

## PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS REPORT

## 1. Project Information

DIST-CO-RTE:8, Riverside County, I-10 PM/PM:				
EA: EF	EA: EFIS Project ID:			
Project Title: I-10 Interchange Improvemen	its (E. Ramsey Rd / Main St)			
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## 2. Project Description

Interstate (I-) 10 is a national east—west transportation route and an integral part of the freeway network for the Southern California metropolitan area. The City of Banning and the City of Cabazon, in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 8 and the County of Riverside, are proposing to reconfigure the interchange for better access and implement safety updates at Main St (Zone 1), and Ramsey St (Zone 2) on the I-10 Freeway. These locations were selected because of their close proximity to each other and the location that is connected by the interchanges as well as the shared deficiencies that exist in them, discussed below. (Figure 1, Regional Location and Project Site).

## **Purpose and Need**

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to provide safety and operational improvements along Interstate-10 (I-10) and its access points to accommodate the existing and forecasted travel demand associated with local and regional growth, for the 2050 design year. We will improve the existing interchange geometry at the East Ramsey Street and Main Street Interchange and will be done by accommodating multimodal travel that integrates with the City of Banning's General Plan, Cabazon Master Plan, and regional plans.

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#### Needs:

An increase in the population of the surrounding area is expected to rise from a population of about 30,000 by 1.1% - 1.148% every year due to the current housing developments that are being built in this area. With this, we already see issues regarding the safety around the on/off ramps of Main St., and Ramsey St and their inability to support any further growth in the near future. Currently both interchanges see a higher than usual fatal collision rate. Current data shows that although the overall crash rate seems to be about average, the fatal crash rate is about 30-40% greater than the non-fatal crash rate between both interchanges. These two interchanges are also nonstandard/incomplete and lack access to a Westbound on-ramp and Eastbound off-ramp. Furthermore, as the population is expected to increase, there is a clear lack of pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure that allows crossing through the interchanges which will hinder the accessibility of planned communities at the East Ramsey St and Main St interchanges.

## **Description of work**

The project proposes to reconfigure 2 interchanges along the I-10 Freeway that are expected to perform below operational standards during high traffic volumes and when the future developments are constructed. The limits of the project would be extended to part of the local streets for re-alignment if needed by the selected alternatives, and include the addition of new bike/pedestrian paths for the local population to utilize. This project will include utility relocations, right-of-way acquisitions, flood control improvements, and traffic signal and ramp metering additions.

#### **Alternatives**

Identify all project alternatives (including no-build). If alternatives are no longer being considered, state why. Do not select or identify a preferred alternative. Describe each alternative still under consideration.

Zone 1 and Zone 2 had three and four interchange reconfiguration alternatives respectively. For Zone 1, the alternatives considered were a hook ramp, SPUI westbound, and tight diamond reconfigurations. For Zone 2, the alternatives considered were a trumpet with modified mainline, hybrid ParClo and tight diamond, spread and tight diamond with modified mainline, and a tight diamond reconfiguration.

Zone 1- Main St.

1. Hook Ramp

The Hook Ramps are extended to provide vehicles with more deceleration time. The eastbound off-ramp and westbound off-ramp will each see an increase to 4 lanes, while the eastbound on-ramp will expand to two lanes, and the westbound on-ramp will

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increase to three lanes. Additionally, the westbound on-ramp will feature a designated metered lane to accommodate anticipated future traffic conditions. To accommodate trucks and larger vehicles, the lane width of both on and off ramps has been expanded since the hook ramps have a sharp turn. The exits leading to Main St. and Seminole St. are both signalized intersections. An alternate route for I-10 is seamlessly connected at the signalized intersection, providing vehicles on that route access to Main St., and the eastbound on-ramp. The bridge has been realigned to facilitate access from Main St. to a realigned Seminole St., featuring 2-3 lanes in each direction that expand to 4 at signalized intersections. Seminole St. will include 3 lanes in each direction, expanding to 4 or 5 at signalized intersections—all of which are signalized. Enhancements for pedestrian access have been implemented on Main St. and Seminole, including the addition of sidewalks and bike lanes on the local roads. See Figure Z1-HR.

#### 2. SPUI

The integration of SPUI geometric design elements with advanced traffic signalization techniques promises to yield a highly efficient interchange. Under this proposed alternative, we envision a strategic relocation of the bridge connecting Seminal Dr. and Main St. This relocation will involve expanding the bridge capacity from one lane on each side to two lanes, with the addition of dedicated left and right turn lanes. Furthermore, Seminal Dr. will be shifted northward to ensure it aligns optimally with the bridge, meeting the necessary distance requirements. Enhancements will include the addition of extra turning lanes on the ramps to bolster capacity. Not stopping there, our design also incorporates dedicated bike lanes and sidewalks along the right side of Main St., transforming it into a complete street, pedestrian-friendly thoroughfare. To streamline traffic flow and mitigate potential confusion, the proposal consolidates two intersections into one, where Main St. intersects with Interstate 10 Alt. and N Fern St. This consolidation promises to alleviate congestion and enhance safety by eliminating conflicting movements. See Figure Z1-SPUI.

## 3. Tight Diamond

This alternative would reconfigure the existing bridge starting from Main and Railroad and realign northward. It would be a 2-lane roadway with a 8-foot two-way bike lane and sidewalk on each side. The on and offramps will be a pedestrian refuge will be added on the east and west offramp locations and allow dedicated lanes to merge with traffic. See Figure Z1-TD.

## Zone 2- Ramsey St.

## 1. Trumpet with Modified Mainline

The trumpet interchange is constructed with a modified mainline. The modified mainline was made with the assumption that the ROW north of the existing mainline could be acquired. The modified mainline helps to create room for different alternative options and so that these options do not encroach onto the railroad to the south. The existing westbound offramp and eastbound undercrossing onramp will have to be demolished to accommodate for the realigned mainline and trumpet. The eastbound offramp begins with one lane and widens to two lanes to allow for passing maneuvers. As the ramp approaches the trumpet loop, the outer lane widens from 12 to 16 feet to accommodate

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the tight turning radius for trucks. The ramp then continues northbound crossing over the freeway until it merges with the westbound offramp to form a three-lane local road. Concrete barriers will be installed on the left and right sides of the eastbound on and offramps to keep motorists within the roadway and prevent head-on collisions. The westbound offramp has one lane throughout and has potential for future widening. As this offramp merges with the eastbound offramp, the two become a local road that continues northbound until it reaches a signalized T-intersection with Wilson Street. The T-intersection has a proposed layout of four lanes for eastbound traffic (two through lanes and two right turn lanes), two lanes for westbound traffic (two through lanes and one left turn pocket), and three lanes for northbound traffic (one left turn lane, one shared left and right lane, and one right turn lane). This intersection is capable of being expanded to a 4-way intersection. The eastbound and westbound onramp begins as a two-lane local road that diverges into the aforementioned ramps. The westbound ramp begins with one lane and widens to two lanes to allow for ramp queuing capacity. Past the ramp meter, there is a parallel acceleration lane to allow for smoother merging. The eastbound onramp begins with one lane and widens to two lanes to allow for ramp queueing capacity. As the ramp crosses over the freeway and approaches the trumpet loop, the outer lane widens from 12 to 17 feet to accommodate the tight turning radius for trucks. Similar to the westbound onramp, there is a parallel acceleration lane past the ramp meter. See Figure Z2-TMM

## 2. Spread and Hybrid Diamond with Modified Mainline

The hybrid diamond with the modified mainline will realign the I-10 and Ramsey St northward. The modified mainline will keep existing number of lanes and existing conditions while adhering to a 4000 foot radius throughout. This modification will allow the spread diamond to have more room south of I-10 so we may be within right of way. The existing underpass and entrance ramps will be removed and redesigned to connect to an overcrossing. The interchanges will connect to the overcrossing on the South side of the I-10 to the north side into a proposed road. The entrance ramps will feature 2 meter lanes merging into one while exit ramps will be one lane turning into 2 lanes for extra storage capacity. The proposed road will meet existing local road (N Hathaway St.) located west of the overcrossing. The proposed roads will also feature 2 lanes merging into 1 in order to match existing local conditions. The local roads will also feature signalized segments at intersections along with proper spacing and time to merge into one lane or become 2 lanes. See Figure Z2-TMM.

#### 3. Tight Diamond

The Tight Diamond Alternative on Ramsey Street adds an eastbound off-ramp and a westbound on-ramp, allowing access to I-10. The current eastbound on-ramp and westbound off-ramp will be reconfigured from their current horizontal alignment to connect through the addition of an overpass. In this design, an overpass will be constructed over I-10, connecting all four ramps and providing access to the local street via North Hathaway Street. Both off-ramps will start with one lane and have an additional lane added at the ramp terminal. On the other hand, both on-ramps will start with two lanes, merging into one lane after the ramp meter. The overpass will consist of

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two lanes northbound and two lanes southbound, with signalized intersections at each ramp terminal. See Figure Z2-TD.

## 3. Anticipated Environmental Approval

CEQA (choose one):
□ Exemption
☐ Statutory ☐ Categorical ☐ Common Sense
□ Initial Study or Focused Initial Study with proposed Negative Declaration (ND) or Mitigated ND
□ Environmental Impact Report
NEPA (choose one):
☐ Categorical Exclusion
⊠ Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significant Impact
⊠ Routine  □ Complex
☐ Environmental Impact Statement

**CEQA Lead Agency** (if determined): California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) **Estimated length of time (months) to obtain environmental approval:** 30 months **Estimated person hours to complete identified tasks:** N/A

## 4. Special Environmental Considerations

Special considerations would include things within the project zone that could potentially affect the project delivery and may require an extended period of project downtime due to its nature.

- During the Project Approval & Environmental Document phase, there will need to be more surveys conducted for any sensitive biological resources that may have been missed. A Natural Environment Study is needed to study potential impacts to biological resources resulting from construction.
- Soils adjacent to paved areas may contain aerially deposited lead (ADL) from vehicle exhaust. Soils within Caltrans right of way may contain hazardous materials from use of weed control, including herbicides and arsenic. Lead and chromium may be present within paint markings on the pavement. Further evaluation for lead based paint (LBP) and ADL would be required, and an Initial Site Assessment (ISA) would be completed.
- If it is identified that any jurisdictional waters would be affected, a Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 Water Quality Certification and a CWA Section 404 Permit, and possibly a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement, would be required.

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- The project has the potential to impact Tribal/Reservation land due to potential
  acquisitions of right of way. Coordination with Tribal entities and Assembly Bill
  (AB) 52 consultation would be required.
- If it is determined that an Induced Travel Analysis is necessary, project delays could be expected as this entails multiple rounds of HQ Sustainability reviews and often involves costly and intricate mitigation measures.

## 5. Anticipated Environmental Commitments

The following is a list of possible avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures that could be required for the proposed project under the build alternatives (All alternatives)

- If human remains are encountered during construction, California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5, states that no further disturbance shall occur until the county coroner has made a determination of origin and disposition pursuant to California Public Resources Code, Section 5097.98. The county coroner must be notified of the find immediately. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the county coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission, who shall determine and notify the most likely descendant. The most likely descendant may inspect the site of the discovery with the permission of the landowner or their authorized representative. The most likely descendant shall complete the inspection within 48 hours of being granted access to the site.
- If buried historical or archaeological resources are found during construction all construction within a 60 ft radius shall stop until a qualified archaeologist can assess the significance of the find.
- Vegetation removal should be limited to outside of the bird breeding season. This will narrow down the range of removal to October 1, to January 31, between the end of nesting season and the beginning of the rainy season.
- Vegetation clearing and modification to bridges on both project sites will be limited due to migratory bird species that are present in the area (typically February 1 to September 30)
- If the project requires removal of vegetation or modifications to bridge structures, a preconstruction nesting bird survey would be required. If nesting migratory birds are found, project activity within an appropriate buffer (varying by species) may be required to halt until all nesting activities have ceased or all juveniles have fledged.
- In compliance with Executive Order 13112, Invasive Species, and subsequent guidance from the Federal Highway Administration, the landscaping and erosion control included in the project shall not use species listed as noxious weeds. In areas of particular sensitivity, extra precautions shall be taken if invasive species are found in or adjacent to the construction areas. These precautions include the inspection and clearing of construction equipment and the implementation of eradication strategies should an invasion occur.

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- Surveys will be taken in the vicinity of the endangered species listed below that
  are within the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan,
  Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan as well as
  Section 7 of US Fish and Wildlife Service shall be taken into consideration. If
  these species are found, subsequent relocation shall be done outside of the
  proposed project area.
- For construction activities resulting in the disturbance of traffic striping materials, the generated wastes shall be disposed of at an appropriate, permitted disposal facility as determined by a lead specialist.
- Where landscaping is proposed, the project shall install landscaping that is compatible with the existing landscaping. All selected plant species within the roadway right of way shall share similar water requirements. The new landscaping concept and plant palette shall be in accordance with the District 8 I-10 Corridor Master Plan and approved by Caltrans District 8 landscape architect.
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be developed and submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and Colorado River Regional Water Board before disturbing the soil. It should document temporary best management practices that shall be implemented to address potential pollutants and sediment discharges during construction. Upon completion of construction, documentation of final soil stabilization shall be provided before termination of the NPDES permit.

## 6. Permits and Approvals

Include timelines for acquiring permits or agreements. Reference PEAR Environmental Commitments Cost Estimate.

Permits/ Approval	Agency	Notes/ Reason	Estimated Approval Time
CWA, Section 402, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit	California State Water Resources Control Board (CSWRCB) Order WQ 2022-0057-DWQ	Notice of Intent to be covered under the NPDES Construction General Permit for discharges of stormwater associated with construction activity, which would require preparation and adoption of a SWPPP.	6-12 months

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National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)	California State Water Resources Control Board (CSWRCB) Order 2022-003-DWQ NPDES NO. CAS000003	Statewide Stormwater Permit and Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for the State of California	6-12 months
Permit to Be on Railroad Property for Nonintrusive Civil Engineering Survey Work	Union Pacific Rail Road (UPRR)	Required to obtain temporary permission to enter and be on or about the tracks and/or property of the UPRR.	3–4 months
CWA Section 404 Permit	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Project involves the discharge of fill into or alterations (such as excavation) to wetlands or waters of the United States.	6-12 months
CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) & River Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Colorado River	Project involves the discharge of fill into or alterations (such as excavation) to wetlands or waters of state Tribal/Reservation land. & Project involves the discharge of fill into or alterations (such as excavation) to wetlands or waters of the State of California.	6-12 months
Section 2081 Incidental Take Permits (ITP)	California Endangered Species Act (CESA)	Project affects federally and/or state-listed species or critical habitat.	6-9 months

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Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement	California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)	Project affects the CDFW river, streams, and/or lakes.	6-12 months
Section 7 Consultation Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO)	USFWS	Project might affect Federally Protected Habitats within the project area including Desert Tortoise	6-12 months
CVMSHCP Consistency Determination	Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan	For species covered under the CVMSHCP.	6-12 months
Regional Conservation Authority Habitat Evaluation	Riverside Conservation Authority (Riverside County)	For species covered under the RCA	6-12 months

## 7. Level of Effort: Risks and Assumptions

#### General:

- The proposed project scope would entail encroachment and right-of-way impacts at some locations, including Tribal/Reservation land. However, the size of the impact would depend on the alternative.
- It is anticipated that AB 52 and Section 106 consultations will be required. Any issues or concerns regarding the proposed project would be resolved during that process.
- If a higher-level environmental document than identified is determined necessary, additional time would be needed for preparation and review, which would lengthen the assumed schedule and increase the cost

#### **Hazardous Waste:**

- Utility relocations may affect the cost and schedule of the project.
- It is anticipated that further evaluation for suspected LBP and ADL would be required. Furthermore, a PSI will be performed with a focus placed on soil testing due to the presence of a gas station within the project site. If hazardous materials contamination or sources are suspected or identified during construction activities, additional time and

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costs could result. If additional tests are required, additional time may be necessary, both for preparation and agency review, along with additional costs

#### **Cultural Resources:**

The scope of the documentation presented here assumes that:

- The Project Manager introduces this project to all pertinent agencies in a timely, such that the PA&ED timeline is not impacted.
- Design provides required information so that the Environmental Studies Request Form is completed timely, such that the PA&ED timeline is not impacted.
- All Resource Agencies requiring coordination in order for Technical Studies to be completed respond timely.
- No major concerns from project shareholders.
- Any archaeological sites found in the project footprint can be avoided with measures.
- All work, access routes, and staging areas remain within to be acquired or already owned Caltrans's ROW.

#### Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff:

• Assuming that the project will involve substantial cut and fill operations, it is feasible that pollution may thus enter the waters substantiating the need for an NPDES permit.

#### Paleontology:

There is a potential that paleontological resources could be found at project locations where there has not been previously disturbed soil. If paleontological resources are found, additional time and costs could be required during the project approval process, and there could be delays during construction.

## **Biological Studies:**

#### Assumptions:

- Project footprint is outside of current Caltrans ROW; additional ROW or TCE is anticipated.
- Work will require off-pavement temporary access roads.
- No proposed equipment staging or storing areas are identified.
- Work will occur off the paved road and require ground disturbance, and vegetation removal.

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#### Risks:

- If nesting birds are found in the project work area, stop work order, work windows, and/or biological monitoring would be required, which could result in construction schedule delays and capital and support cost increases.
- If the Jurisdictional Delineation (JD) Survey identifies more jurisdictional areas then assumed in this PEAR, then additional mitigation may be required.
- If desert tortoises are found, there should be a relocation of the habitat, or if it is found that they are nesting, a stop work order should be issued and all work stopped until they leave.
- If any Joshua Trees are found, the relocation of these plants should be done prior to any construction.

#### 8. PEAR Technical Summaries

#### 8.1 Land Use:

The proposed project is separated into 2 zones. Zone 1 is Main St. and consists of controlled development zones (W-2-10) and City of Banning. Zone 2 is Ramsey St. and consists of Business Park and Airport Industrial zones. The impact area of construction should not interfere with the nearby native lands, but they should still be notified of construction that will occur. Right of way acquisitions, temporary construction easements (TCE) will be needed in the surrounding area for the construction/staging of both alternatives. This will be further discussed in the Community Impact Assessment (CIA).

#### 8.2 Growth:

The purpose of this project is to improve the locals and travelers accessibility around the area in the City of Banning and communities around Cabazon. Both alternatives aim to relieve congestion in the area during high traffic flows, as well as improve existing conditions by upgrading both interchanges to accommodate multimodal traffic. No residences or businesses would be introduced as a result of the proposed project; therefore, a direct increase in population is not anticipated. The project would include the addition of bridges over I-10 and the connection of Main St from the north and south of the interchange, as well as provide a safer and clearer connection of Ramsey St to the existing local roads. The project is not anticipated to induce growth within the area, but rather helps to address the impact of the planned new developments in the area.

#### 8.3 Farmlands/Timberlands

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According to the Banning General Plan Use & Zoning Map, there are no adjacent farmlands or timberlands to the Zone 2 project site. In Zone 1, according to the Cabazon Vicinity Existing Zoning, there is residential agriculture within the impact zone. However, both zones are designated to be Urban and Built-Up Land according to the California Important Farmland Finder and are not designated as Prime Farmland or Williamson Act Land; no impacts to farmlands/timberlands would be necessary. A separate technical study is not required.

## 8.4 Community Impacts:

As discussed earlier in the Land Use section, the area surrounding the two proposed project sites are characterized by controlled development zoned land use and Business Park/Airport Industrial zoned land use respectively. During the PA&ED phase, when the environmental document is prepared, an analysis of Community Impacts will be performed and discussed.

This project would aim to improve the connection between the communities that currently exist as it is located on an already established transportation corridor. It is anticipated that temporary traffic disruptions will occur during construction and that temporary construction easements will be needed. The project would improve the accessibility of the area as well as improve the current safety issues that exist. No relocations of housing, commercial, industrial, or non-profit businesses have been identified. Existing utilities would require relocation, right of way acquisition, flood control improvements, and traffic signal and ramp metering additions. The project would not physically divide an established community, or call for the destruction of any structures aside from the interchange itself.

The proposed project is anticipated to result in improved traffic flow through the project corridor and around the project site; however, during construction, temporary impacts on traffic, including emergency providers, could occur. Implementation of a Traffic Management Plan during construction shall be required and include measures to address construction-period traffic impacts. In addition, the environmental analysis would include a CIA to discuss the potential impacts on local community resources and businesses proximate to the project site, including information relayed at public meetings and potential concerns expressed by community members.

The information below does not include the local population of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians.

Category	City of Banning	Community of Cabazon	Riverside County
White alone, percent	69.00%	42.00%	38.65%
Black or African American alone, percent	9.60%	0.00%	6.51%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	2.90%	1.00%	1.95%

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Asian alone, percent	5.90%	5.00%	7.53%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	-	2.00%	0.36%
Two or More Races, percent	3.20%	5.00%	17.07%
Hispanic or Latino	41.60%	45%	52.56%

In the City of Banning and Community of Cabazon the majority of the race are White or Hispanic/Latino. This is also similar to the two largest percentage of individuals that are White or Hispanic/Latino.

Category	City of Banning	Community of Cabazon	County of Riverside
Median household income (2022)	\$54,083.00	\$72,266.00	\$84,505.00
Per Capita Income in past 12 months	\$28,951.00	\$33,024.00	\$35,356.00
Persons in poverty, percent	18.90%	15.40%	10.90%

The other primary criterion for evaluating the potential for environmental justice impacts is income level. Low income is defined based on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) poverty guidelines. For 2022, this was \$27,750 for a household/family of four. As seen in the table above, the median household income according to the Census data for the location of both project sites. We see that the median income of both the City of Banning, and the Community of Cabazon are above the poverty value of \$27,750. However the percentage of persons in poverty compared to the county shows that there is a great difference. Therefore, the project site may be considered an area that exhibits a low income level. An in-depth analysis will be performed during the PA&ED phase to further determine potential impacts to the community as mentioned above.

#### 8.5 Visual/Aesthetics:

Both project zones are not on an officially designated scenic route nor are they part of an eligible state scenic highway segment. According to Caltrans Scenic Highways Map and National Scenic Byways & All-American Roads from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highways Administration they have designated our sites as non-scenic. The closest eligible state scenic route is State Route 243

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approximately 1.75 miles from Zone 2. The Caltrans Questionnaire was used to determine the kind of level the Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) should be. Completing the VIA Questionnaire, the score was calculated to be 16, concluding that there are no noticeable visual changes to the environment proposed. Thus, no additional VIA technical study is required.

## 8.6 Cultural Resources:

It is anticipated that this project will require a Historic Property Survey Report (HSPR) and an Archaeological Survey Report (ASR) due to the close vicinity of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians. Coordination with the Native American Heritage Commissions and local tribal interests will be required. Right of way acquisitions may affect the need for future reports at Main St. If it is determined that archaeological resources are present, additional studies, such as an Extended Phase I or Archaeological Evaluation Report, may be necessary. Tribal consultation would be conducted as part of the cultural survey. Coordination with BLM will be required. Cultural compliance will take between 6-10 months.

Our working assumption is that there will be no archaeological sites in the area of direct impact.

## 8.7 Hydrology and Floodplain:

According to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Zone 1 map is No. 06065C0845G eff. 8/28/2008 and Zone 2 map is 06065C0836G eff. 8/28/2008.

In Zone 1, the project site and south of the project site are categorized as Zone A, an area with a 1% annual chance of flooding. However, no depth or base flood elevation are known within these zones. Because Zone 1 is directly affected by a floodplain of Zone A, it is considered a significant encroachment (23 CFR § 650.105), and the project would require construction improvements to protect the project site and personnel. The potential floodplain impact would be evaluated in a Technical Information for Location Hydraulic Study and a Summary Floodplain Evaluation Report.

In Zone 2, east of the site is categorized as Zone X, an area of minimal flood risk; a 0.2-percent-annual-chance (or 500-year) flood. South of the site is a section categorized as Zone A. There is no significant encroachment of the project to Zone A, no Hydraulic or Floodplain Study will be necessary.

## 8.8 Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff:

Both project zones are within the San Gorgonio River watershed and are under the Colorado River Water Quality Control Board. The project zones will be reconfiguring interchange onramps and offramps resulting in a larger impervious surface area and increased pollutants resulting in a permanent impact within the area. The Colorado Basin Plan should be incorporated within the project to address the permanent impacts of the reconfiguration of the interstate onramps and offramps such as soils erosion and

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grading. Because the proposed project areas are within a desert landscape, flash floods can occur; thus, a "Clear Water Diversion" should be considered.

The estimated disturbed soil area is greater than one or more acres; thus, compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit is required. An additional compliance requirement of the Construction General Permit (CGP) is the development and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which would identify and implement temporary construction site BMPs to address temporary water quality impacts during the construction phase of the project.

Additionally, the project would need to include Caltrans' National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. It is used to regulate pollutant levels in discharges from state property facilities and activities. The Caltrans Permit requires that all projects within state right of way evaluate and incorporate BMPs to the maximum extent practicable to protect water quality. Consideration of temporary and permanent BMPs to minimize water quality impacts must be integrated into the project design. Coordination between the Project Engineer and the NPDES unit would be needed to identify potential sites for permanent treatment BMPs, if proposed in the Storm Water Data Report.

The project potential water quality impacts would be evaluated in a Water Quality Assessment Report during the PA&ED phase to analyze the project temporary and permanent impacts to water quality and identify the avoidance and minimization measures to address these impacts.

## 8.9 Geology, Soils, Seismic and Topography:

The topography of both Zones are in similar areas within Riverside County. The freeway runs in a valley between Mount San Jacinto, and Kitching Peak. The area is relatively flat but sees a lot of rainfall runoff from both mountain ranges.

According to the USGS Quaternary Fault Database, the San Gorgonio Pass fault is within the project vicinity with the San Andreas Fault nearby as well.

From the USDA Web Soil Survey database, the project areas consist of differing soil types. Zone 1 consists of Soboba stony loamy sand (2-15% slopes), Gorgonio cobbly loamy fine sand (2-15% slopes), Gorgonio gravelly loamy fine sand (2-15% slopes), and Riverwash. Zone 2 consists of Gorgonio gravelly loamy fine sand (2-15% slopes), Gorgonio cobbly loamy fine sand (2-15% slopes), Hanford cobbly coarse sandy loam (2-15% slopes, eroded). Due to the presence of the San Gorgonio Pass fault and its last movement to be within the last quaternary (15,000 years) it is considered to be active according to the CalTrans definition of an active fault and should be expected that there will be a strong seismic motion if there is movement. To further analyze the potential for geological impacts, a Geotechnical Report would be prepared during the PA&ED phase.

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#### 8.10 Paleontology:

Due to the proposed project area being previously disturbed, no paleontological studies will be required for this project, thus a Paleontology Impact Report (PIR) is not anticipated.

#### 8.11 Hazardous Waste/Materials:

Construction of the Project would require transporting some hazardous materials. Typical hazardous materials used during construction (e.g., solvents, paints, and fuels) would be handled in accordance with relevant State, federal, and local regulations regarding the use, storage, handling, disposal, and transport of potentially hazardous materials to protect human health and the environment. Additionally, the project sites have the potential to contain LBP from existing pavement markings and ADL in soils from vehicle exhaust. A Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI), including an Aerially Deposited Lead Survey, would be prepared during the PA&ED. Also, since ISAs are only valid for 1 year, the ISA prepared for this project will need to be updated.

## 8.12 Air Quality:

The city of Cabazon (Zone 1) and the city of Banning (Zone 2) are both within the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Both project zones are considered within a nonattainment area for ozone, carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM<sub>2.5)</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub> according to EPA's Green Book listing). The project is not considered exempt from conformity per 40 CFR 93.126 or 40 CFR 93.128 but is exempt from regional conformity as per 40 CFR 93.127 because the project type is considered an interchange reconfiguration project. As stated, both zones are located within a CO nonattainment maintenance area, thus an Air Quality Report including a CO Hot Spot Analysis must be performed. Additionally, a request for Regional Interagency Consultation regarding the Hot Spot Analysis must be performed including a list of control measures to mitigate CO, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub> approved by the State Implementation Plan (SIP) and Code 403 Fugitive Dust Control due to accumulation of dust from excavation should be considered.

#### 8.13 Noise and Vibration:

The proposed project meets the definition of a Type I project under the Caltrans Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol as an "addition or relocation of interchange lanes or ramps added to a quadrant to complete an existing partial interchange." As a result of this project type classification, a technical noise analysis would be required for all alternatives based on the surrounding sensitive receptors. A detailed Noise Study Report would be conducted. The Noise Study Report would be prepared in accordance with the latest Caltrans Technical Noise Supplement and Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol. If traffic noise impacts are identified, a Noise Abatement Decision Report would be required.

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## 8.14 Energy and Climate Change:

Although an increase in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is not a direct goal of this project, based on our review of the Transportation Analysis under CEQA (TAC) screening criteria, the proposed project would be considered a type likely to lead to a measurable increase in vehicle travel. An interchange reconfiguration project, is considered a capacity-increasing project that would require further quantitative analysis in regards to energy and climate change impacts. As such, an induced travel analysis would be required to determine how much of the increase in VMT is attributable to the project and, where impacts are significant, whether mitigation can reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. Additionally, a greenhouse gas (GHG) analysis would be required to quantify and compare associated GHG emissions for the build alternatives and to evaluate the project for compliance with local, state, and federal emissions policies.

It is expected that construction energy use will be temporary, with all equipment operating according to their manuals. South Coast Air Quality Management District requirements for construction equipment would also serve in lowering energy consumption. However, a separate technical study for GHG emissions stemming from construction activities would still be required, as there are no longer project-specific exemptions. The project site's inland location makes sea-level rise not a concern. A preliminary investigation using the FHSZ Viewer shows that the Banning project site is in a very high fire severity zone, and the Cabazon site is in a moderate fire severity zone. In the future, further analysis of energy and climate change, with an additional focus on temperature extremes, flooding, and wildfire, will be discussed in the environmental document. In regards to wildfires, analyses are not anticipated to rise to the level of a study, but considerations will be made to examine fire breaks, specifications for fire safety along Ramsey, and ensuring that design alternatives do not block evacuation zones.

#### 8.15 Biological Environment:

The Project is located within the Cabazon United States Geological Survey 7.5' series quadrangles. Construction will include work on the highway on/off ramps redesign as well as some roadway realignment depending on the alternative selected, and will take place during nighttime and possible closures on the weekend.

#### **Environment Description:**

The project areas consist of similar settings. Zone 1 is in the community of Cabazon, and has the nearby Morongo Indian Reservation Land. Zone 2 is in the City of Banning where the City of Banning is to the West of the this project location. The project proposes a redesign of the interchanges of Main St. and Ramsey St. to make the locations more accessible to pedestrian traffic, and improve safety via prevention of vehicle collisions and truck turning radius safety.

#### Sources

CNPS-rare plants

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USBLM - endangered species list (plants and animals)

USGS 7.5 minute map of Cabazon

CNDDB QuickView - wildlife in the Cabazon quadrant (which encompasses the project area)

## Biological Resources

Several listed and special-status species are known within the area including the desert tortoise, kangaroo rat, fringe-toed lizards, burrowing owls, California kingsnakes, Southern California legless lizard, American Bumble bee, San Diego desert woodrat, Los Angeles pocket mouse, and some California Native Plant Society (CNPS) rare plant. The Project is within USFWS designated critical habitat for desert tortoise. The preparation of a Natural Environment Study (NES) is required to address potential project effects to listed species, nesting birds, roosting bats, and potential jurisdictional waters.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act offers protection to active bird nests. It is anticipated that breeding birds will be present throughout the project site from February through September. Vegetation removal should occur outside of the bird breeding season. This would require vegetation removal to occur in a narrow range between September 30 to December 31, between the end of the nesting season and the beginning of the rainy season. Sensitive bird species known to occur on the project site and immediate vicinity include burrowing owl (Athene cunicularia), LeConte's thrasher (Toxostoma lecontei), Bells Vireo (Vireo bellii arizonae), California Towhee (Melozone crissalis eremophilus). These species are California species of special concern, fully protected, or watch list species or are federal birds of conservation concern.

#### Waters

In the project area, Waters of the State, Waters of the United States, and wetlands may be present and, thus, may be impacted by construction activities associated with this project. As such, a Jurisdictional Delineation (JD), and subsequent report, will be required to determine the presence of jurisdictional waters within the project area.

## Invasive Plant Species

Executive Order 13112 requires that any federal action may not cause or promote the spread or introduction of invasive species.

- Executive Order (E.O.) 11990 Protection of Wetlands
  - not applicable because it is not federally funded

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## <u>Mitigation</u>

In-lieu fee credits will be required for permanent impacts to jurisdictional waters (if identified), approximate cost is \$250,000/1-acre credit. Current coordination with CDFW suggests a 1.5:1 at \$9,500/acre-credit.

#### **Permits**

The proposed project zones are within three different communities: Banning, Cabazon, and Morongo Reserves. It is important to conform to their biological requirements.

## The permits needed are:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) CWA Section 404 Permit is required when the project involves the discharge of fill into or alterations (such as excavation) to wetlands or waters of the United States. It should include the location where discharge originates from the proposed project and into what designated water of the United States it is affecting. An Individual Permit would be necessary if the water exceeds 0.5 acre, or a non-notifying Section 404 permit when the waters are less than 0.1 acre.
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement is required since the proposed project affects waters or wetlands under the jurisdiction of the CDFW.
- CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) under Colorado River district is required because the proposed project would result in any discharge of fill into or alterations (such as excavation) to waters of the state in California. Mitigation for project impacts would likely be required and would be determined during the permitting process.
- CDFW California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Section 2081 Incidental Take Permits (ITP) is necessary because the proposed project may affect federally and/or state-listed species or critical habitats.

## **Conservation Plans**

 Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (Cabazon Project Site)

The CVMSHCP is a regional plan that addresses the conservation needs of 27 species of native flora and fauna (5 plants, 2 insects, 1 amphibian, 3 reptiles, 11 birds, and 5 mammals) and 27 natural communities occurring throughout the Coachella Valley region of western Riverside County, California. The protected region covers the surrounding proposed area by Main St. which is unavoidable.

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 Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (Banning Project Site)

The Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (WR-MSHCP) is an extensive conservation plan covering some 1.25 million acres in Western Riverside County. It was implemented by the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority with the aim of preserving multiple species and habitats amid urbanization. For land use projects within the 310,000 acre MSHCP Criteria Area, of which the Banning project site is a part of, the Environmental Programs Division (EPD) administers the Property Owner Initiated Habitat Evaluation and Acquisition Negotiation Strategy (HANS) and ensures project level consistency with other elements of the WR-MSHCP.

## <u>Surveys</u>

The surveys would need to be taken to locate the habitats of the endangered plants and animals within the proposed project areas. The animal wildlife surveys needed would be for desert tortoise, kangaroo rat, fringe-toed lizards, burrowing owls, California kingsnakes, Southern California legless lizard, American Bumble bee, San Diego desert woodrat, Los Angeles pocket mouse. The plant wildlife surveys needed would be for Parry's Spineflower, narrow-leaf sandpaper-plant, coachella valley milkvetch, and sonoran creosote bush scrub. Surveys regarding the conservation of wildlife in the CVMSHCP Plan should be considered, a Section 7 USFWS Consultation should be taken into account for possible federally protected species like desert tortoises and other mentioned species within the CVMSHCP and WR-MSHCP. Lastly, if project impacts to special status habitats require mitigation, there should be surveys conducted outside of the proposed project area to locate possible habitat relocation areas for the wildlife.

#### 8.16 Cumulative Impacts:

The project may have cumulative impacts on various resources. Due to the size and complexity of the project and surrounding planned projects, the project may benefit from a separate report investigating cumulative impacts.

#### 8.17 Context Sensitive Solutions:

Context Sensitive Solutions are used by Caltrans as an approach to collaboratively plan, design, construct, maintain, and operate its transportation system in a way that supports the surrounding community and environment. This methodology employs innovative and inclusive approaches that integrate and balance community, aesthetic, historical preservation, and environmental values with transportation goals like safety, maintenance, and performance. This is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves outreach to and input from all relevant stakeholders. To ensure the full integration of Context Sensitive Solutions into this project development process, careful, creative early planning and continuous community involvement is required.

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During the PA&ED phase of the project, appropriate opportunities for public involvement, including public review of the draft environmental document and opportunity for a public meeting, would be provided. Banning and Cabazon may provide additional opportunities for public involvement during the environmental review process. Further context is anticipated to be addressed through the Visual/Aesthetics portion of the environmental document and supporting technical studies.

## 9. Summary Statement for PID

The Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report (PEAR) provides an initial environmental evaluation for the proposed project and its feasible alternatives. The proposed project will qualify as an Initial Study in accordance with CEQA, and an Environmental Assessment in accordance with NEPA. Thus, an Initial Study/ Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) Determination Form is needed for the PA&ED phase of this project.

The project will not include much visual resources and projected impacts to existing visual aesthetics will be low. However, environmental commitments of revegetation of disturbed areas due to construction may be necessary.

The project will have an impact on the surrounding community during time of construction and completion which will be investigated further in the CIA. Additionally, the proposed project area was previously disturbed and a PIR is not necessary.

Some of the project area will be on and disturbed Tribal/Reservation Morongo Land; thus cultural resources should be discussed and coordinated through consultation in accordance with Section 106/ PRC 5024 and AB 52. Verbal approval has been provided to the proposed project locations stated within the PEAR and assumes that no historical land is being disturbed.

For the project, both zones are within the San Gorgonio River watershed and it will increase impervious surface area. A water quality report should be made to analyze the full potential impact of the project. Additionally, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) in preparation for a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPP). The floodplain impact would be evaluated in a report that may require a Letter of Map Report (LOMR) or Conditional Letter of Map Report (CLOMR) due flow and impervious area modifications.

One of the project zones is adjacent to a local gas station (should only be for old gas stations not active ones)

The project will reconfigure the interchange and likely improve the overall traffic flow on the site. Because the area is within a CO nonattainment maintenance area, a Hot Spot Analysis should be conducted to assess the impacts the alternatives may pose. GHG emissions have been done.

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For the project a Noise Study Report should be prepared in accordance with the latest Caltrans Technical Noise Supplement and Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol to determine if the project will disturbed the communities of Banning and Cabazon. If traffic noise impacts are identified, a Noise Abatement Decision Report will be required.

The proposed project sites will be on conservation area plans and habitats of other protected species are noted to be within the area. Collaboration with the plans should be taken. Additionally, NES should be prepared to identify and confirm that all of the habitats exist and are valid and mitigated properly. The report would provide further detail into determining the appropriate permits like Section 2081 for state protected animals and Section 7 PBO for desert tortoises.

For Waters of the State, Waters of the United States, and wetlands, Jurisdictional Delineation (JD) may be needed to differentiate the wetlands being affected by the project site. Additionally, water permits from CWA 404 from USACE and CWA 401 from RWQCB will be necessary for the project.

#### 10. Disclaimer

This Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report (PEAR) provides information to support programming of the proposed project. It is not an environmental determination or document. Preliminary analysis, determinations, and estimates of mitigation costs are based on the project description provided in the PID. The estimates and conclusions in the PEAR are approximate and are based on cursory analyses of probable effects. A reevaluation of the PEAR will be needed for changes in project scope or alternatives, or in environmental laws, regulations, or guidelines.

#### 11. List of Preparers

Cultural Resources specialist:	Date:
Biologist:	Date:
Community Impacts specialist:	Date:
Noise and Vibration specialist:	Date:
Air Quality specialist:	Date:
Paleontology specialist/liaison:	Date:
Water Quality specialist:	Date:
Hydrology and Floodplain specialist:	Date:
Hazardous Waste/Materials specialist:	Date:
Visual/Aesthetics specialist:	Date:
Energy and Climate Change specialist:	Date:
Other:	Date:
PEAR Preparer (Name and Title):	Date:

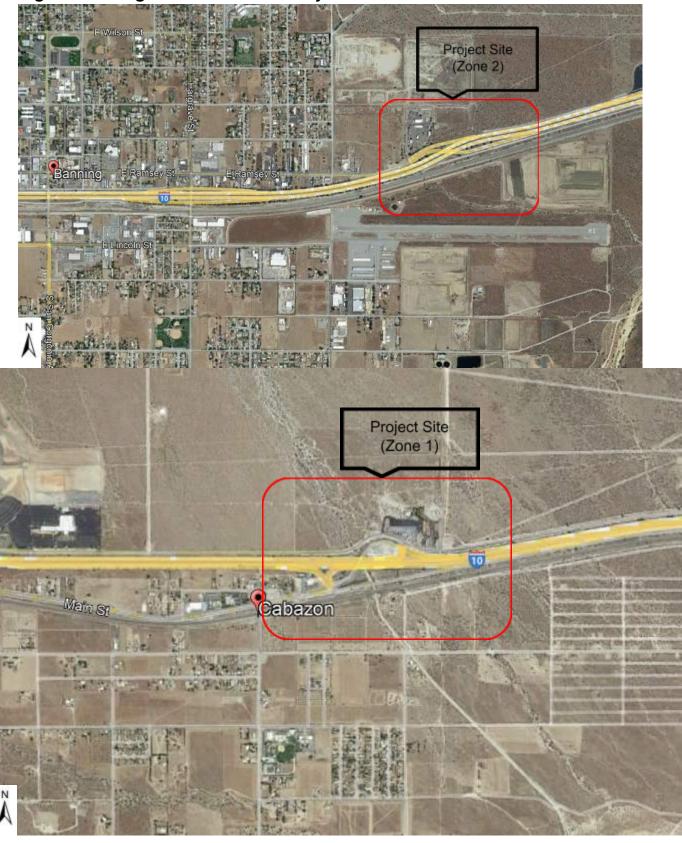
## 12. Review and Approval

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completed and that the PEAR meets all Caltrans requiscoped as a routine EA, complex EA, or EIS, I verify to concurred in the Class of Action.	irements. Also, if the project is
Environmental Branch Chief	Date
Project Manager	 Date
ATTACHMENTS:	
Attachment A: PEAR Environmental Studies Checkli Attachment B: Mitigation and Compliance Cost Estim PSR-PDS) Attachment C: Schedule (Gantt Chart) Attachment D: Caltrans staff should use the "Bottom should contact their local Caltrans dis	nate (MCCE) (not required for Up Tool." External partners

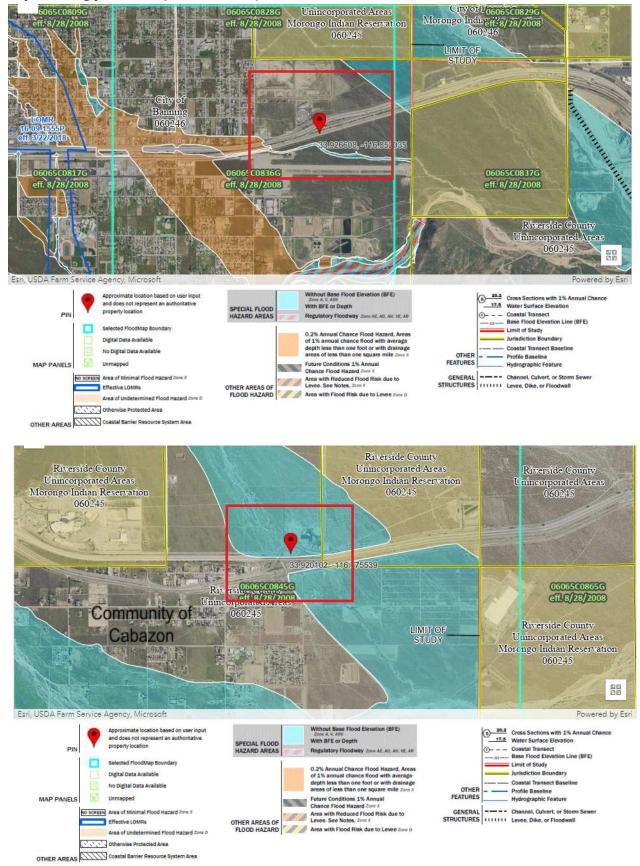
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Figure 1- Regional Location/Project Site



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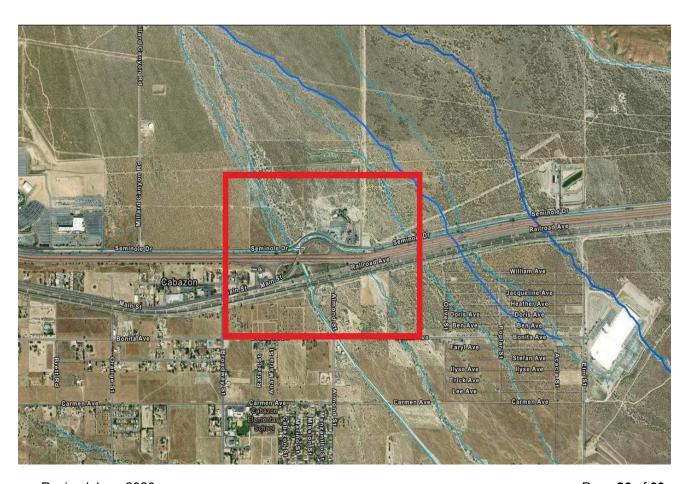
## Hydrology/Floodplains Maps



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# **Location of Water Flows**

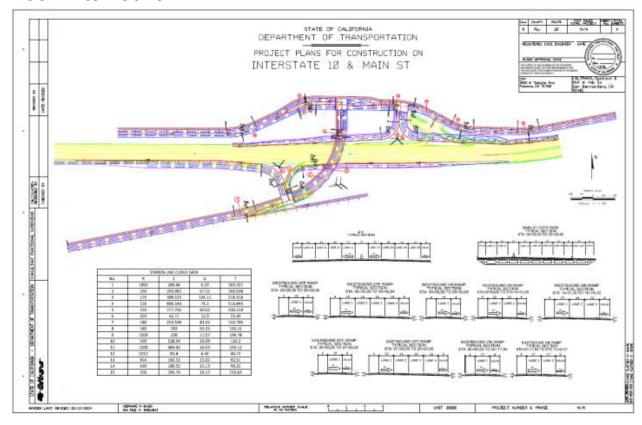




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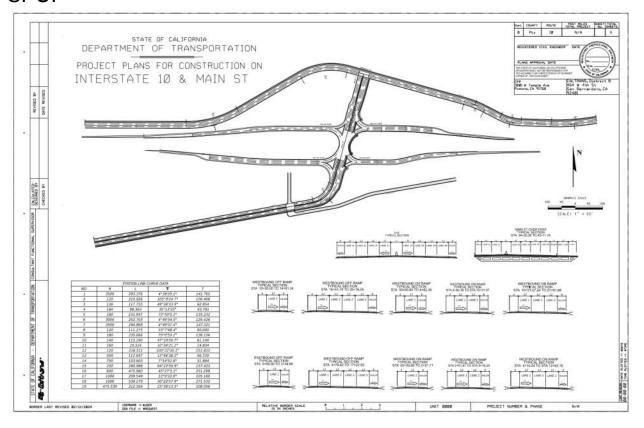
# Alternatives: Zone 1 (Main St.)

## **Hook Alternative**



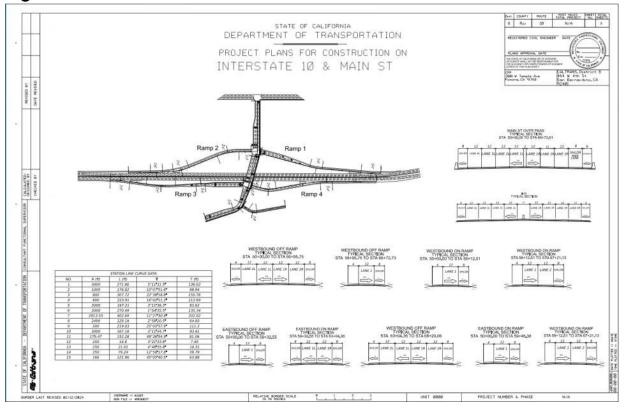
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## **SPUI**



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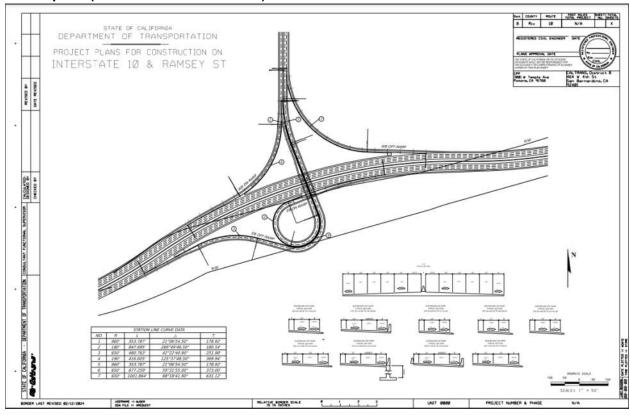
# **Tight Diamond**



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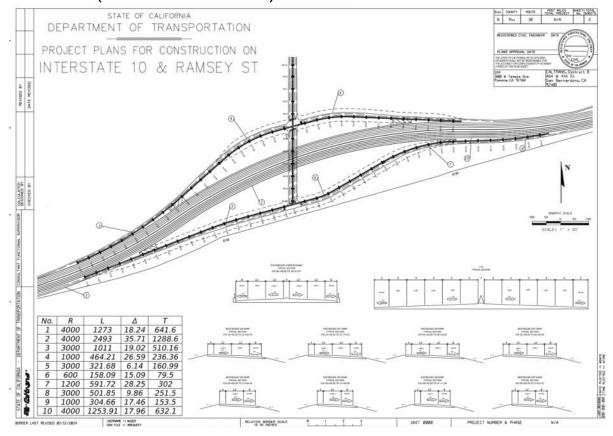
# Alternatives: Zone 2 (Ramsey St)

# Trumpet (Modified Mainline)



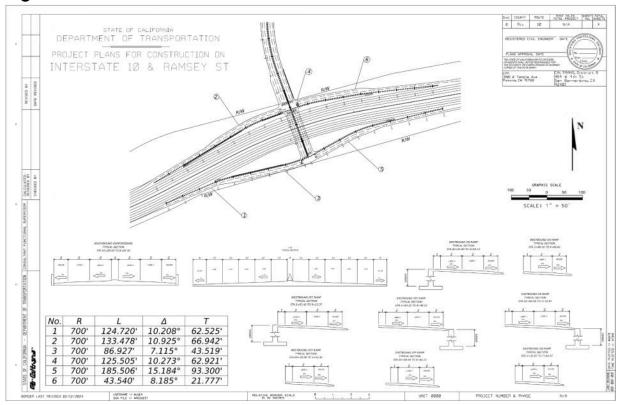
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## Diamond (Modified Mainline)



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# **Tight Diamond**



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## **Attachment A: PEAR Environmental Studies Checklist**

Environmental Study	Not anticipated	Memo to file	Report required	Risk	Comments
Land Use		$\boxtimes$		М	Community Impact Assessment (CIA)
Wild and Scenic River Consistency	$\boxtimes$			L	
Coastal Management Plan	$\boxtimes$			L	
Growth		$\boxtimes$		М	Growth Analysis
Farmlands/Timberlands	$\boxtimes$			L	CIA
Community Impacts		$\boxtimes$		М	CIA
Community Character and Cohesion		$\boxtimes$		L	CIA
Relocations			$\boxtimes$	Н	EIS
Environmental Justice	$\boxtimes$			L	CIA
Utilities/Emergency Services		$\boxtimes$		М	CIA
Traffic/Transportation		$\boxtimes$		Н	Traffic Impact Analysis
SB743/Induced Travel		$\boxtimes$		М	Traffic Impact Analysis
Visual/Aesthetics			$\boxtimes$	Η	Possible sound walls
Cultural Resources:			$\boxtimes$	Н	
Archaeological Survey Report			$\boxtimes$	Н	Archaeological Survey Report
Historic Resources Evaluation Report		$\boxtimes$		М	
Historic Property Survey Report	$\boxtimes$			М	
Historic Resource Compliance Report	$\boxtimes$			М	
Section 106 / PRC 5024 & 5024.5	$\boxtimes$			L	Not within project limits
Native American Coordination		$\boxtimes$		Н	Bounds are in tribal land
Finding of Effect		$\boxtimes$		М	Might affect tribal sacred lands
Data Recovery Plan	$\boxtimes$			L	
Memorandum of Agreement	$\boxtimes$			L	
Other: Enter other study	$\boxtimes$			L	
Hydrology and Floodplain			$\boxtimes$	М	
Water Quality and Stormwater Runoff			$\boxtimes$	М	SQWQI
Geology, Soils, Seismic and Topography			$\boxtimes$	М	Faults nearby but should not be affected by the project
Paleontology	$\boxtimes$			L	No effect on project
PER	$\boxtimes$			L	
PMP	$\boxtimes$			L	
Hazardous Waste/Materials:	$\boxtimes$			L	Little to no effect
ISA (Additional)			$\boxtimes$	М	

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Environmental Study	Not anticipated	Memo to file	Report required	Risk	Comments
PSI			×	M	Main St near a gas station
Other: Enter other study	$\boxtimes$			L	
Air Quality		$\boxtimes$		М	
Noise and Vibration		$\boxtimes$		L	
Energy		$\boxtimes$		L	
Climate Change and Sea Level Rise	$\boxtimes$			L	
Biological Environment		$\boxtimes$		М	
Fish Passage	$\boxtimes$			L	N/A
Wildlife Connectivity	$\boxtimes$			L	
Natural Environment Study			$\boxtimes$	Н	
Biological Assessment Section 7:			$\boxtimes$	Н	
Formal			$\boxtimes$	Н	
Informal	$\boxtimes$			L	
No effect	$\boxtimes$			L	
Section 10		$\boxtimes$		М	Disclaimer
USFWS Consultation		$\boxtimes$		М	
NMFS Consultation	$\boxtimes$			L	
Species of Concern (CNPS, USFS, BLM, S, F)			$\boxtimes$	Н	Many species in the area are under conservation plans
Wetlands & Other Waters/Delineation			$\boxtimes$	Н	Both alternatives are within wetland areas
404(b)(1) Alternatives Analysis	$\boxtimes$			L	
Invasive Species	$\boxtimes$			┙	Not anticipated
HMMP		$\boxtimes$		L	
<b>CDFW Consistency Determination</b>		$\boxtimes$		М	Check wildlife maps
2081			$\boxtimes$	Н	Needed, may affect local wildlife
Other: Enter other study	$\boxtimes$			L	
Cumulative Impacts		$\boxtimes$		М	Check other projects in area
Context Sensitive Solutions		$\boxtimes$		М	
Section 4(f) Evaluation		$\boxtimes$		M	Think we have to do the evaluation no matter what
Permits:			$\boxtimes$	М	
401 Certification Coordination			$\boxtimes$	М	
404 Permit Coordination, IP, NWP, or LOP			$\boxtimes$	М	
1602 Agreement Coordination			$\boxtimes$	М	
Local Coastal Development Permit Coordination	$\boxtimes$			L	

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Environmental Study	Not anticipated	Memo to file	Report required	Risk	Comments
State Coastal Development Permit Coordination	$\boxtimes$			L	
NPDES Coordination			$\boxtimes$	L	
TRPA	$\boxtimes$			L	
BCDC	$\boxtimes$			L	

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Attachment B: Mitigation and Compliance Cost Estimate
(MCCE) (not required for PSR-PDS)

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**Attachment C: Schedule (Gantt Chart)** 

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Attachment D: Caltrans staff should use the "Bottom Up Tool." External partners should contact their local Caltrans district office for direction.

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