taking is in compliance with the terms and conditions of this incidental take statement.

The measures described below are non-discretionary and must be undertaken by FHWA so that they become binding conditions of any grant or permit issued to Caltrans, and the County as appropriate, for the exemption in section 7(o)(2) to apply. The FHWA has a continuing duty to regulate the activity covered by this incidental take statement. If FHWA, Caltrans, or the County fail to ensure their contractors adhere to the terms and conditions of the incidental take statement through enforceable terms that are added to the permit, the protective coverage of section 7(o)(2) may lapse. To monitor the impact of incidental take, FHWA, Caltrans, or the County must

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report the progress of the action and its impact on the species to the Service as specified in the incidental take statement [50 CFR §402.14(i)(3)].

All California red-legged frogs found within the project area may be subject to take in the form of capture during relocation efforts. A subset of captured California red-legged frogs may experience a significant disruption of normal behavioral patterns to the point that reaches the level of harassment. California red-legged frogs that remain in the project area may be subject to increased predation, be crushed by workers conducting project activities, or be otherwise injured or killed.

We cannot determine the precise number of California red-legged frogs that may be killed, injured, harassed, or harmed as a result of the construction activities authorized by the FHWA. Numbers and locations of California red-legged frogs within a population vary from year to year. Incidental take of the California red-legged frog would be difficult to detect because of their small body size and finding dead or injured specimens is unlikely. Take by predation would likely be impossible to detect.

This biological opinion does not exempt any activity from the prohibitions against take contained in section 9 of the Act that is not incidental to the action as described in this biological opinion. Take that occurs outside of demarcated work areas or from any activity not described in this biological opinion is not exempted from the prohibitions against take described in section 9 of the Act.

#### REASONABLE AND PRUDENT MEASURES

We believe the following reasonable and prudent measures are necessary and appropriate to minimize take of California red-legged frogs:

1. The FHWA must ensure that the level of incidental take that occurs during project implementation is commensurate with the analysis contained herein.
2. Biologists must be authorized by the Service before they survey for, capture, and move California red-legged frogs in the action area.
3. Effects to California red-legged frogs must be minimized during rainy weather and at night.
4. Biologists who handle California red-legged frogs must ensure that their activities do not transmit diseases or pathogens.

Our evaluation of the effects of the proposed action includes consideration of the measures to minimize the adverse effects of the proposed action on the California red-legged frog that were developed by the FHWA and Caltrans and repeated in the Description of the Proposed Action portion of this biological opinion. Any subsequent changes in these measures proposed by the

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FHWA and Caltrans may constitute a modification of the proposed action and may warrant reinitiation of formal consultation, as specified at 50 CFR 402.16. These reasonable and prudent measures are intended to supplement the protective measures that were proposed by the FHWA and Caltrans as part of the proposed action.

#### TERMS AND CONDITIONS

To be exempt from the prohibitions of section 9 of the Act, FHWA, Caltrans, and the County must comply with the following terms and conditions, which implement the reasonable and prudent measures described above. These terms and conditions are non-discretionary.

1. The following term and condition implements reasonable and prudent measure 1:

If more than two California red-legged frogs are found dead or injured during construction activities in any single calendar year, the FHWA, Caltrans, or the County must contact our office immediately so we can review the project activities to determine if additional protective measures are needed. Project activities may continue pending the outcome of the review, provided that all protective measures proposed by the FHWA, Caltrans, and the County, and the terms and conditions of this biological opinion, have been and continue to be fully implemented.

2. The following term and condition implements reasonable and prudent measure 2:

Only biologists authorized by the Service under the auspices of this biological opinion may survey for, capture, and move California red-legged frogs from work areas. The FHWA, Caltrans, and the County must request our approval of any biologists they wish to employ to survey for, capture, and move California red-legged frogs from work areas. The request must be in writing and be received by us at least 15 days prior to any such activities being conducted.

3. The following terms and conditions implement reasonable and prudent measure 3:

- a. A Service-approved biologist must survey the project site before construction resumes each day during rainy weather.
- b. If construction is conducted at night between November 1 and April 1, a Service-approved biologist must survey the project site before construction begins each night.

4. The following term and condition implements reasonable and prudent measure 4:

To ensure that diseases are not conveyed between work sites by Service-approved biologists, the fieldwork code of practice developed by the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force must be followed at all times. A copy of the code of practice is

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enclosed. The Service-approved biologist may substitute a bleach solution (0.5 to 1.0 cup of bleach to 1.0 gallon of water) for the ethanol solution. Care must be taken so that all traces of the disinfectant are removed before entering the next aquatic habitat.

#### REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The FHWA must comply with the reporting requirements of the programmatic biological opinion for the California red-legged frog. Upon completion of the project, FHWA must ensure that Caltrans or the County completes and submits to our office the project completion report form enclosed with this biological opinion.

#### DISPOSITION OF DEAD OR INJURED SPECIMENS

Within 3 days of locating any dead or injured California red-legged frogs, FHWA, Caltrans and/or the County must notify our Division of Law Enforcement in writing (370 Amapola Avenue, Suite 114, Torrance, California 90501) and the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, by telephone ((805) 644-1766) and in writing (2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, California 93003). The report must include the date, time, location of the carcass, a photograph, cause of death or injury (if known), and any other pertinent information.

Care must be taken in handling dead specimens to preserve biological material in the best possible state for later analysis. Should any injured California red-legged frogs survive, the Service must be contacted regarding their final disposition. The remains of California red-legged frogs must be placed with the California Academy of Sciences Herpetology Department (Contact: Jens Vindum, Collections Manager, California Academy of Sciences Herpetology Department, 875 Howard Street, San Francisco, California, 94103, (415) 321-8289). Arrangements regarding proper disposition of potential museum specimens must be made with the Collections Manager of California Academy of Sciences or other Service-approved facility prior to implementation of any actions.

#### CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 7(a)(1) of the Act directs Federal agencies to use their authorities to further the purposes of the Act by carrying out conservation programs for the benefit of endangered and threatened species. Conservation recommendations are discretionary agency activities to minimize or avoid adverse effects of a proposed action on listed species or critical habitat, to help implement recovery plans, or to develop information.

1. We recommend that FHWA, Caltrans, and the County cooperatively work to provide wildlife corridors for crossing Highway 1. As this route becomes increasingly wider and busier, wildlife will require protected crossings to disperse across the highway.

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2. We recommend that Caltrans relocate any native reptiles and amphibians found within the action area to nearby suitable habitat, if such activities comply with State laws. This would help conserve the native wildlife in the region.
3. Non-native predators of the California red-legged frog such as bullfrogs, centrarchid fishes, and crayfish should be permanently removed from the wild during the pond reconfiguration activities, if they can be captured and if such activities are in compliance with State laws.
4. To the extent possible, Caltrans should schedule construction activities (especially those that would be conducted at night) to avoid rainy weather. As much as possible, work activities should be completed between April 1 and November 1.

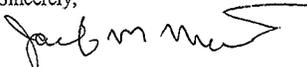
The Service requests notification of the implementation of any conservation recommendations, so that we may be kept informed of actions minimizing or avoiding adverse effects or benefiting listed species or their habitats.

#### REINITIATION NOTICE

This concludes formal consultation on the Salinas Road Interchange project in Monterey County, California. As provided in 50 CFR §402.16, reinitiation of formal consultation is required where discretionary Federal agency involvement or control over the action has been retained (or is authorized by law) and if: (1) the amount or extent of incidental take is exceeded; (2) new information reveals effects of the agency action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not considered in this opinion; (3) the agency action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to the listed species or critical habitat not considered in this opinion; or (4) a new species is listed or critical habitat designated that may be affected by the action. In instances where the amount or extent of incidental take is exceeded, any operations causing such take must cease pending reinitiation.

If you have any questions, please contact Julie Niceswanger of my staff at (805) 644-1766, extension 290.

Sincerely,

*koF*  
  
David M. Pereksta  
Assistant Field Supervisor  
Santa Cruz/San Benito/Monterey

Enclosure