INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

FOR

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

Public Review Draft

Prepared for:

City of Banning
99 E. Ramsey Street
Banning, CA 92220
Contact: Emery Papp, Senior Planner
(951) 922-3152

Prepared by:

Albert A. Webb Associates
3788 McCray Street
Riverside, CA 92506
(951) 686-1070
W.O. 2020-0126

September 6, 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

APPENDICES

ACRONYMS LIST

Acronym	Definition
AB52	Assembly Bill 52
AE	Applied Earthworks
AF	Acre Feet
Afu	Undocumented fill
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
APN	Assessor Parcel Number
AQ/GHG	Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Analysis
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
BMC	Banning Municipal Code
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
Cfs	Cubic feet per second
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGP	Construction General Stormwater Permit
CHSC	California Health and Safety Code
City	City of Banning
CMP	Congestion Management Program
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Data Base
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CRHR	California Register Historical Resources
dB	Decibels
FdBA	A-Weighted Decibels
DBESP	Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIC	Eastern Information Center
DEIR	Draft Environmental Impact Report
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FMMP	Farmland Mapping Management Program
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GP	City of Banning Comprehensive General Plan and Zoning Ordinance
GPA	General Plan Amendment

Acronym	Definition
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agencies
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
Ha	High A
HANS	Habitat Evaluation and Acquisition Negotiation Strategy
Hb	High B
HDR-20	High Density Residential 20
I-MR	Industrial-Mineral Resources
IS/MND	Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration
ISO	Insurance Service Office
JPR	Joint Project Review
LAPM	Los Angeles Pocket Mouse
LDR	Low Density Residential
L_{eq}	Equivalent Sound Level
LST	Localized Significance Threshold
LRA	Local Responsibility Area
LRTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MDP	Master Drainage Plan
MDR	Medium Density Residential
MLD	Most Likely Descendant
MRZ	Mineral Resources Zone
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Water Sewer System
MSHCP	Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
$MTCO_2e$	Metric Tons Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
NCCP	Natural Communities Conservation Plan
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NEPSSA	Narrow Endemic Plant Species Survey Area
NHC	Northwest Hydraulic Consultants
NO_2	Nitrogen Dioxide
NO_x	Nitrogen Oxides
Non-RPW	Non-relatively permanent waterways
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historical Places
OHWM	Ordinary High Water Mark
OS-Pk	Open Space – Parks
OS-R	Open Space – Resources
PM-2.5	Particulate Matter Less Than 2.5 Microns in Diameter
PM-10	Particulate Matter Less Than 10 Microns in Diameter
PQP	Public quasi-public lands
Qa	Holocene-age alluvium

Acronym	Definition
Qf	Pleistocene-age Alluvial fan of the San Gorgonio Pass
RCB	Reinforced Concrete Boxes
RCFD	Riverside County Fire Department
RCTC	Riverside County Transportation Commission
RTA	Riverside Transit Agency
RTP/SCS	Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SB 743	Senate Bill 743
SF	Square Feet
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SCE	Southern California Edison
SLF	Sacred Lands File
SMARA	Surface Mining and Reclamation Act
SRA	State Responsibility Area
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAZ	Traffic Analysis Zone
TNM	Traffic Noise Model
TNW	Traditional navigable Waterways
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plan
VHFHSZ	Very High Fire Severity Zone
VLDR	Very Low Density Residential
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
WEAP	Workers Environmental Awareness Program

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM

1. **Project title**
   Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension

2. **Lead agency name and address**
   City of Banning
   99 E. Ramsey Street
   Banning, CA 92220
   (951) 922-3131

3. **Contact person email address and phone number**
   Emery Papp, Senior Planner
   City of Banning Community Development Department
   epapp@banningca.gov
   (951) 922-3152

4. **Project location**
   The majority of the project is located within the City of Banning (City), although a small portion is located within the unincorporated territory of Riverside County. The alignment of the proposed Sun Lakes Extension (hereinafter referred to as the "Project Site") is in the western portion of the City, south of Interstate 10 (I-10) in between the intersections of South Highland Home Road to the west and Sunset Avenue to the east**.** The Project Site also extends north and south in Sunset Avenue. (Refer to **Figure 1 – Vicinity Map** and **Figure 2 – Project Location.**)[1]

5. **Project sponsor's name and address**
   Public Works Department
   City of Banning
   99 E. Ramsey Street
   Banning, CA 92220
   (951) 922-3130

6. **General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations**
   As shown on **Figure 3 – General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations**, the portion of the Project within the City traverses through areas in which the General Plan and Zoning Designations are (from west to east): Specific Plan Overlay, Medium Density Residential (0-10 units/acre) (MDR), Open Space-Parks (OS-P), Open Space–Resources (OS-R), Low Density Residential (0-5 units/acre) (LDR), High Density Residential 20/Affordable Housing Opportunity (20-24 units/acre) (HDR-20), and Very Low Density Residential (0-2 units/acre) (VLDR).

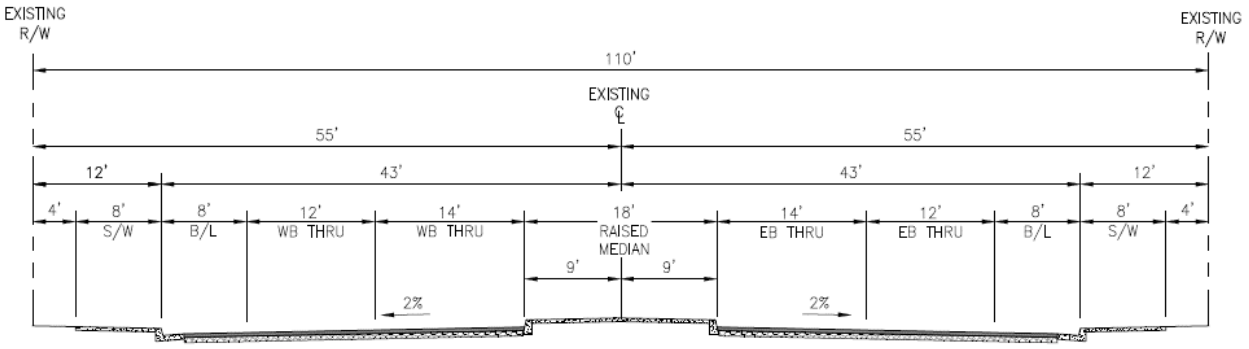
   The portion of the Project Site within the unincorporated territory of the jurisdiction of the County of Riverside has a General Plan land use designation of Low Density Residential (0.5 acre/unit) (LDR) and a zoning designation of Light Agriculture 10-acre/unit (A-1-10.)

[1] Figures commence on page 9.

7. Project Description:

The proposed Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension project ("Project") is a transportation project including construction of a new section of Sun Lakes Boulevard from Highland Home Road to Sunset Avenue and intersection improvements (**Figure 2 – Project Location**). The Project is consistent with the City's Circulation Element that was amended in January 2020 through General Plan Amendment (GPA) 19-2502. This GPA modified the previous Circulation Element (GPA 16-2501) by changing the previous Sun Lakes Boulevard alignment that connected South Highland Home Road to West Lincoln to the existing alignment that connects South Highland Home Road to Sunset Avenue. The road remained an east-west Arterial Highway. The Project is approximately 5,400 linear feet (1.02 mile) and 110-feet wide, encompassing approximately 19.4 acres of direct footprint and another 9.1 acres of temporary construction disturbance area (see **Figure 4 – USGS Map**). The site is at an elevation of approximately 2,500 feet above mean sea level. Project staging and stockpiling will occur within the City's ROW. The following typical section shall be constructed according to the City's General Plan:

Typical Section – Arterial Highway



Sun Lakes Boulevard will be constructed as an Arterial Highway with two eastbound and two westbound lanes each containing a 12-feet wide lane and a 14-feet wide lane; a raised 18-foot wide median; eastbound and westbound 8-foot-wide bike lanes; 8-foot-wide sidewalks; associated road striping, drainage and street light improvements. The Project crosses over three creeks, from west to east: Highland Wash, Smith Creek, and Pershing Creek. The Project will include the construction of three sets of culverts (i.e., Proposed Lines J, I, and K)[2] to cross said creeks. The culverts are multi-cell reinforced concrete box (RCB) channels running under the proposed Sun Lakes Boulevard roadway extension. Straight wing walls with concrete and riprap aprons will be constructed at the upstream end of each channel while vertical wing walls and concrete aprons will be provided at the downstream end of channels. Concrete ramps will be constructed at the south end of the channels to provide maintenance access. Concrete swales and trapezoidal channels will be provided to intercept stormwater run-on from north of the Project and discharge it to the proposed channels, which is consistent with the City's Master Drainage Plan (MDP).

Left turn pockets are proposed at the intersection of South Highland Home Road, a future intersecting street, and at Sunset Avenue. Stop signals will be located at the intersection of South Highland Home Road and

[2] "Proposed Lines J, I, and K" correspond to the naming convention used in the Project storm drain plans and engineering hydraulic analysis. They should not be confused with the existing MDP Lines J, I and K that cross under I-10.

Sunset Avenue. The Project will also adjust and relocate various utilities to grade (such as sewer manhole, storm drain manhole, telecommunication manhole, power poles, air vacuums, fire hydrants, electrical risers, and electrical vault).

Currently, Westward Avenue is an east-west unpaved dirt road between Highland Home Road and Sunset Avenue. The proposed Sun Lakes Blvd. alignment will shift to the north between the intersections, as shown on **Figure 2**, to avoid utility lines. The existing Westward Avenue includes two culverted concrete Arizona crossings, one at Highland Wash and Smith Creek and another at Pershing Creek. Each creek currently has at least one existing pipe culvert to convey flows under Westward Avenue, specifically three pipe culverts for Highland Wash, one pipe culvert at Smith Creek and one pipe culvert at Pershing Creek. During storm events that exceed the capacities of the existing pipe culverts, the flows will overtop the pipes and flow over Westward Avenue continuing south and back into the Smith and Pershing Creek channels. The existing Westward Avenue pipe culverts are outside of the Sun Lakes Blvd. ROW and will be abandoned in place when the Project is completed. No other constructed drainage facilities are present in the Project area.

Right-of-Way and Easement Acquisition

The Project includes the acquisition by the City of approximately 621,000 square feet (SF) of ROW, and approximately 143,000 SF of drainage easements, and approximately 44,000 SF of pipeline easements (see **Figure 5 – Proposed Project Easements and Rights-of-Way**). Also, Project construction will require the relocation of approximately 13 City of Banning power poles along Sun Lakes Boulevard (see **Figure 5**). The maximum depth of excavation is approximately 13 feet.

Proposed Creek Crossing Details

As shown on **Figure 2**, there are three major drainage channels which intersect with the proposed roadway alignment. The drainage design for the Project consists of three sets of multiple/in series reinforced concrete boxes (RCBs), concrete swales, loose riprap, v-gutters, and concrete trapezoidal channels. The design of the proposed RCB culverts has been developed in discussions with California Department Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service so that the Project will not substantially decrease the amount of sediment transport currently occurring in the creeks. The in-road storm drain system (e.g., portions of proposed swales, V-gutters, trapezoidal channels) are in uplands and not in the jurisdictional areas. The RCB culverts will be in jurisdictional limits and have been designed to convey flows meeting as close to existing conditions as feasible. The proposed drainage crossings are as follows (from west to east) (refer to **Figure 6a – Project Components West Extent 1, Figure 6b – Project Components West Extent 2, Figure 6c - Project Components East Extent 1, Figure 6d – Project Components East Extent 2**):[3]

- Swale No.1 at west bank of Highland Wash (west of proposed Line J)[4]
    - 983 linear feet of concrete swale, 4 feet wide that will capture and convey offsite flows from north of the swale into the proposed Line J RCB culvert via proposed connection to westerly wingwall of Line J.

[3] Values are approximate. Exact quantities are known at final design stage.

[4] "Proposed Lines J, I and K" correspond to the naming convention used in the Project storm drain plans and engineering hydraulic analysis. They should not be confused with the existing MDP Lines J, I and K that cross under I-10.

- Pads of ungrouted Backing No. 2 (aka, Rock Slope Protection Class II rock size) of approximately 466 SF are proposed at existing flowlines to convey flows into proposed swale and prevent erosion.
- Design flow rate: 27.5 cubic feet per second (cfs)

- Creek Crossing No.1: Highland Wash (aka Proposed Line J)
  - Six (6) reinforced concrete boxes (RCBs) that are 14-feet wide, 10-feet high, and 269-feet long placed within the bed of Highland Wash extending across the full width of creek, with pier nose extensions.
  - Upstream of RCBs, there will be 3,483 SF of concrete apron with headwall and wingwalls. Additionally, 2,185 SF of ¼-ton ungrouted riprap is being proposed for slope protection.
  - Downstream of RCBs, there will be 4,000 SF of concrete apron with headwall and wingwalls and cut off walls.
  - The access maintenance ramp will be approximately 470 SF of concrete.
  - 2,150 SF of asphalt-concrete pavement will be installed to join existing pavement access road and maintenance ramps for Line J and Line I.
  - Design flow rate: 1,715 cfs

- Swale No. 2 at east bank of Highland Wash; (east of Line J)
  - 332 linear feet of concrete swale that is 4 feet wide to capture and convey offsite flows north of the swale into Line J RCB culvert via proposed connection to easterly wingwall of Line J.
  - A 233 SF pad of ungrouted Backing No. 2 is proposed to convey flows into the swale and prevent erosion.
  - Design flow rate: 35.0 cfs

- Creek Crossing No. 2: Smith Creek (aka Proposed Line I)
  - Seven (7) RCBs that are 14-feet wide, 10-feet high, and 140.1-feet long placed within the bed of Smith Creek extending across the full width of the creek, with pier nose extensions.
  - Upstream of RCBs, there will be 2,466 SF of concrete apron with headwall and wingwalls. Additionally, 1,209 SF of ¼-ton ungrouted rip rap is being proposed for slope protection.
  - Downstream of RCBs, there will be 2,765 SF of concrete apron with headwall and wingwalls and cut off walls.
  - The access maintenance ramp will be approximately 384 SF of concrete.
  - No removal of an existing impervious area.
  - Design flow rate(s): 3,500 cfs

- Swale No. 3 at east bank of Smith Creek; (east of Line I)
  - 176 linear feet of concrete swale that is 4 feet wide to capture and convey offsite flows north of the swale into Line I RCB culvert via proposed connection to easterly wingwall of Line I.
  - Design flow rate(s): 1.80 cfs

- Swale No. 4 on west bank of Pershing Creek; (west of Line K)

- 1,680 linear feet of concrete trapezoidal channel approximately 10 feet wide that will capture and convey offsite flows from north of the swale into Line K RCB culvert via proposed connection to westerly wingwall of Line K.
- Design flow rate: 112.5 cfs

- Creek Crossing No. 3: Pershing Creek (aka Proposed Line K)
  - Seven (7) RCBs that are 14-feet wide, 10-feet high, and 120-feet long placed within the bed of Pershing Creek extending across the full width of the creek, with pier nose extensions.
  - Upstream of RCBs, there will be 4,555 SF of concrete apron with headwall, wingwalls, and cut off walls. Additionally, 2463 SF of ¼-ton ungrouted riprap is proposed for slope protection.
  - Downstream of RCBs, there will be 3,315 SF of concrete apron with headwall, wingwalls, and cut off walls.
  - The concrete access maintenance ramp will be approximately 257 SF.
  - No removal of existing impervious area.
  - Design flow rate: 3,800 cfs

- Swale No. 5 East of Pershing Creek
  - 707 LF of concrete swale that is approximately 2 feet wide that will capture and convey offsite flows coming from north of the swale into an underground 36-inch diameter reinforced concrete pipe ("Lateral K-2") that will connect to proposed Line K.
  - Design flow rate(s): 4.3 cfs
- There are four storm drain laterals in the Project. Laterals K-1 and K-2 drain to Pershing Creek and Laterals I-1 and I-2 drain to Smith Creek. Laterals K-2, I-1, and I-2 collect street runoff via catch basins in the street. Lateral K-2 differs in that it collects run-on from north of the Project and conveys it to Line K.

Operation and maintenance inspections of the proposed RCB culverts would occur regularly, at a minimum annually prior to flood season and after any significant runoff event. Accumulated debris and sediment at the RCB opening and support piers would be monitored and removed if necessary, per the City's engineer staff's discretion.

Pipeline Realignments

The Project includes a partial realignment of three pipelines within the areas noted on **Figures 6a** and **Figure 6d**. The first pipeline is a 20-inch diameter steel pipeline conveying petroleum that is owned by Kinder Morgan, Inc. which is located generally within the alignment of existing Westward Avenue and within the area of the future Sun Lakes Blvd. expansion. Approximately 1,500 linear feet of the Kinder Morgan petroleum pipeline will be relocated because of the Project so that the petroleum pipeline is not located under the new Sun Lakes Blvd extension.

The second pipeline is a 16-inch diameter steel pipeline that is owned by Williams Companies and conveys natural gas. The current alignment generally follows the existing Westward Avenue alignment, and approximately 1,500 feet of this natural gas pipeline will have to be relocated so that it does not interfere

with the Sun Lakes Blvd. extension alignment. Figure 6a and Figure 6d show the relocation area for the Williams natural gas pipeline that will occur as a result of this Project.

The third pipeline is a 12-inch diameter steel pipeline owned by Kinder Morgan but currently leased for telecommunications. Approximately 1,500 linear feet of the Kinder Morgan telecommunications pipeline may be relocated as well with the Project.

All three of these existing utility pipelines parallel each other and separated by a width of approximately 20-feet within the general area of existing Westward Avenue.

The pipeline owners have indicated to the City that the proposed Project cannot lie on top of the pipelines, nor can the Project cross over the pipelines at less than a 45-degree angle, or add more than a negligible depth of fill on top of the pipelines. Therefore, the extents of the realignments analyzed herein are the City's best and most conservative assumption of what each pipeline owner will want and accept. The relocations are located at the east and west edges of the Project alignment (shown on Figure 6a and 6d), where the Project connects to the Highland Home Road and Sunset Avenue intersections and veers north from the existing Westward Avenue dirt road. The majority of these three pipelines will remain in place along the existing Westward Avenue alignment.

8. Surrounding land uses and setting:

As shown in **Figure 2 – Project Location**, the area to the north and south of the Project Site are currently vacant and undeveloped. However, proposed development projects for industrial/commercial is proposed on either side of Sun Lakes Blvd which are currently being processed and considered by the City of Banning separate from this Project. Adjacent to existing Westward Avenue are existing utilities that include three well sites and one wastewater lift station. West of Highland Home Road are single-family homes (primarily a retirement community). East of Sunset Avenue are single-family homes, a small number of commercial shops, the Mt. San Jacinto College San Gorgonio Pass Campus, and vacant land.

Adjacent to the north and south of the proposed Project Site are approximately 533 acres of undeveloped land for which development applications have been submitted to the City for the Sunset Crossroads project. The proposed Conceptual Land Use plan for the Sunset Crossroads Project at the time of the NOP is shown on **Figure 8 – Proposed Sunset Crossroads Conceptual Plan**. On February 2, 2021, the City issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan and related entitlements. A public scoping meeting was held for the Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan EIR on February 18, 2022. The Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR was issued December 15, 2023 to commence the 45-day public review period that ended on January 30, 2024. A public hearing with the Planning Commission and City Council is pending.

The Sunset Crossroads project is not a part of the Project evaluated in this Initial Study and is mentioned for informational purposes. The following proposed actions are collectively referred to as the Sunset Crossroads project: a GPA, Pre-Zoning and Zoning Amendment, and Adoption of the Specific Plan; Annexation; approval of Tract Maps; Development Agreement and other requested approvals as may be required from time to time for the project. The Sunset Crossroads project proposes the development of industrial and commercial uses

on a 533.8-acre site through adoption of the Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan, including up to 268,400 square feet of medical office, professional office, education, recreation, and commercial uses, a travel center with refueling uses, and a 125-room hotel on 47.9-acres; and up to 5,545,000 square feet of industrial uses (including up 330,000 square feet of cold storage uses) on 392.0 acres. The Specific Plan text identifies the permitted land uses; development standards, design guidelines; and implementation provisions. The Development Project includes a GPA and Zone Changes amending the existing land use designations to General Commercial, Industrial, Open Space – Parks, and Open Space – Resources. Approximately 65.6 acres of the Project site would be retained as Open Space - Resources and/or Open Space – Parks use, including a five-acre passive park. Approximately 253.7 acres of the site are located outside the current City boundary within the City's sphere of influence (SOI); therefore, the Project envisions annexation of this area into the city. The Project would result in the reduction of the City's residential capacity by a maximum of 1,146 units on the site; therefore, the City's requirement to identify and rezone other land in the city to ensure no net loss of residential capacity is also evaluated as part of the project. The City has identified an approximately 49.2-acre site located east of Sunset Avenue and south of Westward Avenue owned by the Mt. San Jacinto Community College District (MSJCCD) to accept the transfer of residential capacity from the Sunset Crossroads project site. The City has initiated a GPA and rezoning of the MSJCCD site to Very High Density Residential allowing a maximum capacity of not less than 1,146 residential units. No residential development is envisioned on the MSJCCD Site at this time according to the December 15, 2023 Notice of Availability for the Draft EIR.

9. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement):

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife - Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement
- County of Riverside, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – funding allocation through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule.
- Regional Water Quality Control Board Colorado River Region - Clean Water Section 401 Water Quality Certifications or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act waste discharge permit

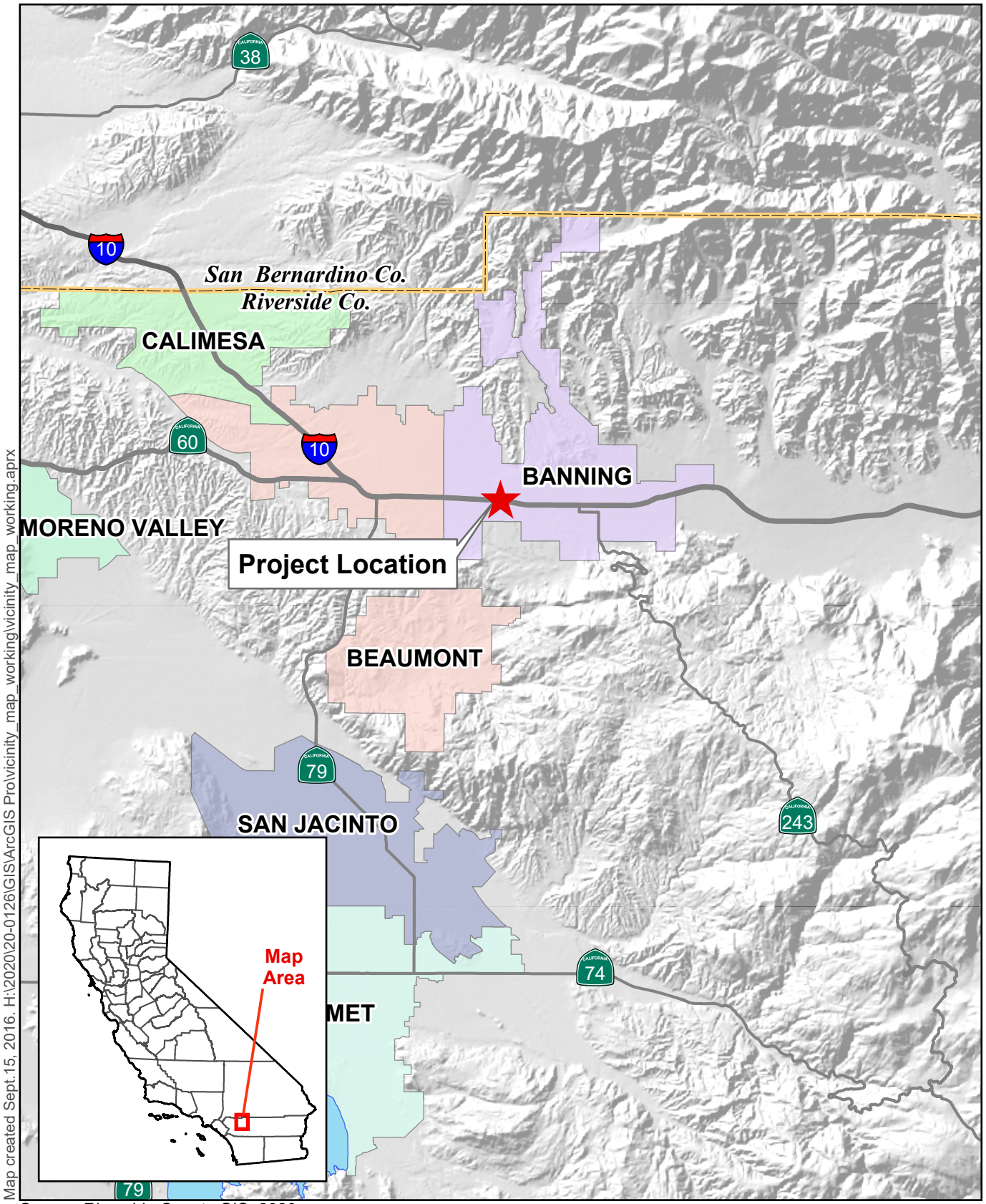
10. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resource Code section 21080.3.1?

If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

As part of GPA 19-2502, the City conducted consultation per Senate Bill (SB) 18 and Assembly Bill (AB 52). This consultation was concluded in August 2019. The following Tribes responded to the consultation request for GPA 19-2502: Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, and Twenty- Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians. Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians noted that the Project area is located within their traditional use area and as a result would like copies of cultural resource documentation generated in connection with the Project. Augustine Band of Cahuilla Indians noted that they are unaware of specific cultural resources that might be affected however, wish to be contacted if cultural resources were discovered. Morongo Band of Missions Indians noted that the Project area is located within the ancestral territory and traditional use area of the Cahuilla and Serrano people of Morongo Band of Mission Indians as such they are requesting copies of the records search, and Phase I study or other cultural assessments. Rincon Band of

Luiseno Indians noted that there were concerns regarding disturbing and destroying culturally significant resources for the Luiseno people as a result they requested to be notified and consulted at the time of any discoveries. The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians stated the Project area was located outside of the Serrano ancestral territory and would not request additional consultation. Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians responded noting that they are not aware of any additional cultural resources within the Project area.

On October 15, 2020, representatives of the City and WEBB (as the City's consultant) met virtually with the Morongo Band of Mission Indians Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (Anne Brierty) to introduce the Project and provide background regarding the prior consultation efforts. The Project cultural resources report was also provided. No response from the tribe was received by the City after this meeting over the course of eight months (October 2020 to June 2021) of efforts to communicate. The City deemed the consultation process complete as of November 15, 2021. The consultation process is discussed further in Section XVIII of this Initial Study.



Map created Sept.15, 2016. H:\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\vicinity_map_working\vicinity_map_working.aprx

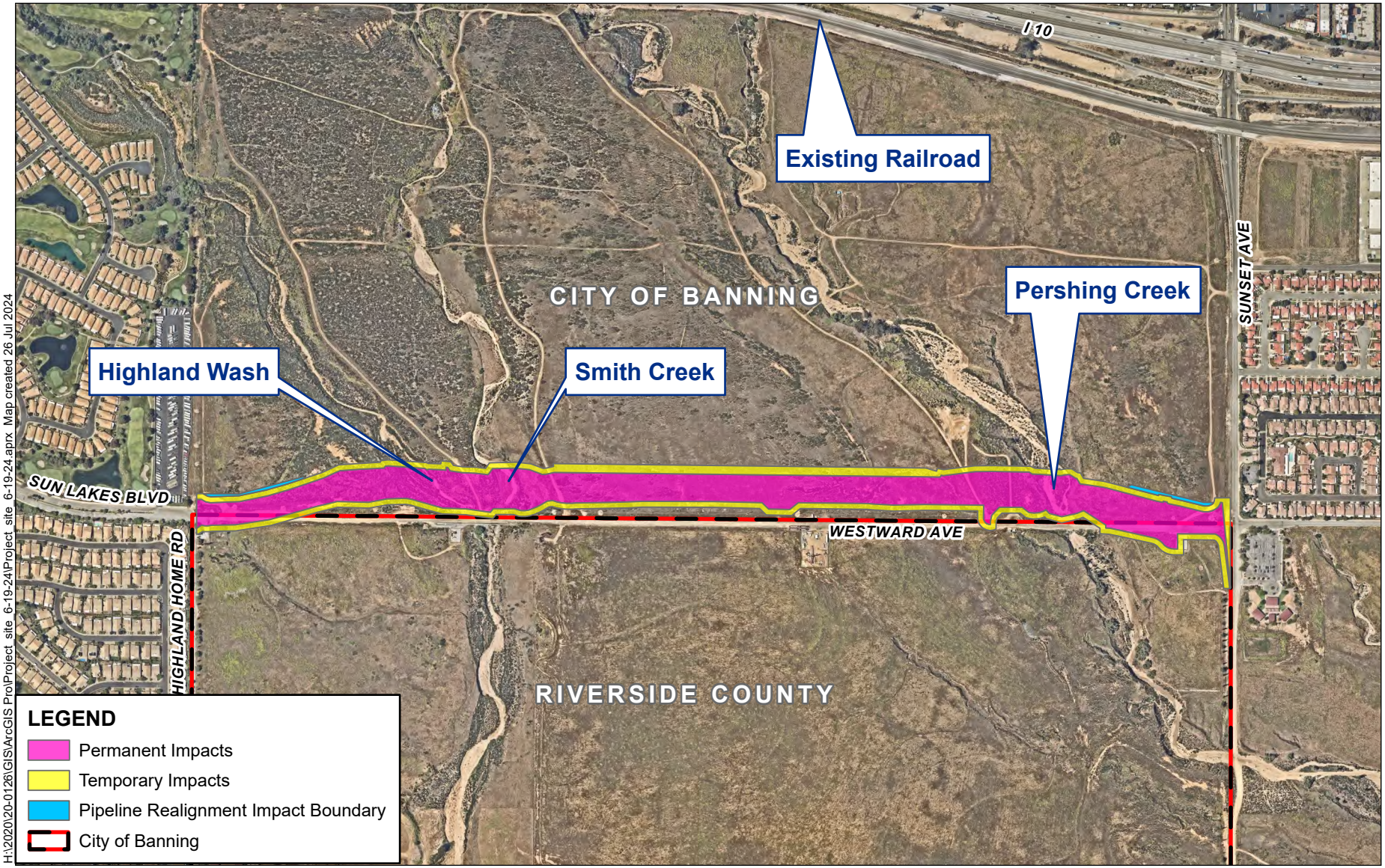
Source: Riverside County GIS, 2020

Figure 1 – Vicinity Map

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

0 2 4 6 Miles

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



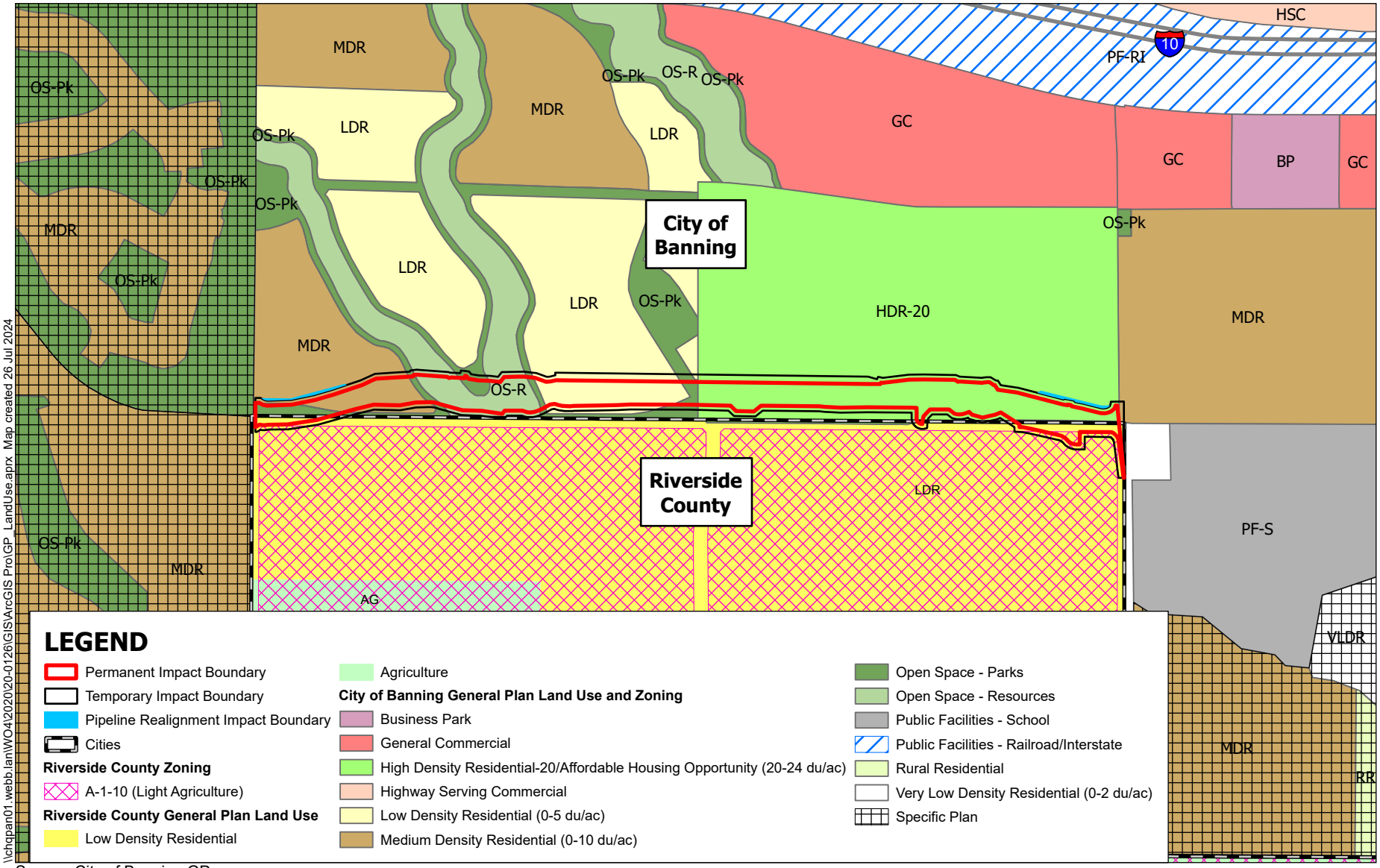
Source: Nearmap, 2024.

0 500 1,000 1,500 Feet

Figure 2 - Project Location

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



\chqpan01.webb.lan\WO4\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\GP_LandUse.aprx Map created 26 Jul 2024

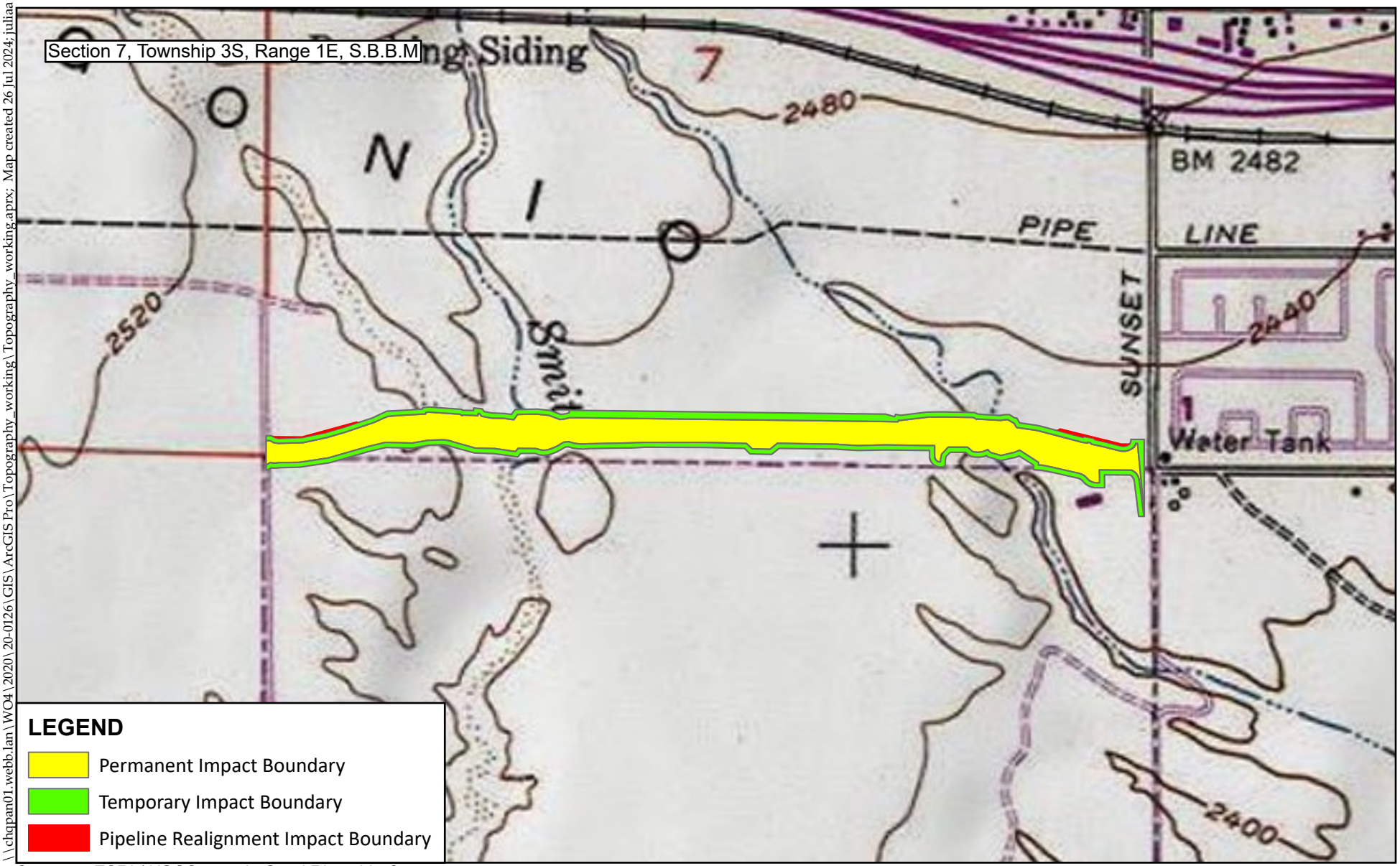
Source: City of Banning GP
Land Use and Zoning (June 2021);
Riverside County Land Use and Zoning, 2023.

Figure 3 – General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

0 500 1,000 1,500 Feet

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



\\chqpan01.webb.lan\WO4\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\Topography_working\Topography_working.aprx; Map created 26 Jul 2024; juliaa

Sources: ESRI / USGS 7.5 min Quad Riverside Co.

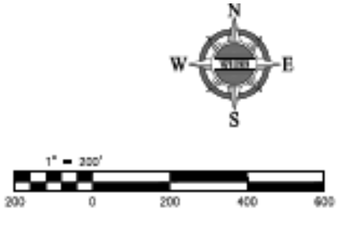
0 400 800 1,200 Feet

Figure 4 - USGS Map

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES

\\brkpan01.webb.lan\WO4\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\IS 2024 Bio\IS 2024 Bio.aprx; Map created 24 Jul 2024



LEGEND

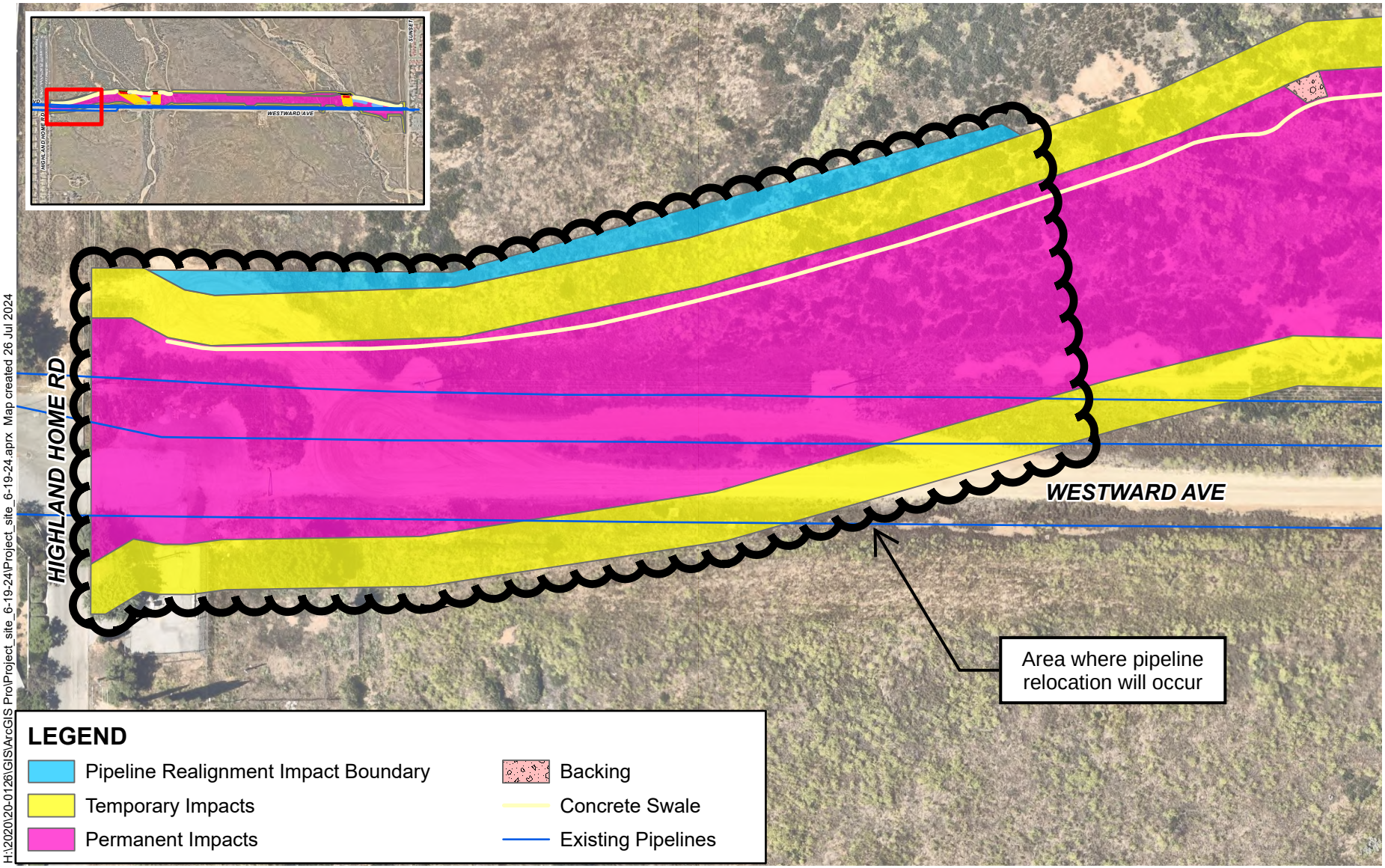
- ADDITIONAL RIGHT OF WAY NEEDING TO BE ACQUIRED, 550,823 SF
- ACCESS EASEMENT
- DRAINAGE EASEMENT
- SLOPE EASEMENT
- PIPELINE EASEMENT

Sources: WEBB

Figure 5 - Proposed Project Easements and Rights-Of-Way

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



H:\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\Project_site_6-19-24\Project_site_6-19-24.aprx Map created 26 Jul 2024

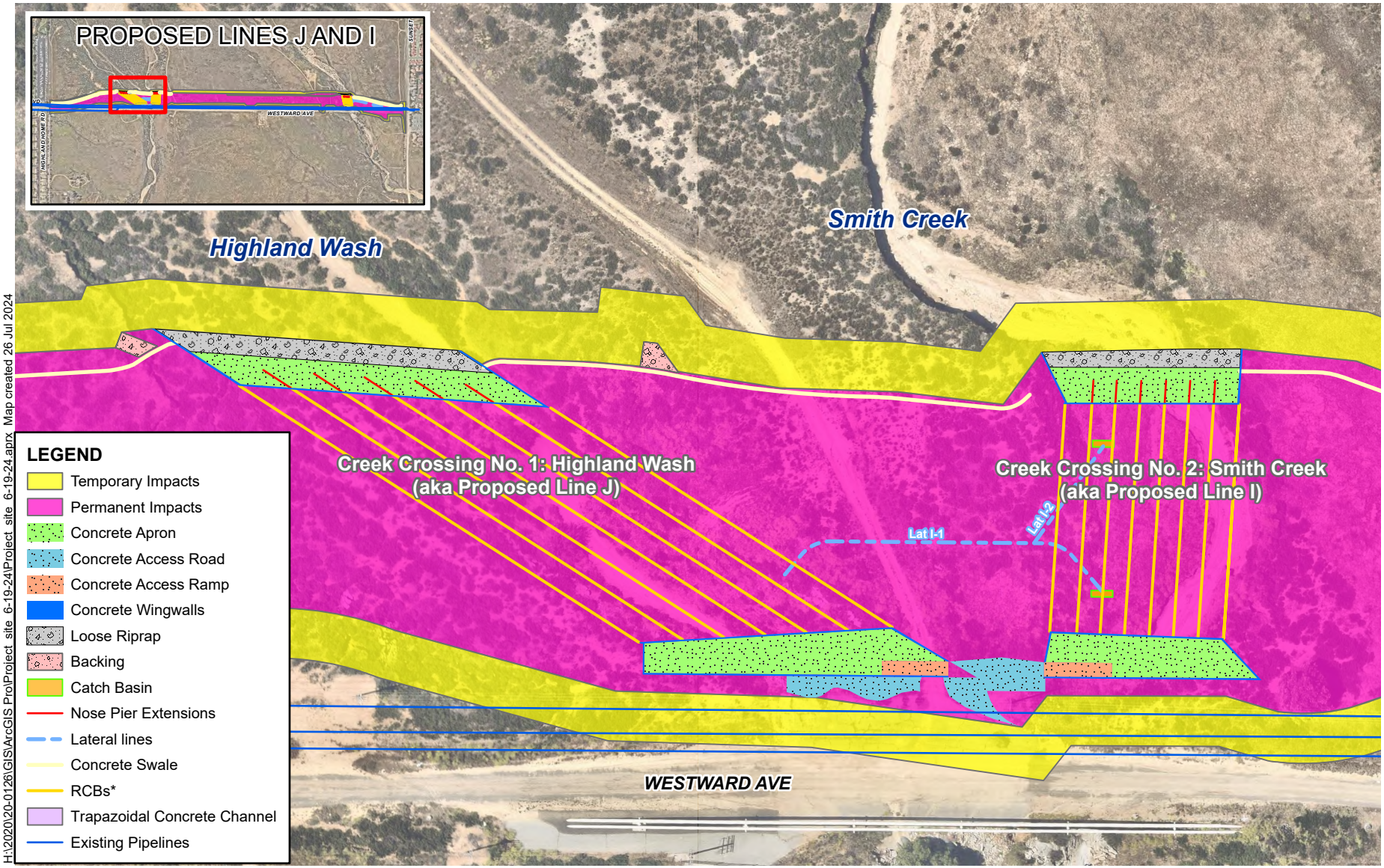
Source: Nearmap, 2024.

0 50 100 150 US Feet

Figure 6a - Project Components West Extent 1

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



Source: Nearmap, 2024.

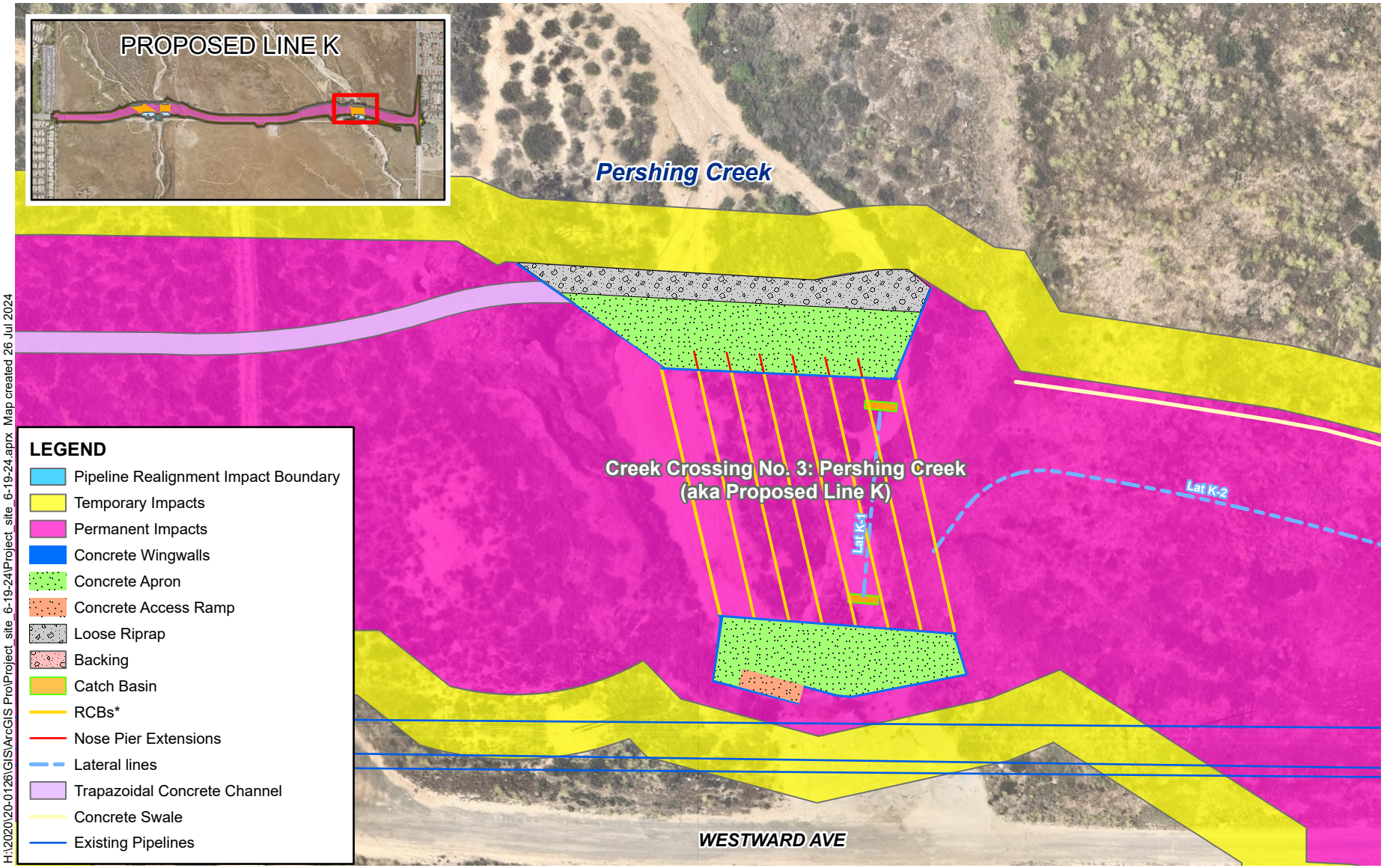
*Reinforced Concrete Box

0 50 100 150 US Feet

Figure 6b - Project Components West Extent 2

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



Source: Nearmap, 2024.

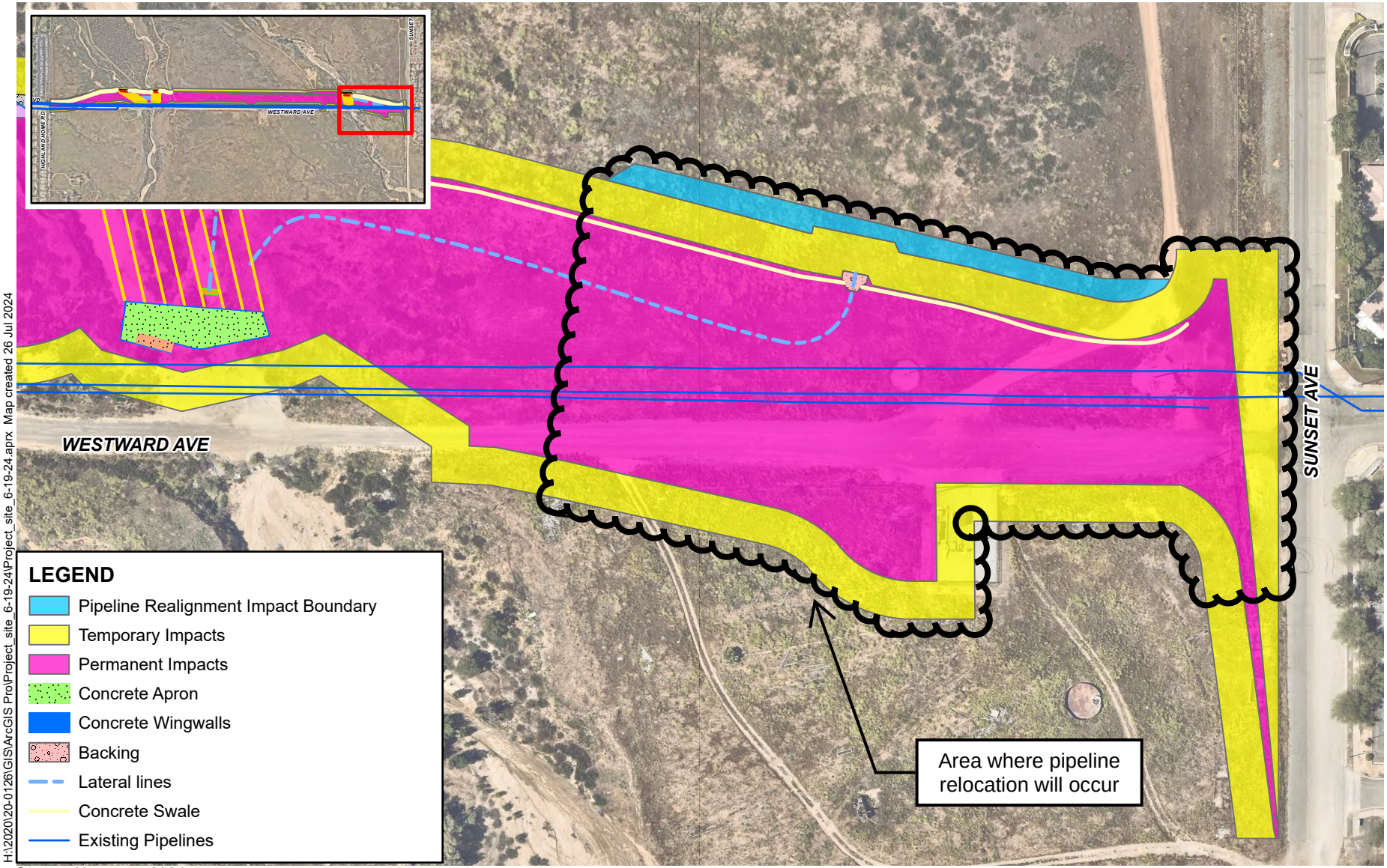
*Reinforced Concrete Boxes

0 50 100 150 US Feet

Figure 6c - Project Components East Extent

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



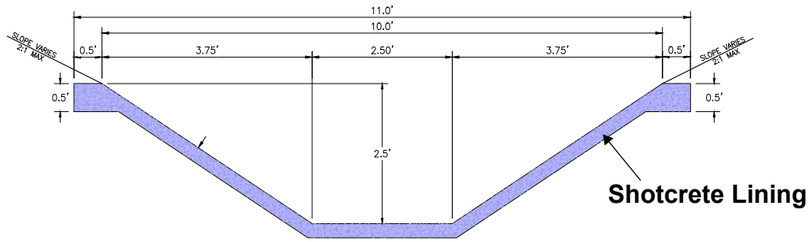
Source: Nearmap, 2024.

0 50 100 150 US Feet

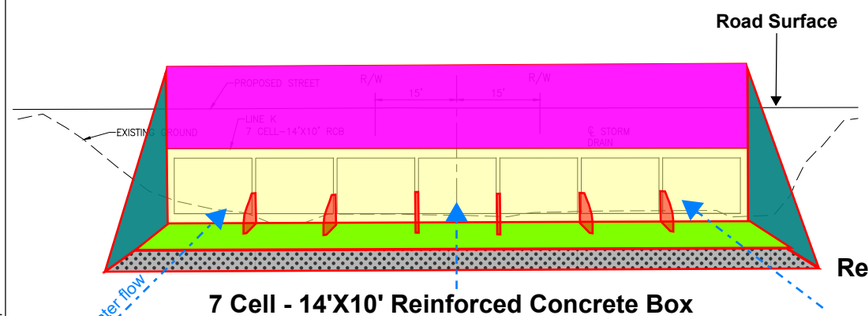
Figure 6d - Project Components East Extent 2

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

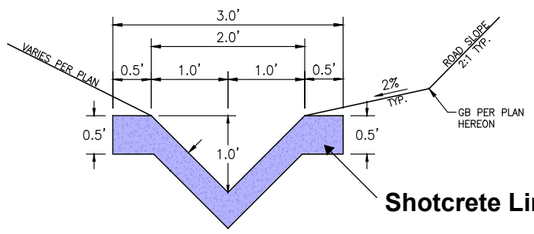
ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



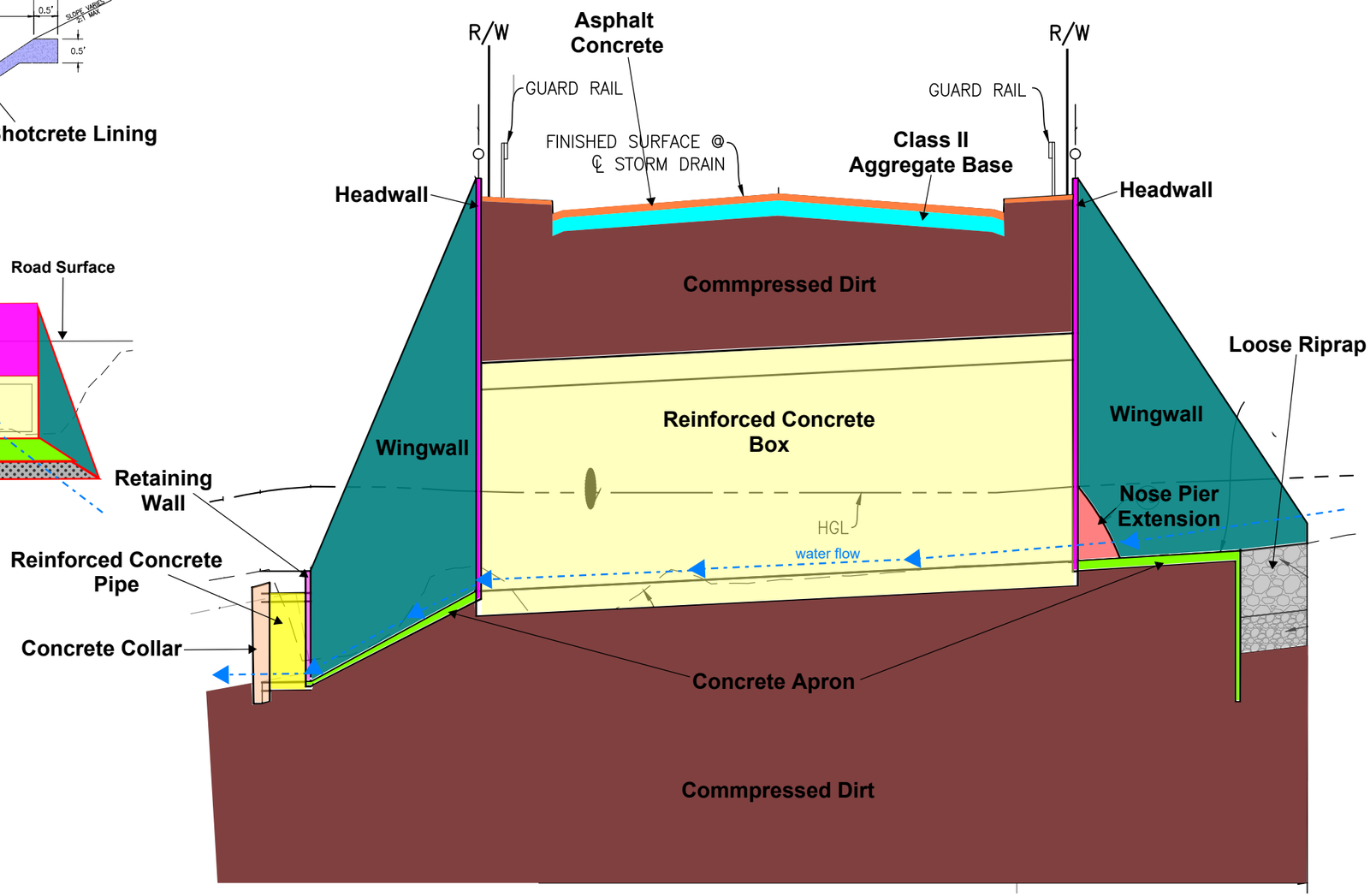
Trapezoidal Channel



7 Cell - 14'X10' Reinforced Concrete Box



Swale



Representative Creek Crossing Profile

H:\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\Project_site_6-19-24\Project_site_6-19-24.aprx Map created 09 Jul 2024

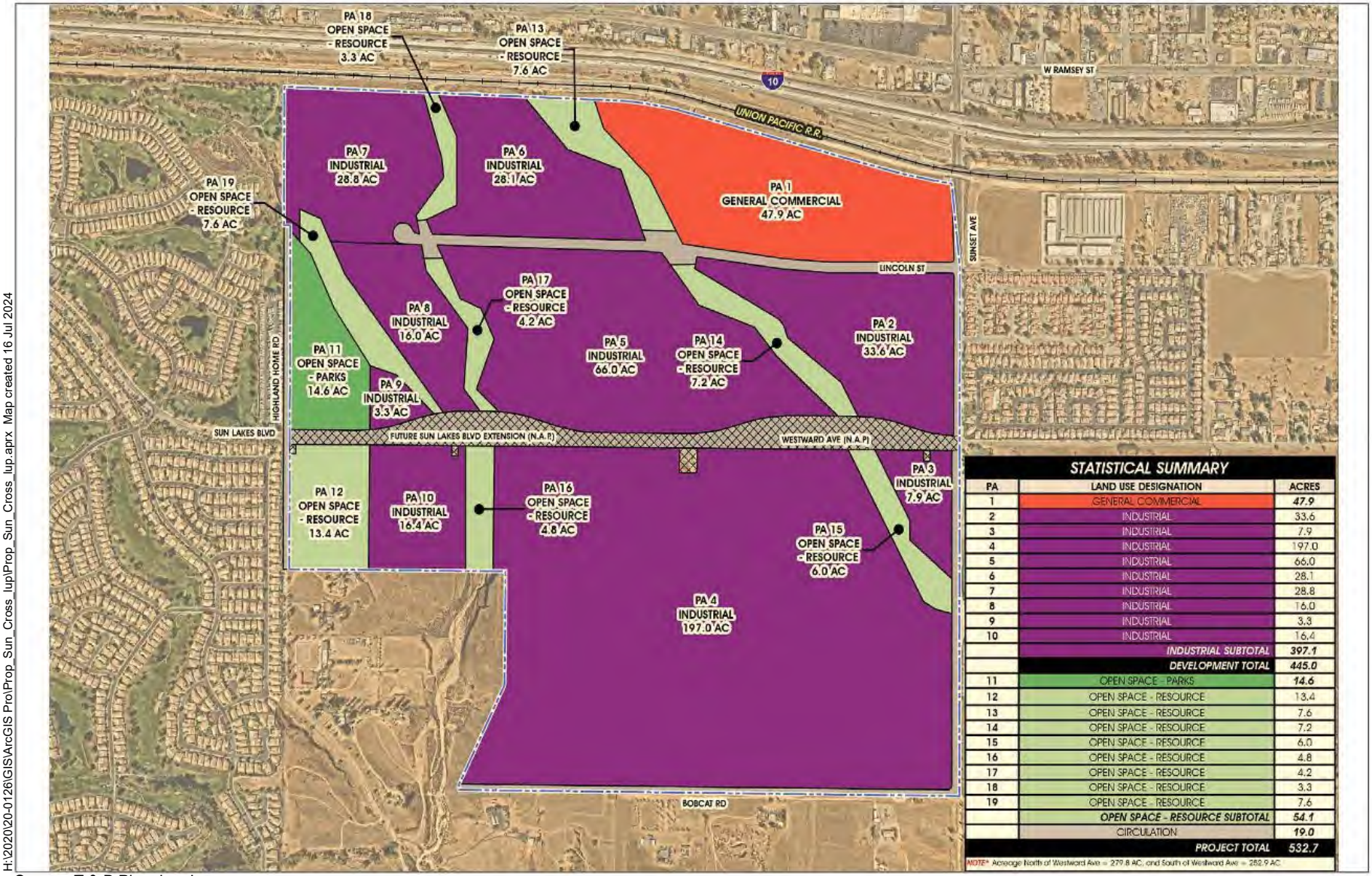
Source: Sun Lakes Blvd Extension, Storm Drain Improvement, June, 2024.

NTS

Figure 7 - Project Components Cross Sections

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



STATISTICAL SUMMARY

PA	LAND USE DESIGNATION	ACRES
1	GENERAL COMMERCIAL	*47.9*
2	INDUSTRIAL	33.6
3	INDUSTRIAL	7.9
4	INDUSTRIAL	197.0
5	INDUSTRIAL	66.0
6	INDUSTRIAL	28.1
7	INDUSTRIAL	28.8
8	INDUSTRIAL	16.0
9	INDUSTRIAL	3.3
10	INDUSTRIAL	16.4
	INDUSTRIAL SUBTOTAL	*397.1*
	DEVELOPMENT TOTAL	*445.0*
11	OPEN SPACE - PARKS	*14.6*
12	OPEN SPACE - RESOURCE	13.4
13	OPEN SPACE - RESOURCE	7.6
14	OPEN SPACE - RESOURCE	7.2
15	OPEN SPACE - RESOURCE	6.0
16	OPEN SPACE - RESOURCE	4.8
17	OPEN SPACE - RESOURCE	4.2
18	OPEN SPACE - RESOURCE	3.3
19	OPEN SPACE - RESOURCE	7.6
	OPEN SPACE - RESOURCE SUBTOTAL	*54.1*
	CIRCULATION	*19.0*
	PROJECT TOTAL	*532.7*

NOTE Acreage North of Westward Ave = 279.8 AC. and South of Westward Ave = 252.9 AC.

H:\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\Prop_Sun_Cross_lup\Prop_Sun_Cross_lup.aprx Map created 16 Jul 2024

Source: T & B Planning, Inc.

0 350 700
FEET

N

Figure 8 - Proposed Sunset Crossroads Conceptual Land Use Plan

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages:

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

DETERMINATION

(To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

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

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

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

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

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

Signature _____ Date _____

Emery Papp, Senior Planner, City of Banning
Printed Name

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved *(e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone)*. A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards *(e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis)*.

2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).

5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063©(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

    a. **Earlier Analysis Used.** Identify and state where they are available for review.
    b. **Impacts Adequately Addressed.** Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
    c. **Mitigation Measures.** For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts *(e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances)*. Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.

7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.

9) The explanation of each issue should identify:

a. the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
b. the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significant.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS: ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
I. AESTHETICS Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:				
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Aesthetics Discussion:

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

Less than significant impact. The City of Banning (City) defines visual resources as those physical features that enhance the City's aesthetic and scenic character. The majority of the City is located within the narrow east-west trending valley of the San Gorgonio Pass, which is dominated by the San Bernardino Mountains along the northern end of the valley and the San Jacinto Mountains along the southern end of the valley. (GP DEIR, p. III-189.) These mountain ranges present impressive viewsheds and dramatic scenery, including frequently snow-covered mountain peaks and ranges with rugged slopes. The San Bernardino Mountains which can be seen from the Project Site towards the northern horizon have a peak elevation of approximately 11,499 feet above sea level. The San Jacinto Mountains seen from the Project Site towards the southern horizon have a peak at an approximate elevation of 10,804 feet above sea level. (GP DEIR, p. III-189.)

The Project Site is located at an elevation of approximately 2,500 feet above sea level. Given the differences in elevation between the Project Site and the mountains, the proposed Project does not include any sizeable above-grade features that would have the potential to obscure views of the San Bernardino Mountains or the San Jacinto Mountains. Construction equipment and related construction activity along the Project Site may result in limited, short term, and undesirable visuals; however, this will be a temporary condition, which will cease after construction is completed. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

Sources: GP DEIR; Project Description

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

No impact. A portion of State Highway 243 (Figure 1) is designated as a state scenic highway where it occurs in the City's southern Sphere of Influence; however, the City's GP Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)

determined that development pursuant to the City's GP would have a limited impact to viewsheds along this corridor. (GP DEIR, p. III-190.) Moreover, the portion of Highway 243 designated as a state scenic highway is more than 2 miles east from the Project site. As such, the Project will not physically affect scenic resources within a state scenic highway. Therefore, no impact will occur.

Source: GP DEIR

c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Less than significant impact. CEQA Section 21071(a) defines an incorporated city as being an urbanized area if it meets either of the following criteria:

(1) Has a population of at least 100,000 persons.
(2) Has a population of less than 100,000 persons if the population of that city and not more than two contiguous incorporated cities combined equals at least 100,000 persons.

The City is not categorized as an urbanized area because (i) the City's population is not at least 100,000 persons and (ii) the combined population of both the City and the City of Beaumont (the only contiguous city) is less than 100,000 persons. Based on July 1, 2023 United States Census Bureau data, Banning has a population of approximately 31,680 persons and Beaumont has a population of 58,463 persons, totaling to a population of approximately 90,143 persons (USCB). The January 1, 2024, California Department of Finance population estimate for Banning and Beaumont is approximately 31,213 and 57,416, respectively (DOF). Since the City is not an urbanized area, this analysis is based on whether Project implementation would substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the Project Site and its surroundings.

Public views of the Project Site are possible from four locations: (i) the intersection of Sun Lakes Boulevard/Bay Hills Road, (ii) Highland Home Road (between Sun Lakes Boulevard and Death Valley Road), (iii) Sunset Avenue (between Interstate 10 (I-10) and Bob Cat Road), and (iv) the intersection of Westward Avenue/Sunset Avenue. The Project Site may also be briefly visible from motorists traveling in the westbound lanes of I-10, which is approximately one-half mile north of and parallel to the Project Site.

Although the Project Site will be visible from public access points and will change the view of the Project Site from vacant land to vacant land with an improved road, this will not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of public views of the site or its surroundings. Because existing Westward Avenue and above ground utilities are already present in proximity to the Project Site and there are no unique items or visual interest present on the Project Site. Additionally, the Project does not include any above-grade features of significant mass that would alter or interfere with the dramatic and valuable viewsheds provided by the mountains. (GP, p. II-1.) For these reasons, Project implementation would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site or its surroundings and impacts would be less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; USCB; DOF

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

Less than significant impact. Light pollution may result due to the introduction of new artificial light sources. The International Dark-Sky Association defines light pollution as any adverse effect of artificial light including sky glow, glare, light trespass, light clutter, decreased visibility at night and energy waste. (IDA.) Night lighting and glare can affect human vision, navigation, and other activities; however, it can also affect nocturnal wildlife particularly night-hunting or foraging animals, such as owls, rodents, and others. Glare is typically associated with installation of windows and other reflective surfaces.

The only lighting currently sourced from the general Project area is from the Sun Lakes development to the west of the Project Site and the existing commercial and residential development east of the Project Site; thus, the Project Site is generally dark at night. The streetlights proposed as part of the Project will create a new source of light within the Project Site. However, the streetlights will be shielded and directed downwards on the street surface to minimize spillage and light pollution in accordance with the City's standards. Project implementation will not introduce a source of substantial glare to the surrounding area. Therefore, the impact will be less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; IDA

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

Agricultural Resources Discussion:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

No impact. The proposed Project Site is not located within areas designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland). According to the California Department of Conservation *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program* (FMMP), the Project Site consists of, and is adjacent to, Farmland of Local Importance and Grazing Land, and has Urban and Built-Up Land directly adjacent on the east and west. Thus, implementation of the proposed Project will not convert any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Therefore, no impact will occur.

Source: FMMP

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

No impact. The proposed Project is not located within a Williamson Act contract; the land south of Westward Avenue near the Project Site that is under a Williamson Act contract is either in non-renewal status or is not considered prime agricultural farmland. As of 2004, there were three Williamson Act contracts in effect over approximately 3,500 acres within the City's GP planning area. These include lands located in the City limits near the Banning Bench, in the northwest portion of the planning area between Highland Springs Avenue and Highland Home Road, and in the City's southerly sphere of influence south of Westward Avenue/Sun Lakes Boulevard. (GP, p. IV-22.) These lands are being phased out due to urbanization, although residential land uses that allow for agricultural and ranching activities are provided for under the GP. (GP DEIR, p. III-11.) As shown on **Figure 3 – General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations,** Riverside County zones the land south of the Project Site as A-1-10, which is defined as Light Agriculture. (RCZO, p. XIII-1.) However, the City land use and zoning designation for that area is LDR, and there are no agricultural zoning/land use designations adjacent to the Project Site (see **Figure 3**). The Project will not encroach Williamson Act land or change a land use in the vicinity of a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, no impacts will occur**.**

Sources: GP; GP DEIR; RCZO

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

Forest land, as defined in Public Resources Code (PRC) section 12220(g) is land that can support 10 percent of native tree cover of any species under natural conditions and that allows for the management of one or more forest resources. Timberland, as defined in PRC section 4526, means land other than land owned by the federal government and land designated as experimental forest land, which is capable of growing a crop of trees for any commercial species, including Christmas trees.

Less than significant impact. The Project does not propose or require rezoning. As shown on **Figure 3 – General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations,** the majority of the proposed Project Site is within the City with a portion located in the unincorporated territory of Riverside County. Banning does not have a zoning designation for forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production within City limits. Further, according to Table 17.08.020 of Banning's Zoning Ordinance, farming uses are prohibited in the City's LDR, MDR, and HDR-20 zones. Community gardens are a permitted use in the City's OS-R, zone; however, a community garden would not allow commercial tree production as defined in PRC section 12220(g).

Regarding the portion of the Project Site within Riverside County, forest land, timberland, and timberland production occurs at a much higher elevation, typically 5,000 feet. The Project Site is located at an elevation of approximately 2,500 feet above mean sea level. Per Riverside County's A-1-10 Light Agriculture Zone permits tree crops. However, as shown on **Figure 3**, only a small portion of the Project Site is within the A-1-10 Zone, which does allow for production of tree crops. Given the small area of the Project Site within Riverside County, and that the Project Site does not traverse through or adjacent to areas zoned for forest land, or Timberland Production, impacts would be less than significant.

Sources: GP; PRC 12220; PRC 4526; BMC; Ord. 348

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

No impact. There is no forest land in proximity to the Project Site. Implementation of the Project would not result in the loss or conversion of forest land; thus, there would be no impact in this regard.

Sources: GP; Site Visit

e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Less than significant impact. As discussed in Response IIa, there is no designated Farmland on or in proximity to the Project Site. As stated in Response IId, there is no forest land within or adjacent to the Project Site. As such, implementation of the proposed Project, will not result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use**.** Therefore, impacts are less than significant.

Sources: FMMP; GP

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

Air Quality Discussion:

The focus of the air quality analysis is to evaluate the impacts of regulated air pollutants, which are the amounts of foreign and/or natural substances occurring in the atmosphere that may result in human health impacts due to their release from numerous sources. Health-based ambient air quality standards have been established for seven air pollutants: ozone (O_3), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), particulate matter less than 10 microns in size (PM-10), particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in size (PM-2.5), and lead (Pb).

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

Less than significant impact. The City of Banning is in the South Coast Air Basin (Basin). The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) prepares the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) for the Basin. The AQMD sets forth a comprehensive program that will lead the Basin into compliance with all federal and state air quality standards. (SCAQMD 2022, pp. 1-1 and 1-4.) The control measures and related emission reduction estimates included in the AQMP are based on emissions projections for a future development scenario derived from land use, population, and employment estimates defined in consultation with local governments. To do this, the AQMP utilizes the population and growth estimates compiled by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) in their 2020 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) also known as Connect SoCal. (SCAQMD 2022, pp. 4-51 – 4-52.) SCAG's population and employment projections for the City are based on the City's growth projections (SCAG RTP/SCS, p. 76.), which are outlined in the GP. Thus, since the 2022 AQMP is consistent with the Connect SoCal, the Connect SoCal is also consistent with the growth assumptions in the GP. Accordingly, if a project demonstrates compliance with local land use plans and/or population projections, then the AQMP would have taken into account such uses when it was developed, and the project would not conflict with implementation of such a plan.

The proposed Project will design, construct, and operate the Sun Lakes Boulevard, a planned roadway designated an Arterial Highway, in accordance with the City's GP Circulation Element. As a planned roadway,

no increase in population is expected as it is meant to facilitate mobility within the City. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

Sources: SCAG RTP/SCS; SCAQMD 2022

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

Less than significant impact. The portion of the Basin within which the proposed Project is located is designated as a non-attainment area for ozone, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM-10), and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM-2.5) under the State standards and for ozone and PM-2.5 under Federal standards. (CARB 2022) The SCAQMD considers the thresholds for project-specific impacts and cumulative impacts to be the same. (SCAQMD 2003.) Therefore, projects that exceed project-specific significance thresholds are considered by SCAQMD to be cumulatively considerable. Based on SCAQMD's regulatory jurisdiction over regional air quality, it is reasonable to rely on its thresholds to determine whether there is a cumulative air quality impact.

Air quality impacts can be described in a short- and long-term perspective. Short-term impacts occur during site grading and Project construction and consist of fugitive dust and other particulate matter, as well as exhaust emissions generated by construction-related vehicles. Long-term impacts occur once the Project is in operation. Operational emissions would primarily be from infrequent visits by vehicles driven by maintenance personnel and are considered negligible; therefore, only short-term impacts were quantified.

The Project will be required to comply with existing SCAQMD rules for the reduction of fugitive dust emissions. SCAQMD Rule 403 establishes these procedures. Compliance with this rule is achieved through application of standard best management practices in construction and operation activities, such as application of water or chemical stabilizers to disturbed soils, managing haul road dust by application of water, covering haul vehicles, restricting vehicle speeds on unpaved roads to 15 mph, sweeping loose dirt from paved site access roadways, cessation of construction activity when winds exceed 25 mph and establishing a permanent, stabilizing ground cover on finished sites. In addition, projects that disturb 50 or more acres or more of soil or move 5,000 cubic yards of materials per day are required to submit a Fugitive Dust Control Plan or a Large Operation Notification Form to SCAQMD. Based on the size of this Project's disturbance area (approximately 23.47 acres) a Fugitive Dust Control Plan or a Large Operation Notification Form would not be required.

An Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas analysis (AQ/GHG Analysis) was prepared for the Project by Albert A. Webb Associated dated November 2, 2021 (WEBB(a)) and is included in Appendix A to this Initial Study. Short-term emissions from Project construction were evaluated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) version 2020.4.0. The results of this analysis are summarized in **Table A –Estimated Maximum Daily Construction Emissions**, below.

Table A – Estimated Maximum Daily Construction Emissions

Activity	Peak Daily Emissions (lb/day)					
	VOC	NO_X	CO	SO_2	PM-10	PM-2.5
SCAQMD Daily Construction Thresholds	**75**	**100**	**550**	**150**	**150**	**55**
Grading 2023	**3.45**	**37.11**	**29.45**	**0.08**	**5.70**	**2.94**
Grading 2024	3.34	34.98	29.09	0.08	5.61	2.86
Grading 2025	3.02	30.52	27.65	0.08	5.41	2.67
Paving 2023	**1.16**	**11.14**	**15.38**	**0.03**	**0.84**	**0.57**
Paving 2024	1.11	10.47	15.39	0.03	0.80	0.53
Paving 2025	1.03	9.52	15.31	0.03	0.75	0.48
Maximum[1]	**4.61**	**48.25**	**44.83**	**0.11**	**6.54**	**3.51**
Exceeds Threshold?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Source: WEBB(a), Table 2 – Estimated Maximum Daily Construction Emissions
Note: [1] Maximum emissions are either the greater of grading and paving in 2023, 2024, or 2025 as these activities overlap. Maximum emissions are shown in bold.

As shown in **Table A** above, the emissions from construction of the Project are below the SCAQMD daily construction thresholds for all criteria pollutants. In addition, the short-term emissions do not exceed SCAQMD's localized significance thresholds (LST). (WEBB(a), Table 2.) As such, the Project will not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the Project region is in non-attainment and the impacts will be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

Sources: CARB 2022; SCAQMD 2003; WEBB(a); Project Description

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less than significant impact. A sensitive receptor is a person in the population who is particularly susceptible to health effects due to exposure to an air contaminant including children, the elderly, and persons with pre-existing respiratory and/or cardiovascular illness. SCAQMD defines a "sensitive receptor" as a land use or facility such as residences, schools, childcare centers, athletic facilities, playgrounds, retirement homes, and convalescent homes where these persons are typically located. (SCAQMD 1993.)

The proposed Project is located adjacent to existing residences. The closest sensitive receptors are the residences adjacent to each end of the Project alignment. (WEBB(a), p. 4.)

According to the LST methodology, only on-site emissions need to be analyzed. Emissions associated with vendor and worker trips are mobile source emissions that occur off site. The emissions analyzed under the LST methodology are NO_2, CO, PM-10, and PM-2.5. SCAQMD has provided LST lookup tables[5] to allow users to readily determine if the daily emissions for proposed construction or operational activities could result in significant localized air quality impacts for projects five acres or smaller. The Project's total disturbance area is approximately 23.47 acres. However, based on SCAQMD guidance, the daily disturbance area is

[5] http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/ceqa/air-quality-analysis-handbook/localized-significance-thresholds

approximately 3 acres.[6] Therefore, the two-acre LST Look-Up Table was compared with the on-site emissions estimated by CalEEMod to provide a conservative analysis.

The LST thresholds are estimated using the maximum daily disturbed area (in acres) and the distance of the Project to the nearest sensitive receptors (in meters). The closest receptor distance on the LST look-up tables is 25 meters. According to LST methodology, projects with boundaries closer than 25 meters to the nearest receptor should use the LSTs for receptors located at 25 meters. Therefore, a receptor distance of 25 meters (82 feet) was used to ensure a conservative analysis. The results are summarized below.

Table B – LST Results for Daily Construction Emissions

Activity	Peak Daily Emissions (lb/day)			
	NO_X	CO	PM-10	PM-2.5
LST for 2 acres at 25 meters	**149**	**1,541**	**10**	**6**
Grading 2023	**34.52**	**28.05**	**5.02**	**2.74**
Grading 2024	32.38	27.72	4.93	2.65
Grading 2025	27.94	26.33	4.73	2.47
Paving 2023	**10.19**	**14.58**	**0.51**	**0.47**
Paving 2024	9.52	14.63	0.47	0.43
Paving 2025	8.58	14.58	0.42	0.39
Maximum[1]	**44.71**	**42.63**	**5.53**	**3.21**
Exceeds Threshold?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**

Source: WEBB(a), Table 3 – LST Results for Daily Construction Emissions.
Note: [1] Maximum emissions are either the greater of grading and paving in 2023, 2024, or 2025 as these activities overlap. Maximum emissions are shown in bold.

Emissions from construction of the Project will be below the LST established by SCAQMD for the Project.

Short-term emissions will only be generated in the Project area during construction of the Project and have been found to be less than significant (see Response IIIb). The operational emissions are negligible as they consist of roadway maintenance; hence, the Project will not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. Therefore, impacts are considered less than significant.

Sources: SCAQMD 1993; WEBB(a); Project Description

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

Less than significant impact. The Project presents the potential for generation of other emissions such as odors in the form of diesel exhaust during construction in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site. Odors generated during construction will be short-term and will not result in a long-term odorous impact to the surrounding area. After completion of the proposed improvements, only infrequent maintenance will be required.

[6] http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ceqa/handbook/localized-significance-thresholds/caleemod-guidance.pdf?sfvrsn=2

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has developed an Air Quality and Land Use Handbook to outline common sources of odor complaints, including: sewage treatment plants, landfills, recycling facilities, and petroleum refineries. (CARB 2005, p 2-2.) The Project proposes a roadway which is not included on CARB's list of uses that are known to be prone to generate odors. Therefore, impacts are less than significant.

Source: CARB 2005

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
IV. 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 state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☒	☐	☐

Biological Resource Discussion:

The analysis in this section is based on the findings of several technical studies prepared by WSP USA, Inc. for the Project, which are located in **Appendix B.1 through B.7**:

- *Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Consistency Analysis,* June 2024 (hereinafter, "MSHCP Consistency Report")*;*
- *Los Angeles Pocket Mouse Focused Survey,* June 2024 (hereinafter the LAPM Survey Report);
- *Burrowing Owl Focused Survey*, June 2024 (hereinafter, "Burrowing Owl Focused Survey Report");
- *Narrow Endemic Plant Species Survey*, June 2024, (hereinafter, "NEPSSA Report");
- *2020-2021 Wet and Dry Season Fairy Shrimp Focused Surveys Technical Memorandum*, June 2024 (hereinafter, "Fairy Shrimp Technical Memo");
- *Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation Report*, June 2024 (hereinafter, "DBESP"); and
- *Jurisdictional Delineation Report*, June 2024 (hereinafter, "JD Report")

The aforementioned reports included literature reviews and database searches of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW's) California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB), the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California, Soil Survey data, vegetation mapping, United States Fish and Wildlife Services' (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory, and the USFWS Critical Habitat mapper. Historic aerial photographs and soils maps from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) were also reviewed. In addition to the literature review and database searches, pedestrian surveys were conducted of the Project Site and surrounding area. The City of Banning is a permittee to the MSHCP.

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

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated. According to the *MSHCP Consistency Report*, the Project Site is currently undeveloped, with no existing structures and is composed of the following six vegetation communities: buckwheat scrub, non-native grassland, riparian scrub/woodland, Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub, unvegetated streambed, and disturbed/developed as shown on **Figure 9 – Vegetation Communities**.[7] Implementation of the proposed Project will result in permanent and temporary impacts to these vegetation communities, as shown below in **Table C – Vegetation Communities Present on the Project Site**. (WSP(a), p. 10.) Permanent impacts include the direct footprint of the Project and temporary impacts include the adjacent temporary construction disturbance buffer around the Project footprint.

Table C – –Vegetation Communities Present on the Project Site

Vegetation Community	Permanent Impacts (acres)	Temporary Impacts (acres)	Grand Total (acres)
Buckwheat Scrub	10.08	3.63	13.69
Disturbed/Developed	1.62	0.91	2.534
Non-native Grassland	6.97	4.34	11.31
Non-vegetated Streambed	0.39	0.13	0.52
Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub	0.28	0.04	0.32
Riparian Scrub Woodland	0.05	0.03	0.08
Total	**19.39**	**9.08**	**28.47**

Source: WSP(a), Table 1. *Land Use Acreage by Habitat (Vegetation Community/Land Cover)*.

According to MSHCP Consistency Report Table 1 (*Special Status Plant Species Potential for Occurrence*), a total of 13 special status plant species were identified from state and federal databases that have the potential to occur within the Project site. One plant species, Mojave tarplant (*Deinandra mohavensis*) listed as state endangered and CRPR Rank of 1B.3 (rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere but not very threatened in California) has a "low" potential to occur because marginal habitat is present on the Project site

[7] Figures for the Biological Resources section are located at the end of this section.

but it was not observed onsite during biological surveys conducted for the Project. The nearest known occurrence of Mojave tarplant is 1.6 miles southeast dating from 2012. A second plant species, smooth tarplant (*Centromadia pungens ssp. laevis*) listed as CRPR Rank 1B.1 (rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere but seriously threatened in California), has a "moderate" potential to occur because suitable habitat is present on the Project site but it was not observed during surveys conducted for the Project. The nearest known occurrence of smooth tarplant is approximately 10 miles west in San Timoteo Canyon. The remaining 11 special status plant species are considered "absent" due to lack of suitable habitat and lack of recorded observations (WSP(a)). Both Mojave tarplant and smooth tarplant are Covered Species under the MSHCP. Because the Project is not within a MSHCP-survey area for these species, and none have been found, the Project will not significantly affect the species and no additional surveys or measures are required for these two species.

In addition, one special status vegetation community was identified by state databases to potentially occur onsite, which is Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest. This vegetation community is listed by the State as CRPR rank of S3.2 (Vulnerable and threatened). According to the MSHCP Consistency Report, this vegetation community is absent from the Project (Table 2, *Special Status Vegetation Community Potential for Occurrence*).

Lastly, according to the MSHCP Consistency Report, Table 3 (*Special Status Animals*), a total of 20 special status animal species were identified from state and federal databases that have potential to occur within the Project site. The following nine species have "low" potential to occur due to lack of habitat and/or were not observed onsite: Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii)*, American bumble bee (*Bombus pensylvanicus)*, monarch butterfly (*Danaus Plexippus)*, orange-throated whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra)*, coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii)*, purple martin (*Progne subis)*, least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus)*, yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia)*, and American badger (*Taxidea taxus)*. The following four species have "moderate" potential to occur due to suitable habitat present onsite: Southern California legless lizard (*Anniella stebbinsi)*, loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus)*, Southern California rufus-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens)*, and San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia)*. One reptile species was observed on the Project site, coastal whiptail lizard (*Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri)*. The coastal whiptail lizard is listed as a CDFW Species of Special Concern (SSC) with a CRPR rank of "S3" (vulnerable). The remaining six special status species are considered "absent" from the Project site. The coastal whiptail is locally common throughout most of western Riverside County. Although observed during biological surveys on the Project site, adverse impacts to the species are not expected as a result of the Project because the drainage features will remain intact to provide wildlife corridors and allow any coastal whiptails that may be present to freely move through the site. Therefore, no further action is required for the coastal whiptail lizard.

The Project Site contains suitable nesting habitat for bird species protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Impacts to nesting birds, both direct and indirect, can be minimized or eliminated during Project-related activities by conducting work outside of the breeding season. Although nesting can occur year-round in southern California for some species, the typical avian breeding season is from approximately February 1st through August 31st. To reduce impacts to nesting birds, the Project shall implement mitigation measure **MM BIO-1**, which requires preconstruction nesting bird surveys prior to any Project-related ground disturbing activities between September 1st and January 31st.

MM BIO-1: Vegetation Clearance and Preconstruction Nesting Bird Survey. *To avoid direct and indirect impacts to nesting birds, any Project-related ground disturbance/vegetation clearance must take place between September 1 and February 1. For preconstruction nesting bird surveys, if vegetation clearance does not occur within the September 1 to February 1 timeframe, then a preconstruction nesting bird survey would be required. A qualified biologist shall conduct a nesting bird survey(s) no more than three (3) days prior to initiation of construction to document the presence or absence of nesting birds within or directly adjacent (100 feet) to the Project Site. The nesting bird survey(s) would focus on identifying any passerine or raptor nests that would be directly or indirectly affected by construction activities. If active bird nests are documented, species-specific measures shall be prepared by a qualified biologist and implemented to prevent abandonment of the active bird nest. At a minimum, grading in the vicinity of a nest shall be deterred until the young birds have fledged. A minimum exclusion buffer of 100 feet shall be maintained during construction, depending on the species and location. The perimeter of the nest setback zone shall be fenced or adequately demarcated with stakes and flagging at 20-foot intervals, and construction personnel and activities restricted from the area. A survey report by a qualified biologist verifying that no active nests are present, or that the young have fledged, shall be submitted to the City of Banning for review and approval prior to initiation of construction in the nest-setback zone. The qualified biologist shall serve as a construction monitor during those periods when construction activities occur near active nest areas to ensure that no inadvertent impacts on these nests occur. A report of the findings prepared by a qualified biologist shall be submitted to the City of Banning for approval prior to initiating construction activities.*

The Project Site is located within survey areas designated by the Western Riverside County MSHCP for the following species: Los Angeles pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris brevinasus*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), and two narrow endemic plant species, Marvin's (also known as Yucaipa) onion (*Allium marvinii*), and many-stemmed dudleya (*Dudleya multicaulis*). The Project Site also contained non-vernal pool depressions that could support fairy shrimp habitat. Thus, focused surveys for Los Angeles pocket mouse (LAPM), burrowing owl, Marvin's onion, many-stemmed dudleya, and fairy shrimp were conducted as discussed in the following paragraphs.

Los Angeles Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus longimembris brevinasus*)

LAPM is designated a species of special concern by CDFW and is not federally or state listed as threatened or endangered. Since portions of the Project Site are within the MSHCP Mammal Survey Area for the LAPM and potential habitat for this species is present, WSP conducted focused surveys as required by the MSHCP. The survey results are documented in the *LAPM Survey Report* in **Appendix B.2** to this Initial Study.

As part of the *LAPM Survey Report*, WSP biologists conducted operations over five nights from September 13-18, 2020. These nights were forecasted to have suitable conditions for surveying. A total of six grids of 25 traps were placed within those portions of the Project Site with suitable habitat that are also within the MSHCP designated survey area for LAPM (refer to **Figure 9 – Los Angeles Pocket Mouse Survey Results**). As shown below in **Table D – Los Angeles Pocket Mouse Survey Results**, a total of 583 mammals were trapped over the course of 750 trap-nights, which represents a trapping success rate of 77.7 percent. (WSP(b), p. 3.)

Table D – Los Angeles Pocket Mouse Survey Results

Species Trapped	Number of Species Trapped Each Night					
	Sept 13–14	Sept 14–15	Sept 15–16	Sept 16–17	Sept 17–18	Totals
Northwestern San Diego Pocket Mouse *Chaetodipus fallax*	13	30	38	38	40	**159**
Dulzura Kangaroo Rat *Dipodomys simulans*	4	9	8	4	10	**35**
Dulzura Kangaroo Rat *Dipodomys simulans*	1	2	0	1	2	**6**
Bryant's (San Diego Desert) Woodrat *Neotoma bryanti* (*lepida*) *intermedia*	1	1	0	1	1	**4**
Baja Mouse *Peromyscus fraterculus*	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Deer Mouse *Peromyscus maniculatus*	59	68	83	86	69	**365**
Western Harvest Mouse *Reithrodontomys megalotis*	2	3	1	4	3	**13**
Totals	**81**	**113**	**130**	**134**	**125**	**583**

Source: WSP(b), Table 2. Survey Results

As shown in the above table, seven species of mammals were captured, none of which were the LAPM. Two other species status species were captured: the northwestern San Diego pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus fallax fallax*) and the Bryant's Woodrat (*Neotoma bryanti intermedia*), formally known as the San Diego desert woodrat. Both of these species are CDFW species of special concern, and both are covered under the MSHCP. (WSP(b), p. 3.)

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

The burrowing owl is currently designated a "California Species of Concern" by the CDFW, a "Bird of Conservation Concern" by the USFWS, and "Sensitive" by the U. S. Bureau of Land Management. Burrowing owls are protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3513, and 3800, and the MSHCP. (WSP(c), p. 4.) Since the Project Site is within the MSHCP survey area for burrowing owl, WSP conducted focused surveys as required by the MSHCP and documented in the *Burrowing Owl Focused Survey Report,* which is included as **Appendix B.3** to this Initial Study.

The burrowing owl focused surveys were conducted in accordance with the two-step protocol provided by the Riverside County Transportation and Land Management Agency. Step 1 and Step 2, Part A of the protocol

were conducted on July 17, 2020. Step 1 consisted of assessing suitable habitat on the Project Site and Step 2, Part A consisted of mapping locations of burrows that would be suitable for burrowing owls. Step II, Part B consisted of focused burrow surveys conducted on four occasions, July 24, July 31, August 6, and August 12, 2020. (WSP(c), p. 4.)

As shown on **Figure 10 – Burrowing Owl Survey Results**, a total of approximately 30 burrows suitable for burrowing owl use were detected within the Project boundary and the Project's 500-foot buffer zone survey area. No evidence of burrowing owls being present at any of the burrows were detected and no owls were observed on the Project Site or within the adjacent 500-foot buffer zone survey area. It should be noted that an occupied burrow, with at least two burrowing owls was observed approximately 0.35-mile south of the eastern Project buffer zone. (WSP(c), p. 5.) Since there was suitable unoccupied habitat for burrowing owl reported within the Project Site, there is potential for burrowing owls to colonize the Project Site at any time. Therefore, prior to any Project-related ground disturbing activity, mitigation measure **MM BIO-2** shall be implemented.

> ***MM BIO-2: Burrowing Owl Survey.*** *To avoid direct and indirect impacts to burrowing owls, a qualified biologist shall conduct a minimum one visit 30-day burrowing owl preconstruction survey of all suitable habitat that is slated for any vegetation removal, grading, or other disturbance in the Project site. The burrowing owl survey shall be conducted to ensure protection for this species and compliance with the conservation goals as outlined in the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) and according to the MSHCP "Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions" dated 2006. A report of the survey findings prepared by a qualified biologist shall be submitted to the City of Banning and County of Riverside Environmental Programs Division (Riverside County EPD) for review and approval prior to any ground disturbing activities. If burrowing owls are detected on the Project Site during the 30-day preconstruction survey, and during the breeding season (February 1st to August 31st), then construction activities shall be limited to beyond 300 feet of the active burrows until a qualified biologist has confirmed that nesting efforts are competed or not initiated. In addition to monitoring breeding activity, if construction is proposed to be initiated during the breeding season or active relocation is proposed, a burrowing owl mitigation plan will be developed based on the Riverside County EPD, CDFW, and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) requirements for the relocation of individuals. Passive relocation may occur when owls are found onsite during preconstruction surveys conducted outside of the breeding season. If no owls are found onsite during the preconstruction survey, then construction may commence within 30 days without another survey.*

<u>Narrow Endemic Plant Species – Marvin's Onion (*Allium marvinii*) and Many-stemmed Dudleya (*Dudleya multicaulis*)</u>

Nearly the entire Project Site is within the MSHCP narrow endemic plant species survey area (NEPSSA) for Marvin's onion and many-stemmed dudleya (**Figure 11 – MSHCP Narrow Endemic Plan Survey Area**); thus, WSP conducted a focused survey for these species as required by the MSHCP and documented in the *NEPSSA Report,* which is included as **Appendix B.4** to this Initial Study. Marvin's onion is designated by the State as critically imperiled and by the CNPS as moderately threatened in California. Many-stemmed dudleya is

designated by the State as imperiled and by the CNPS as moderately threatened in California. (WSP(d), Table 1.)

The focused surveys were conducted on May 26 and 27, 2020, which was the appropriate time of year for the detection of Marvin's onion and many-stemmed dudleya. The surveys were conducted following a period of above average rainfall for the 2019-2020 winter season; thus, survey timing was ideal for the detection of these two target plant species. Since neither Marvin's onion nor many-stemmed dudleya were detected, both species are considered absent from the Project Site and no further surveys are required. (WSP(d), p. 4.)

Fairy Shrimp

Several species of fairy shrimp are considered sensitive by the USFWS and CDFW because of their rarity and/or association with sensitive aquatic habitats such as vernal pools. Two federally listed fairy shrimp species are known to occur within Riverside County: vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*) and Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*). No federally-designated Critical Habitat has been designated for these species in western Riverside County. A third species, Santa Rosa Plateau fairy shrimp *(Linderiella santarosae*), is an unlisted sensitive species that occurs only on the Santa Rosa Plateau of Riverside County, which is not in the Project study area.

Nine inundated depressions were identified on the Project Site as meeting the protocol criteria for pooling sufficient to support listed fairy shrimp species. Due to the presence of these depressions, wet and dry fairy shrimp focused surveys were conducted and the results documented in the Fairy Shrimp Technical Memo included as **Appendix B.5** to this Initial Study.

As documented in the *Fairy Shrimp Technical Memo*, each of the ten ponded areas shown on **Figure 12 – Fairy Shrimp Habitat** were systematically sampled by an USFWS permitted biologist per the USFWS protocol *Survey Guidelines for the Listed Large Branchiopods.* Wet season surveying began after the first storm on November 8, 2021 until the rainy season ended and the last inundated pool reached 120 days of continuous inundation on April 28, 2021. (WSP(e), p. 1.)

Dry season surveys took place on December 24, 2020 and June 8, 2021 while there were dry soils. All fairy shrimp cysts collected during the dry season were hatched in isolated environmental chambers, a total of three hatching attempts were performed, and all hatchlings were grown until mature enough to be identified. As shown below in **Table E – Fairy Shrimp Survey Results** the common, unlisted versatile fairy shrimp was detected in two pools. Because the wet and dry season surveys did not detect any special-status species of fairy shrimp, special-status fairy shrimp are considered absent from the Project Site and will not be impacted by implementation of the proposed Project. (WSP(e), p. 2.)

Table E – Fairy Shrimp Survey Results

Pool Number (see Figure 12)	Wet Season Fairy Shrimp Detected?	Dry Season Fairy Shrimp Detected?	Special Status Fairy Shrimp Detected?
3	No	No	No
9	**Yes**	**Yes**	No
14	No	No	No
15	No	No	No
16	No	No	No
21	No	No	No
33	No	No	No
40	No	No	No
41	No	No	
46	No	No	No

Source: WSP(e), Table 1. Fairy Shrimp Ponded Areas

Crotch's Bumble Bee

Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*) has been designated as an endangered species under the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List since 2014 (IUCN 2024) and is recently considered a Candidate endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act since 2019 (CDFW 2021; Hatfield and Jepsen 2021). It has not been listed as threatened or endangered by either the USFWS or CDFW.

Crotch's bumble bee primarily occurs in California's pacific coast, western desert, and adjacent foothills throughout most of the state's southwestern region, where it inhabits grasslands and shrublands and requires a hotter and drier environment than other bumble bee species. Overwintering occurs in soil or under leaf litter/debris. The bees nest in various cavities and forage on a number of annual flowers, including plants in the following floristic families: Fabaceae, Apocynaceae, Asteraceae, Lamiaceae, Boraginaceae, and Hydrophyllaceae. Genera include Antirrhinum, Asclepias, Chaenactis, Clarkia, Dendromecon, Eschscholzia, Eriogonum, Lupinus, Medicago, Phacelia, and Salvia (Hatfield et al. 2018).

Worker bees are typically active from April to August and queen bees are generally active for only two months, from February through March. Once the queen selects the hive location, the active colony is detectable between April and August. Notably, bumble bees move nests sites each year. Crotch's bumble bees require flowering plants for the entire activity period to be considered suitable for an active hive.

Because the Crotch's bumble bee is a candidate endangered species according to the California Endangered Species Act and can potentially occur in the Project area especially if there are suitable flowering plants available, the Project has the potential to adversely impact said species. Therefore, focused surveys and records searches shall be conducted according to mitigation measure **MM BIO-3** and a worker's environmental awareness program (WEAP) shall be provided according to **MM BIO-4.**

MM BIO-3: Crotch's Bumble Bee Survey and Construction Monitoring. *In order to avoid direct and indirect impacts to Crotch's bumble bee (CBB) which could be present in flowering habitat or in burrows along the creek embankments, a qualified CBB biologist (i.e., 1-2 years of experience performing CBB surveys, or, has a Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] with CDFW), shall perform the records searches and site surveys according to the Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act Candidate Bumble Bee Species (CDFW 2023) prior to the start of ground-disturbing project activities. The literature review and records search shall identify occurrences at the Project site and within a 5-mile buffer. The literature review and records search shall include: a report from the CDFW California Natural Diversity Data Base for a 10-mile radius of the project site; aerial photographs; and iNaturalist for bee sightings and nectar sources. Then, the qualified biologist shall conduct on-site surveys for foraging and nesting bees. The surveys shall begin with a habitat assessment to evaluate the likelihood of bumble bees occurring within and adjacent to the project area. Then, foraging bumble bee and nesting surveys shall be conducted during the peak nectar blooming period (April through June 30). Habitat assessment and survey results shall be submitted to CDFW prior to the start of ground-disturbing project activities. Vegetation removal is allowable from November to January (note seasonal limitations for nesting birds in MM BIO-1). No monitoring is required if removal of vegetation occurs during this time period. However, vegetation removal/ground disturbances during the CBB flight season, which is February to October, will require preemptive focused CBB surveys and full-time biological monitoring for CBB to take place within the project limits. Construction monitoring for CBB may cease based on the professional judgement of the qualified CBB biologist that construction activities have already impacted the extent of the planned impact footprint. If an active CBB nest is detected during focused surveys conducted between April and June, or during the construction monitoring, then the qualified biologist shall establish a no-disturbance buffer zone (including foraging resources and flight corridors essential for supporting the colony) around the CBB nest. The qualified biologist and City shall notify CDFW and if needed, process an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) with CDFW. If a single CBB is observed during construction, CDFW shall be notified, and work shall be halted in that area until the qualified biologist deems the CBB has left the site. It is expected that if an ITP is needed, that the offsite mitigation site along Smith Creek proposed by MM BIO-5, which has similar habitat types and embankments, could support CBB. If offsite mitigation for CBB is needed, then a CBB permitted land manager shall be hired by the City to ensure CBB habitat is intact on the offsite mitigation property.*

MM BIO-4: Biological Worker's Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP): *The City of Banning shall enlist a qualified biologist to conduct a mandatory training for all construction contractors and their employees on project-related environmental concerns, including Crotch's bumble bee, burrowing owl, pertinent rare plant species, and riparian/riverine features. To the extent feasible, the biologist conducting the WEAP shall be the same one enlisted by the City for MM BIO-1 (nesting bird surveys), MM BIO-2 (burrowing owl surveys), and MM BIO-3 (Crotch's bumble bee surveys). This WEAP can occur during the same meeting as the paleontological WEAP described in MM GEO-1.*

Thus, with implementation of **MM BIO-1, MM BIO-2**, **MM BIO-3**, and **MM BIO-4** the proposed Project will not have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modification, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant with mitigation.

Sources: WSP(a); WSP(b); WSP(c); WSP(d); WSP(e)

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

Less than significant impact with mitigation. According to the *MSHCP Consistency Report*, no vernal pools were detected on the Project Site; however, riparian/riverine areas were detected on the Project Site consisting of three existing ephemeral drainages: Highland Wash, Smith Creek, and Pershing Creek, as well as six existing pipe culverts under Westward Avenue (pipes of varying diameters) as riverine resources (WSP(a), p. 13). So that the proposed road can pass over the ephemeral drainages, the Project will utilize series of 6 to 7 reinforced concrete boxes (RCBs) that are each 14-feet wide and 10-feet tall in each drainage to maintain the flow passing through these drainages.

<u>Highland Wash</u>

Highland Wash is an ephemeral drainage containing riparian and riverine resources that flows from north to south and crosses perpendicular to the Project Site. Flow originates from north of Interstate 10 and from the Sun Lakes community immediately northwest of the Project. Within Project boundaries, Highland Wash contains an active low flow channel with an adjacent active floodplain that is bordered on the west with low terraces and on the east with incised channel walls that are both bordered by uplands. The active low-flow channel is 12 inches wide with a silty/sandy bed and no vegetation within the Project area. Evidence of flows were identified by benches and drift. The adjacent active floodplains varies from roughly 3-feet to 15-feet wide and evidenced by a more pebbly substrate then the low flow channel as well as ripples, older drift, presence of bed and bank, benches and no vegetation. The ordinary high-water mark (OHWM) is approximately 8-inches and indicated by a break in slope and change in vegetative cover from active floodplain to low terrace. The low terrace borders the floodplain on the west with midstage upland vegetation consisting of California buckwheat that uniformly dominates the drainage area from the low terrace to the nearby hill tops. The outer limit of the low terrace is characterized by a higher vegetative density of buckwheat and marks the limit of potential CDFW jurisdiction.

Highland Wash likely flows for less than 3 months per year and therefore does not have permanent flow and would not be considered USACE jurisdictional. Highland Wash joins with Smith Creek at Westward Avenue. (WSP(a), p. 11.)

<u>Smith Creek</u>

Smith Creek is an ephemeral drainage containing riparian and riverine resources that flows north to south and crosses perpendicular to the proposed Project. Smith Creek is east of Highland Wash. Flow to Smith Creek originates from a large watershed north of I-10. Within the Project boundaries, Smith Creek contains an active low flow channel with adjacent active floodplain that is bordered with low terraces. The active low-flow

channel is approximately 8 inches wide with a silty/sandy bed and no vegetation. Evidence of flows were identified by benches and drift. The adjacent active floodplain is on average 20-feet wide and the limits of which evidenced by a more pebbly substrate then the low flow channel, as well as ripples, older drift, presence of bed and bank, benches, and limited pockets of early-stage vegetation. OHWM is approximately 6-inches and indicated by a break in slope and changes in vegetative cover and sediment texture from active floodplain to low terrace. The low terrace borders the floodplain on the west with late-stage upland vegetation consisting mostly of California buckwheat that uniformly dominates the drainage area from the low terrace to the nearby hill tops. The outer limit of the low terrace is characterized by change in slope and a higher vegetative density of California buckwheat and marks the limit of potential CDFW jurisdiction.

Smith Creek likely flows for less than 3 months per year and therefore does not have permanent flow and would not be considered USACE jurisdictional. Highland Wash joins with Smith Creek at Westward Avenue. Smith Creek is tributary to San Gorgonio Creek, which is tributary to the Whitewater River.

Pershing Creek

Pershing Creek is a wide ephemeral drainage located east of Smith Creek that contains riparian and riverine resources and flows from north to south to cross perpendicular to the Project Site. Flows to Pershing Creek originate from north of I-10. In the area of the Project, Pershing Creek splits around an island approximately 0.24-acre in size of Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub into two sets of active low flow channels with adjacent active floodplains. The Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub is dominated by scale broom. The active low flow channels are approximately 10-inches wide in the Project area with a fine sandy bed and no vegetation. Evidence of flows were identified by benches and ripples present in the project area. The active floodplain is on average 38-feet wide and bordered by short low terraces that are bordered by steep embankments that are roughly 20-feet high to the east and west of the creek. One mature eucalyptus tree (*Eucalyptus species*) on the far westerly bank is also within the Project area. The active floodplain is evidenced by a more sandy/pebbly substrate then the low flow channel, as well as older drift, mud cracks, and early-stage vegetation of buckwheat and annual filarees (*Erodium* species). OHWM is approximately 10-inches and indicated by break in slope and changes in vegetative cover and sediment texture from active floodplain to low terrace. The low terrace borders the floodplain on the west with silty soil and 95% cover of late-stage upland vegetation consisting of California buckwheat that uniformly dominates the drainage area from the low terrace to the nearby hill tops. The outer limit of the low terrace on the east side of the creek is characterized by a change in slope and higher vegetative density of buckwheat and marks the limit of potential CDFW jurisdiction. The outer limit on the west side of the creek is characterized by a near-vertical incised channel bank.

Pershing Creek likely flows for less than 3 months per year and therefore does not have permanent flow and would not be considered USACE jurisdictional. Pershing Creek merges with Smith Creek far downstream of the Project limits.

Existing Pipe Culverts under Westward Avenue

A total of six pipe culverts are currently located under Westward Avenue where Smith Creek, Pershing Creek and Highland Wash cross Westward Avenue. The culverts are metal pipes of varying diameters ranging from 18-inches to 54-inches. The collective footprint of the pipes account for approximately 0.02 acre of the Project

site. They are considered riverine resources. The existing pipe culverts will be left in place and remain functional after the Project is completed to continue conveying low flows. They were not included in the hydraulic modeling conducted for the Project (Appendix F) as a conservative measure. Therefore, these pipe culverts are not considered to be impacted by Project implementation.

MSHCP riverine resources of this Project are inclusive of areas that are also potentially jurisdictional (regulable) by the RWQCB as Waters of the State according to Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and the CDFW as streambed according to California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 *et seq*. . According to the *JD Report* that is provided in **Appendix B.8** of this Initial Study, the Project will result in direct, permanent impacts to 0.37-acre of CDFW/RWQCB jurisdiction and 0.09-acre of temporary impacts to CDFW/RWQCB jurisdiction (p. 6-1). Impacted resources consist of only non-wetland waters. CDFW/RWQCB jurisdiction represents Waters of the State and CDFW Streambed, which are coterminous in the Project area. Impacts to CDFW and RWQCB jurisdiction will require permits from these agencies; specifically, a Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFW and a Waste Discharge Requirement permit from RWQCB. Based on the current definition of Waters of the U.S., the Project will not impact Waters of the U.S. and will therefore not require a Section 404 permit from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. No riparian vegetation is present.

Permanent impacts to jurisdictional resources and MSHCP Riparian/Riverine resources would result from the direct, permanent footprint of the Project that cannot be returned to pre-existing conditions and areas that must be maintained on an ongoing basis as well as temporary impacts within the temporary construction buffer which can be returned to pre-existing conditions around the permanent impact footprint.
The MSHCP Riverine features function as conveyance for storm water flows mostly during high storm events. The historical importance of the Project drainages has been to convey sediment as well downstream into the Whitewater watershed. The sediment flows into the desert areas is an important source of sediment and sand needed for the aeolian and other natural processes that support sensitive species. Over time, the sediment conveyance in Pershing, Smith and Highland Creeks has been diminished due many compounding factors. Therefore, when looking at the impacts of the Project and the proposed RCB crossings, care was taken to consider the need to not significantly affect the sediment transfer along with flood flows with implementation of the Project. The functions and values of the Project drainage crossings and the surrounding upland areas include absorption and the gradual release of water into downstream areas. The topography and vegetation in the Project Site drainages also provide cover and corridors for the shelter and movement of wildlife.

Regarding sediment transport, the proposed RCBs and retention of existing pipe culverts within Westward Avenue will be such that sediment transport and wildlife movement functions and values will be retained. To arrive at the proposed RCB design, an iterative process was undertaken to achieve a design that would have an insignificant change in the water surface elevation and velocity upstream and downstream of the proposed RCB culverts as compared to the pre-project condition. The design will not improve nor worsen the existing flow of sediment occurring in the Project area (NHC, p. 7). Therefore, if a rainfall event occurs that is large enough to transport sediment, the Project will not inhibit that from happening in the future post-construction condition. Where impacts are unavoidable, the design maintains the existing hydrologic regime including flood flows, and sediment transport. Based on the analysis by NHC, the Project effects on downstream functions will be insignificant and they will continue as they currently do, meaning, erosion or accretion that occurs

outside of the Project within Highland Wash, Smith Creek, or Pershing Creek will not change as a result of the Project. Offsite erosion or accretions in said creeks are the result of other actions unrelated to the Project for which the City plans to address separately from this Project.

Impacts to jurisdictional resources resulting from Project implementation are presented below in **Table F – Riparian/Riverine and Jurisdictional Impacts** and shown on **Figures 13a through 13c – Aquatic Resources.**

Table F– Riparian/Riverine and Jurisdictional Impacts

Name of Potentially Jurisdictional Feature	Riparian/Riverine and CDFW/RWQCB		
	Permanent Impacts (acres)	Temporary Impacts (acres)	Length (feet)
Highland Wash (Creek Crossing No. 1)	0.1	0.01	394 / 61
Smith Creek (Creek Crossing No. 2)	0.08	0.04	128 / 65
Pershing Creek (Creek Crossing No. 3)	0.2	0.03	230 / 72
Total	**0.37**	**0.09**	**748 / 187**

Source: WSP(a), Table 2. Project site Riparian/Riverine Impacts

CDFW/RWQCB jurisdiction and the Riparian/Riverine area are coterminus.

As shown in **Table F,** potentially jurisdictional features and MSHCP Riparian/Riverine features would be impacted with Project implementation. According to the *DBESP Report* prepared for impacts to Riparian/Riverine resources that is in **Appendix B.7** of this Initial Study, mitigation is required for impacts to Riparian/Riverine resources. Because jurisdictional resources are within the Riparian/Riverine, mitigation for one resource can also mitigate for the other. Thus, the Project will implement mitigation measure **MM BIO-5** and place land into permanent conservation as mitigation for riparian/riverine and jurisdictional impacts. The City intends to purchase land or conserve and enhance existing city land within the Whitewater Watershed, along Smith Creek which would be placed into a conservation easement or have a deed restriction and protected in perpetuity with a non-wasting endowment. The land will be managed by a third-party land manager such as Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA), Rivers and Lands Conservancy (RLC) or Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD). The conservation land will contain similar habitat to the Project site and provide similar or superior function and habitat value. Currently, the Project site has relatively unvegetated, sandy bottom, riverine habitat. Any mitigation areas that contain riparian habitat would be considered superior habitat.

Permanent impacts will be mitigated at a 3:1 ratio (3 x 0.37 acre = 1.11 acres) and temporary impacts will be mitigated at a 2:1 ratio (2 x 0.09 acre = 0.18 acre). The total mitigation acreage should equal or surpass 1.3 acres. The primary method of mitigation will be offsite conservation and enhancement of City owned property located along Smith Creek. The City will place at least 1.3 acres into a Conservation Easement with an

approved third-party conservation holder such as RCA, RLC or IERCD. Additionally, the City has committed to participating in a regional solution of the sediment transport function of the Smith Creek watershed. The intended outcome of this regional solution is to bring the various stakeholders in this watershed together to work on a sediment management strategy to ensure sediment is transported efficiently and effectively to support ecological resources. The City's commitment to this regional solution will serve as providing rehabilitation credits to the overall impacts from this Project.
The project will also return temporary impact areas to their pre-existing contours and revegetate them with appropriate native species. The project will also mitigate and/or minimize impacts by following MSHCP Section 6.1.4 Urban Wildlands Interface Guidelines and MSHCP Volume I, Appendix C Standard Best Management Practices (BMPs) (WSP(f), p. 14).

Through the conservation of biologically equivalent or superior land and the City's participation in a regional solution to Smith Creek sediment transport functions, the Project would have a less than significant impact on riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by CDFW or USFWS.

> ***MM BIO-5: Mitigation for Riparian/Riverine and Jurisdictional Impacts.*** *In order to mitigate 0.37 acre of permanent impacts and 0.09 acre of temporary impacts to riparian/riverine waters and jurisdictional impacts to Waters of the State and CDFW Streambed, the City of Banning shall purchase land or conserve and enhance existing City-owned land that is within the Whitewater Watershed along Smith Creek, which would be placed in a conservation easement or deed restriction and protected in perpetuity with a non-wasting endowment. The land shall be managed by a third-party land manager such as Rivers and Lands Conservancy, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District, or Regional Conservation Authority. The amount of land preserved for permanent impacts will be based on a 3:1 ratio (3 x 0.37 acre = 1.11 acres) and for temporary impacts at a 2:1 ratio (2 x 0.09 acre = 0.18 acre) for a total mitigation area of no less than 1.3-acres. In addition, the City has committed to participating in a regional solution of the sediment transport function of the Smith Creek watershed. The intended outcome of this regional solution is to bring the various stakeholders in this watershed together to work on a sediment management strategy to ensure sediment is transported efficiently and effectively to support ecological resources. The City's commitment to this regional solution will serve as providing rehabilitation credits to the overall impacts from this Project. The Project shall also return temporary impact areas to their pre-existing contours and revegetate them with appropriate native species. Project construction shall also follow MSHCP Volume I, Appendix C Standard Best Management Practices and MSHCP Section 6.1.4 Urban Wildlands Interface Guidelines.*

With implementation of the design of the RCB culverts to provide consistency in the duration and volume of water and sediment being transported after Project implement to existing conditions, as well as through implementation of **MM BIO-5** to provide land conservation in exchange for the permanent and temporary impacts, along with the restoration of temporary impact areas, impacts are considered less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Sources: WSP(a); WSP(c); WSP(f)

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Less than significant impact. The site investigations conducted as part of the *JD Report* found no evidence of wetlands, as reported on Table C above. (WSP(g), p. 3-2). The aforementioned fairy shrimp sampling points are isolated depressional features that are not hydrologically connected to a jurisdictional drainage feature and are likely only ponded for a short duration of time. In addition, because none of the aforementioned fairy shrimp sampling points were observed to develop vernal pool vegetation parameters over the 2020-2021 survey period, no vernal pools are present in the Project (WSP(a), p. 21). Thus, the fairy shrimp sampling points were considered but not included in the delineation and are therefore not considered within potentially jurisdictional areas.

As discussed in Response IVb. and shown in **Table F – Riparian/Riverine Impacts** and on **Figures 13a through 13c – Aquatic Resources**, Project implementation will result in temporary and permanent impacts to potentially jurisdictional features located in Highland Wash, Smith Creek, and Pershing Creek that would be considered potentially jurisdictional by the RWQCB and CDFW, but do not support wetlands. Therefore, in addition to compliance with mitigation measure **MM BIO-3** to address impacts to riverine and non-wetland jurisdictional impacts, the Project shall obtain regulatory permits from the RWQCB and CDFW prior to starting construction within any potentially jurisdictional areas. However, since no wetlands were identified in the Project footprint, impacts to wetlands is considered less than significant and no mitigation is needed.

Source: WSP(g)

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?

Less than significant impact. The Project Site is located within The Pass Area Plan of the MSHCP. The Project Site is not located within a MSHCP criteria area cell, group, or linkage area. Therefore, no Habitat Evaluation and Acquisition Negotiation Strategy (HANS) or Joint Project Review (JPR) is required. (WSP(a), p. i.) There are no native wildlife nursery sites within proximity to the Project site. THere is no contemplated MSHCP Conservaiton areas near or adjacent to the Project alignment. The use of the extremely incised drainage channels makes it difficult for wildlife to move from upland areas into the drainages, but the Project's RCB culvert design allows for multiple options for wildlife in the drainages to move through them to the other side. Therefore, since there are no designed or planned areas for movement of wildlife, wildlife corridors, or the use of native wildlife nursery sites on Site, and since the Project does include multiple box culverts so that wildlife can pass under the roadway, impacts to wildlife movement is considered less than significant.

Source: WSP(a)

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

Less than significant impact. As shown in **Table C – Vegetation Communities Present on the Project Site** and on **Figure 9 – Vegetation Communities,** the Project Site includes vegetation communities that could potentially contain tree species. Additionally, one mature eucalyptus tree (*Eucalyptus species*) was observed

on the far westerly bank of Pershing Creek that would be removed as part of Project implementation. (WSP(a), p. 12.)

City of Banning Municipal Code Section 17.32.060, "Removal or destruction of trees" is not applicable to capital projects. Therefore, Project implementation would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance and therefore, impacts are less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; BMC; WSP(a)

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?

Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated. Because the City is a Permittee to the MSHCP, it must therefore ensure that all projects comply with MSHCP Sections 6.1.2 (Protection of Species within Riparian/Riverine Areas and Vernal Pools), 6.1.3 (Protection of Narrow Endemic Plant Species), 6.1.4 (Urban Wildlands Interface), 6.3.2 (Additional Survey Needs and Procedures), Appendix C (Standard Best Management Practices), and 7.5.3 (Construction Guidelines). To measure the Project's consistency with the MSHCP, the *MSHCP Consistency Report* was prepared along with focused surveys for burrowing owl, native endemic plants, and LAPM, which determined impacts would occur to Section 6.1.2 resources (Riparian/Riverine) and thus triggered the need for the *DBESP Report* to describe mitigation for said impacts. The Project Site is not located within, nor adjacent to a MSHCP Conservation Area, which means the MSHCP did not plan for the Project Site to be placed into conservation in the future.

According to the *DBESP Report*, impacts to Section 6.1.2 of the MSHCP Riverine resources as shown in **Table F – Jurisdictional and Riparian/Riverine Impacts** and on **Figures 13a through Figure 13c – Aquatic Resources.** No surface water or sufficiently sized tracts of habitat are present, and therefore no riparian bird surveys were conducted, and they are not expected to occur (WSP(f), p. 7). The Riverine impacts from the Project will be mitigated pursuant to **MM BIO-5** with the purchase and conservation of land that is within the Whitewater Watershed along Smith Creek, which would be placed in a conservation easement or deed restriction and protected in perpetuity with a non-wasting endowment. The land shall be managed by a third-party land manager such as RLC, IERCD, or RCA. The amount of land preserved for permanent impacts will be based on a 3:1 ratio (3 x 0.37 acre = 1.11 acres) and for temporary impacts at a 2:1 ratio (2 x 0.09 acre = 0.18 acre) for a total mitigation area of no less than 1.3-acres. In addition, the City has committed to participating in a regional solution of the sediment transport function of the Smith Creek watershed. The intended outcome of this regional solution is to bring the various stakeholders in this watershed together to work on a sediment management strategy to ensure sediment is transported efficiently and effectively to support ecological resources. The City's commitment to this regional solution will serve as providing rehabilitation credits to the overall impacts from this Project. The Project shall also return temporary impact areas to their pre-existing contours and revegetate them with appropriate native species. Project construction shall also follow MSHCP Volume I, Appendix C Standard Best Management Practices and MSHCP Section 6.1.4 Urban Wildlands Interface Guidelines. Through implementation of mitigation, impacts to Section 6.1.2 MSHCP riverine resources will be less than significant.

As discussed in Response IVa, wet and dry fairy shrimp focused surveys were conducted in 10 inundated depressions on the Project Site (WSP(e)). As shown in **Table E – Fairy Shrimp Survey Results** and **on Figure 12 – Fairy Shrimp Habitat**, the common, unlisted versatile fairy shrimp was detected in one pool (Pool No. 9). Because listed fairy shrimp of special concern were not found in any sampled ponds, no further action including mitigation is required for fairy shrimp. In addition, the fairy shrimp habitat was barren or dominated by non-native weedy plants and occurred in compacted soil in road ruts and other human alterations of the environment, which impeded drainage (WSP(f), p. 7). Over the course of the fairy shrimp surveys, no vernal pool indicators were observed to develop in the fairy shrimp sampling ponds (WSP(a), p. 21).

Section 6.1.3 of the MSHCP requires assessments of sites that are in the designated survey area for narrow endemic plant species to be completed. As discussed in Response IVa and shown on **Figure 11 – MSHCP Narrow Endemic Plan Survey Area**, nearly the entire Project Site is within the MSHCP NEPSSA for Marvin's onion and many-stemmed dudleya. Focused surveys were conducted for these species, which determined they are not present on the Project Site and no further action is required. Therefore, the proposed Project will not conflict with MSHCP Section 6.1.3.

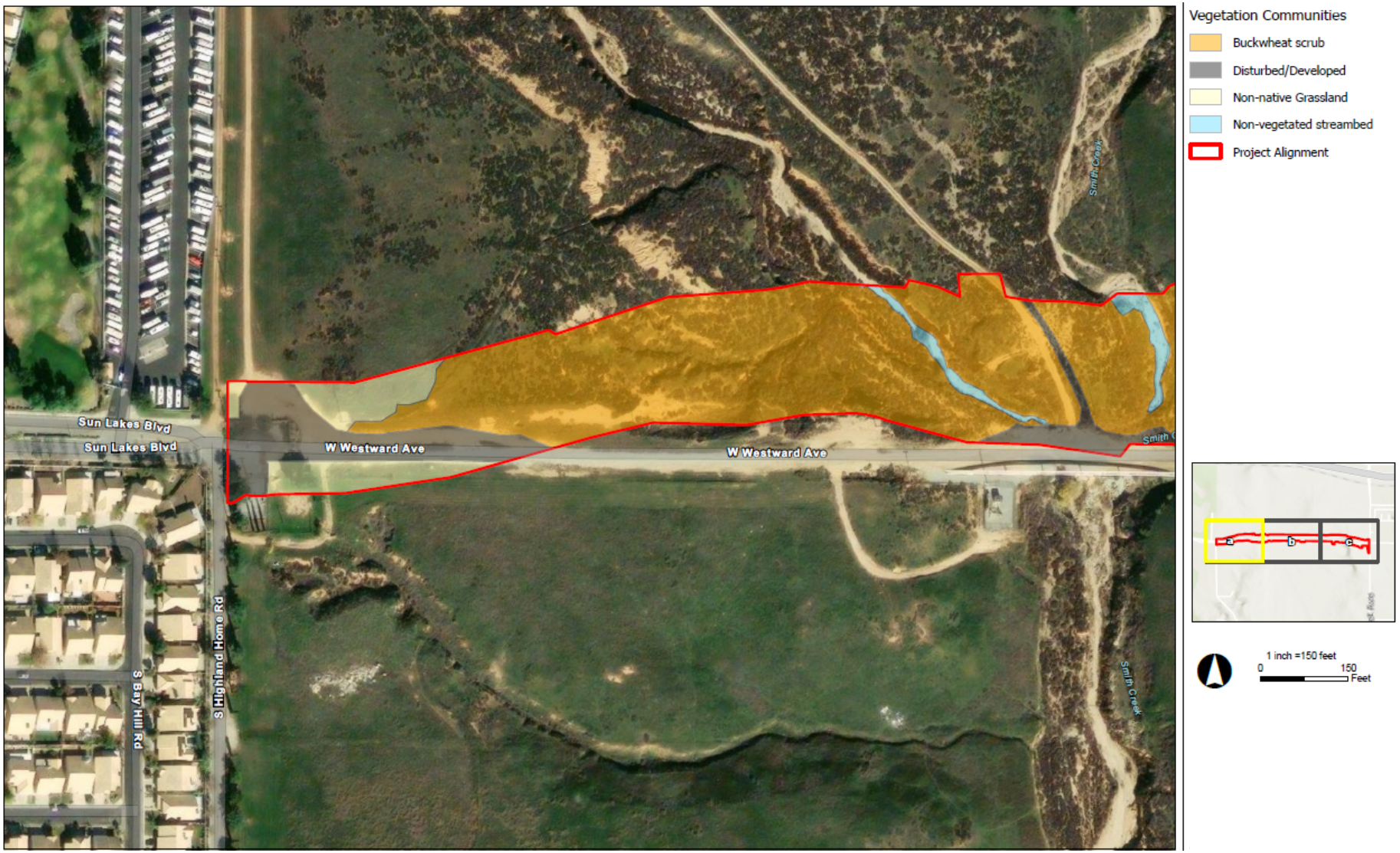
Section 6.1.4 of the MSHCP outlines the minimization of indirect effects associated with locating development in proximity to a MSHCP Conservation Area. Because the Project Site is not located in proximity to a MSHCP Conservation Area, the Project will not conflict with MSHCP Section 6.1.4.

Section 6.3.2 of the MSHCP requires additional surveys for certain species depending upon the location of a given project. The Project Site is not located within an MSHCP-designated criteria area species survey area for plants or amphibians; therefore, no surveys are needed for these species. As discussed in Response IVa, the Project Site is within a mammal survey area for LAPM (refer to **Figure 9 – LAPM Survey Results**) and burrowing owl survey area (refer to **Figure 10 – Burrowing Owl Survey Results**); thus, focused surveys were conducted for these species (WSP(b), p. 2 and WSP(c), p. 4). The results of the surveys were negative for LAPM and burrowing owl and no additional surveys are necessary for LAPM; however, a pre-construction survey for burrowing owl will be required as stated in **MM BIO-2**. Through implementation of mitigation measures, the Project will not conflict with MSHCP Section 6.3.2.

The MSHCP lists standard best management practices (Appendix C) and guidelines to be implemented during project construction (Section 7.5.3) that will minimize potential impacts to sensitive habitats in the vicinity of a project. The guidelines relate to water pollution and erosion control, equipment storage, fueling, staging, dust control, exotic plant control, and timing of construction. The Project applicant is required to implement measures from Appendix C and Section 7.5.3 of the MSHCP. will address potential construction impacts to nesting birds and burrowing owl. Thus, with mitigation the proposed Project is consistent with MSHCP Appendix C and Section 7.5.3.

Therefore, through implementation of Appendix C and Section 7.5.3 of the MSHCP as well as mitigation measures **MM BIO-1** through **MM BIO-5,** the proposed Project will not conflict with the provisions of an adopted conservation plan and impacts will be less than significant with mitigation.

Sources: WSP(a); WSP(b), WSP(c), WSP(d), WSP(e), WSP(f), WSP(g)



H:\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\IS 2024 Bio\IS 2024 Bio.aprx Map created 16 Jul 2024

Source: WSP MSHCP Report

Figure 9a - Vegetation Communities

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES

H:\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\IS 2024 Bio\IS 2024 Bio.aprx Map created 16 Jul 2024

Source: WSP MSHCP Report

Figure 9b - Vegetation Communities

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES

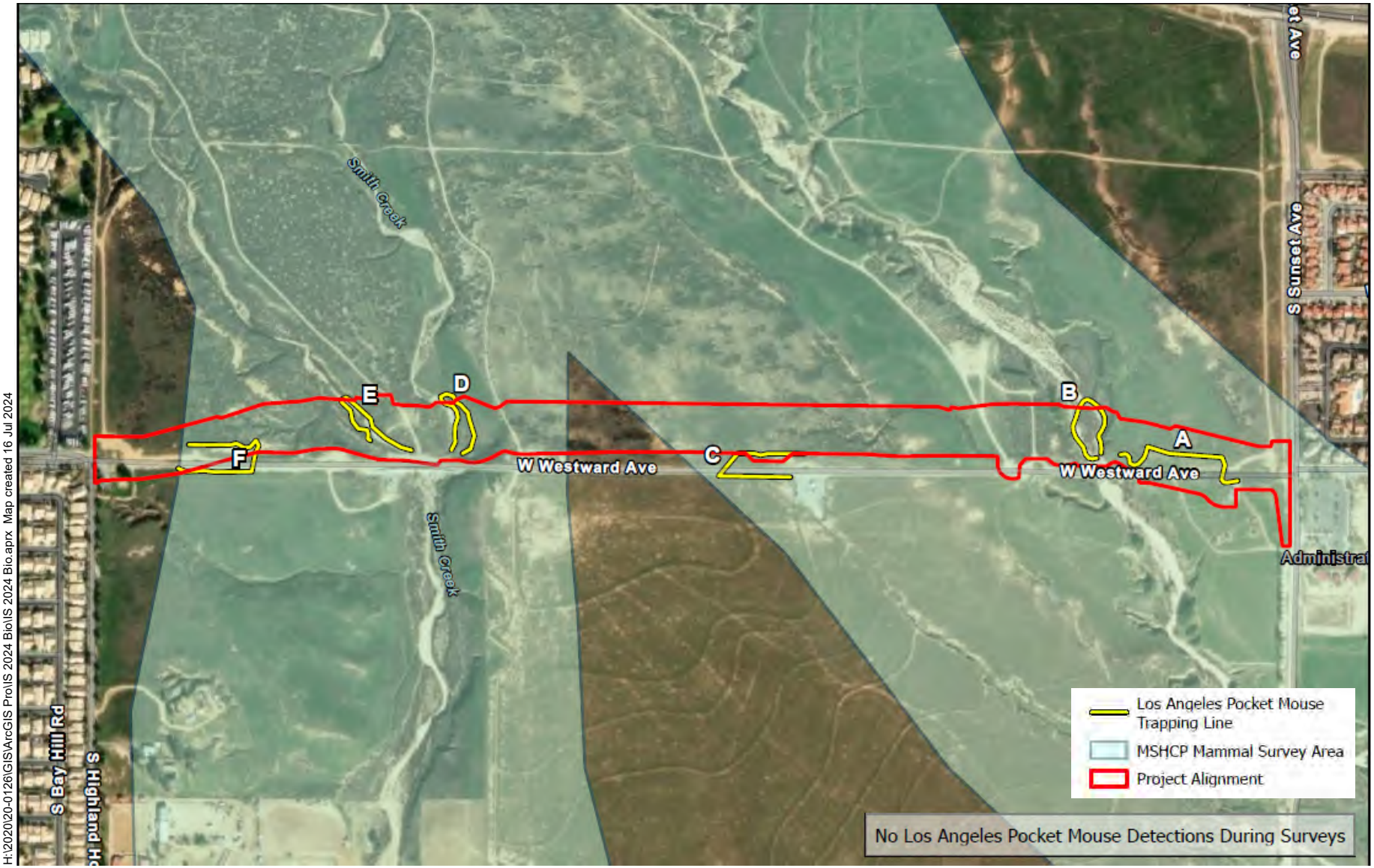
H:\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\IS 2024 Bio\IS 2024 Bio.aprx Map created 16 Jul 2024

Source: WSP MSHCP Report

Figure 9c - Vegetation Communities

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



H:\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\IS 2024 Bio\IS 2024 Bio.aprx Map created 16 Jul 2024

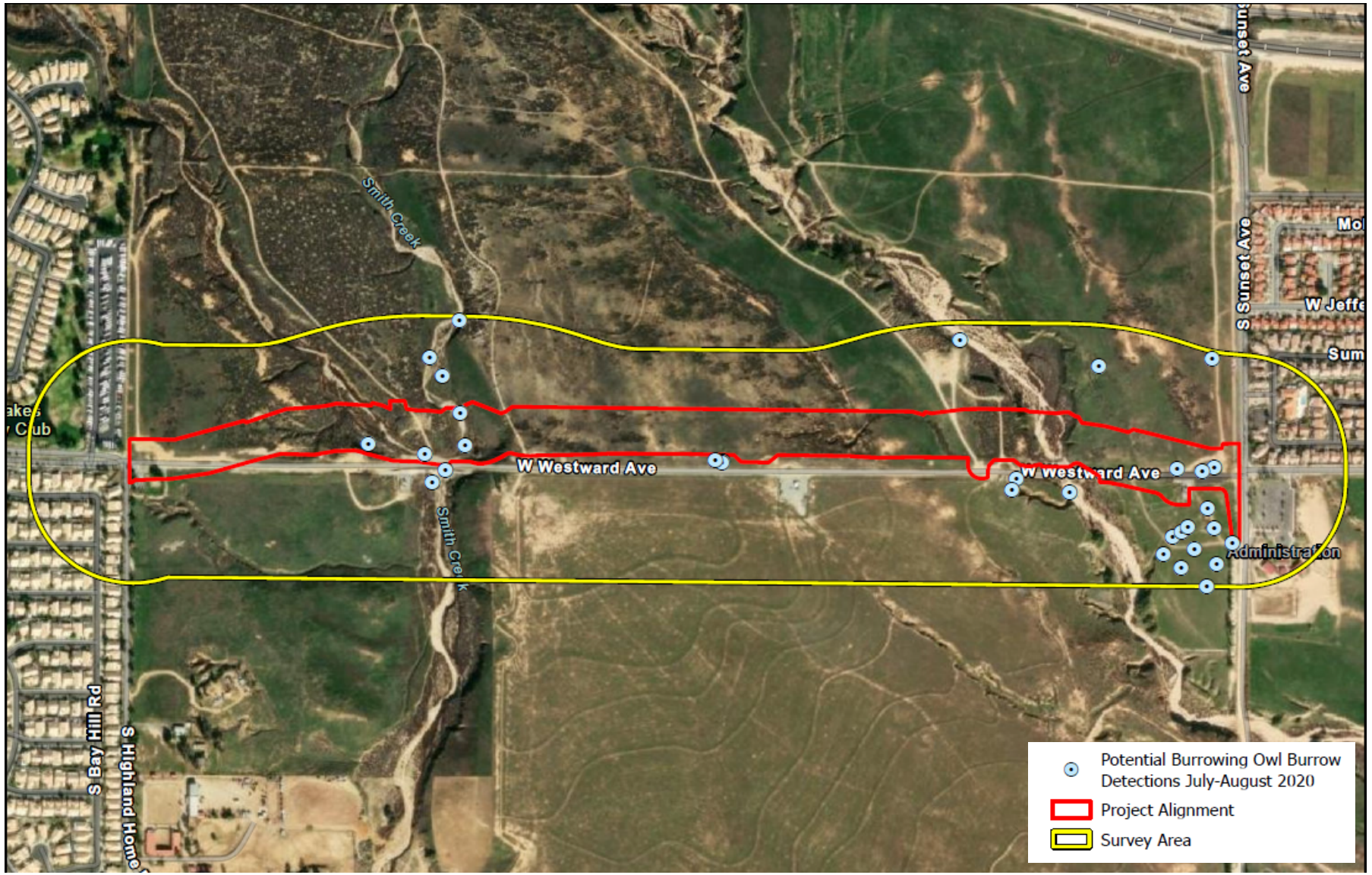
Source: WSP LAPM

1 inch =600 feet
0 300 600
Feet

Figure 10 - Los Angeles Pocket Mouse Survey Results

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



H:\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\IS 2024 Bio\IS 2024 Bio.aprx Map created 16 Jul 2024

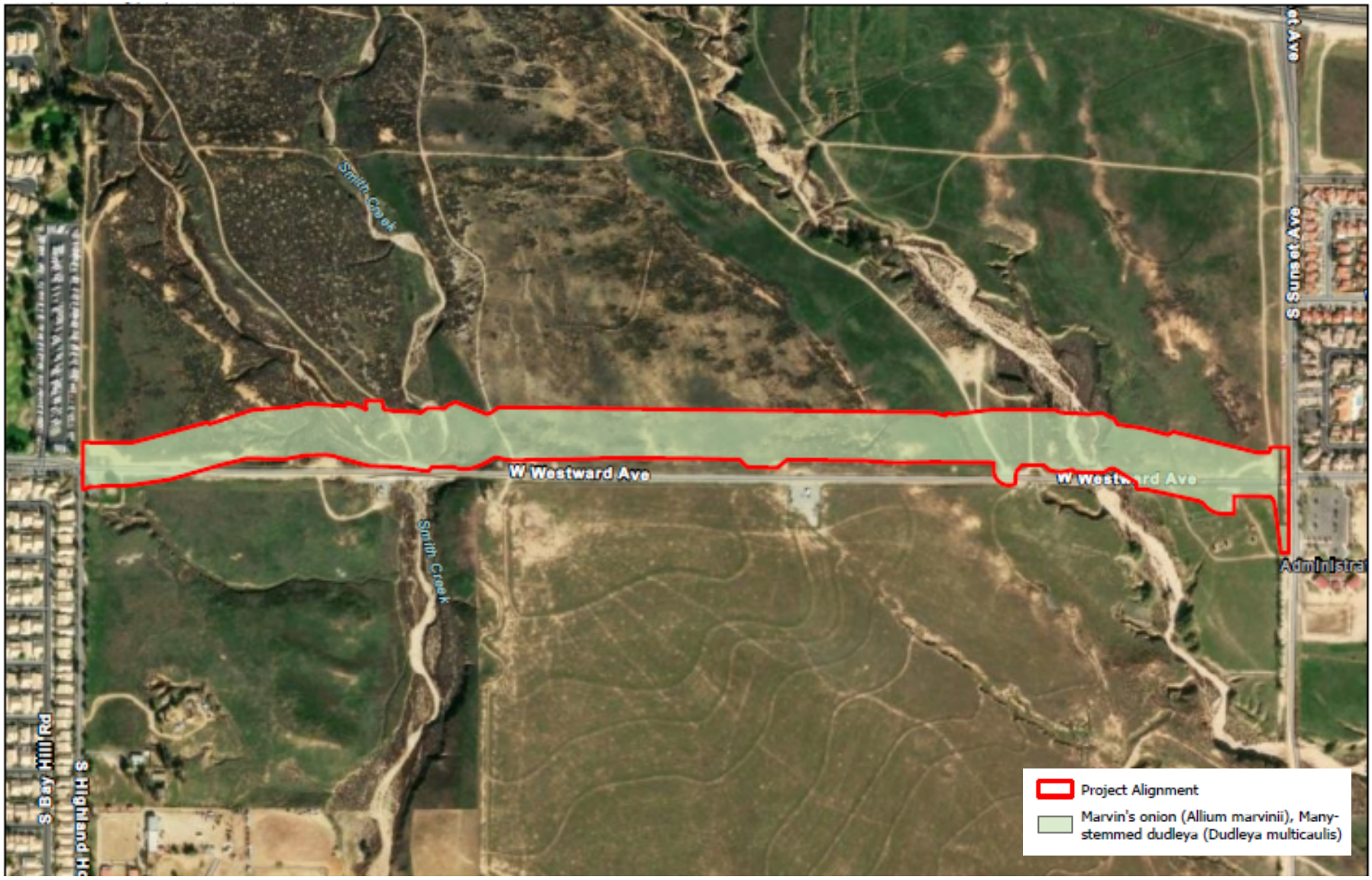
Source: WSP BUOW Report

1 inch =650 feet
0 325 650
Feet

Figure 11 - Burrowing Owl Survey Results

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



H:\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\IS 2024 Bio\IS 2024 Bio.aprx Map created 16 Jul 2024

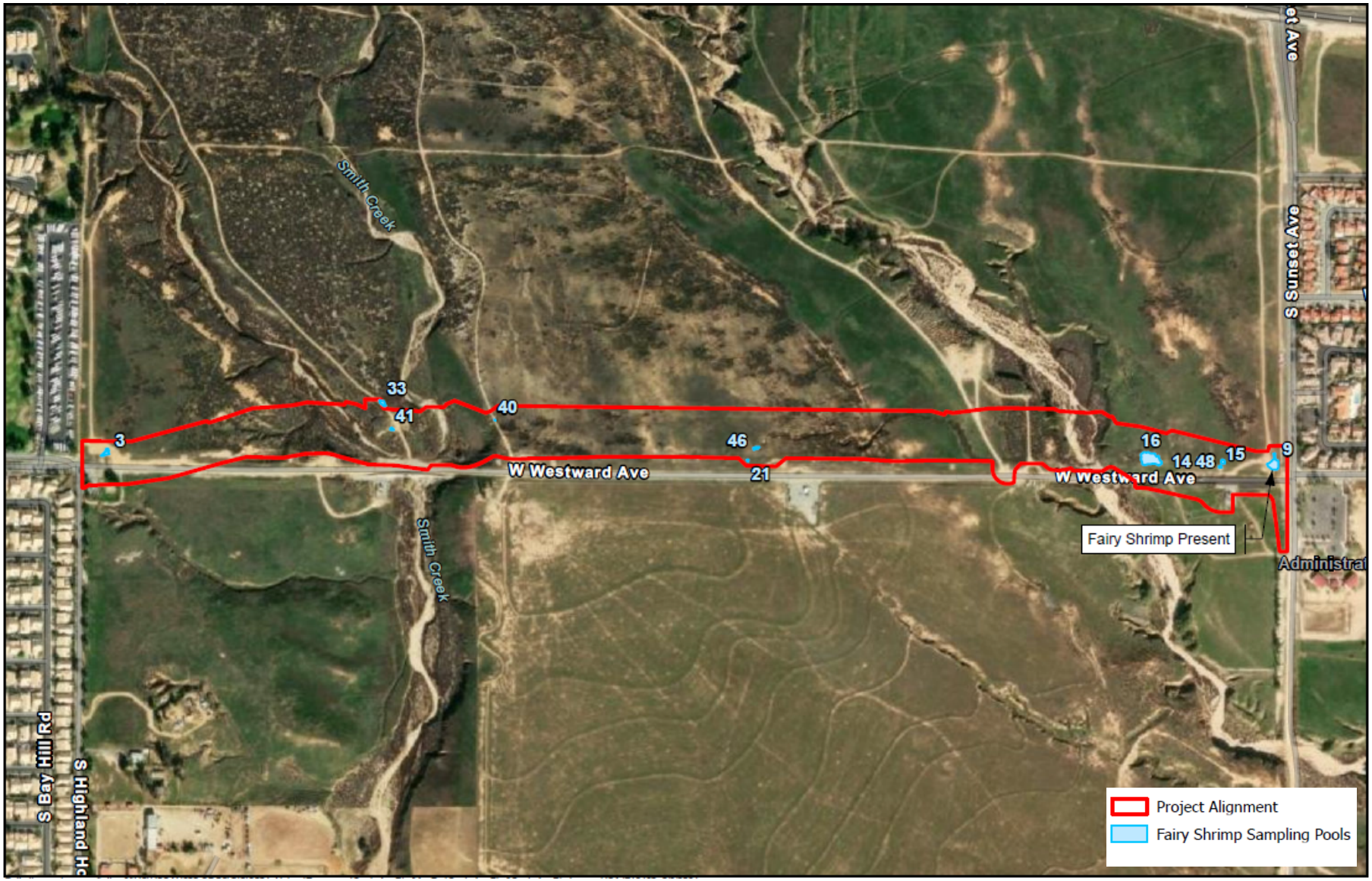
Source: WSP Rare Plant Report

1 inch =600 feet
0 300 600 Feet

Figure 12 - MSHCP Narrow Endemic Plants Survey Area

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES



H:\2020\20-0126\GIS\ArcGIS Pro\IS 2024 Bio\IS 2024 Bio.aprx Map created 16 Jul 2024

Source: WSP Fairy Shrimp Report

1 inch =600 feet
0 300 600
Feet

Figure 13 - Fairy Shrimp Habitat

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES

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

Cultural Resource Discussion:

The analysis in this section is based on the findings in the *Phase I Cultural Resource Assessment for the Sun Lakes Boulevard Realignment Project in the City of Banning, Riverside County, California*, which was prepared by Applied EarthWorks Inc. (AE) and is included as Appendix C of this Initial Study (hereinafter referred to as "Phase I CRA"). As part of the Phase I CRA, AE conducted archaeological literature and records searches on September 16, 2019 at the Eastern Information Center (EIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), located at the University of California, Riverside. The EIC is the official cultural resource records repository for Riverside County. AE reviewed maps and records on file at the EIC for previously identified cultural resources and existing cultural resources reports pertaining to the vicinity within a one mile radius around the Project Site (the Study Area). AE archaeologists conducted an intensive pedestrian survey of the area of potential effect (APE) to observe and note the condition of the Project Site on September 4, 2020, March 31, 2022, and April 3, 2024. The APE for the Project is limited to the Project footprint in which direct effects may occur, as shown on *Figure 1-2, Project location on USGS Beaumont 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle* on page 3 of the Phase I CRA (located in Appendix C). The survey was completed with 15-meter east-west parallel pedestrian transects moving northward through the APE. (AE(a), pp. 28, 30, 31.)

The EIC records indicated 16 previous investigations have been conducted and documented in the Project Study Area. Four of these studies specifically involved portions of the APE, as such, 100 percent of the APE has been previously studied. Additionally, one of the previous investigations conducted a sensitivity assessment for archaeological resources and concluded the Project Site is within an area of low archaeological sensitivity. (AE(a), p. 22.)

The previous cultural resources investigations conducted within the Study Area identified a total of 44 cultural resources have been identified; eight archaeological resources that all date to the historic period and 36 built-environment resources. The eight archaeological resources that date to the historic period include: one isolated concrete chute remnant, three water-conveyance systems, two refuse scatters, foundations, and a segment of the old Banning Trade Route/6th Street. The 36 built environment resources consist of historical houses, commercial buildings, and a segment of the Union Pacific Railroad. (AE(a), p. 23.) Two historic period resources, Sites 33-013779 (CA-RIV-7544) and 33-013778 are located within the Project's APE. (AE(a), p. 23.)

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

Less than significant impact. The determination of National Register of Historic Property (NRHP) eligibility for cultural resources is made if a historic property meets one or more of the four NRHP criteria of historical significant; possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association (36 CFR 60.4); and, in general, it must be at least 50 years old and:

A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;

B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;

C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack distinction; or

D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

If a cultural resource is at least 50 years old, meets one or more of these specific criteria of historical significance, and is considered a good representative of a significant historical theme or pattern, the historic property is eligible for nomination to the NRHP. (AE(a), p. 5.)

For purposes of CEQA, lead agencies determine whether a project will have a significant impact on historical resources. Historical resources in CEQA terminology are analogous to historic properties in NHPA terminology. That is, a cultural resource shall be considered "historically significant" if it meets the requirements for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) under any one of the following criteria (Title 14, California Code of Regulations [CCR], § 15064.5):

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or,
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

One historic-period archeological resource, Site 33-013779 (CA-RIV-7544) and one built environment resource, 33-013778, are within the Project's APE. Site 33-013779 (CA-RIV-7544) is a large historic water-control complex consisting of 39 features, some of which are mapped within the Project's APE. Site 33-013779 (CA-RIV-7544) was formally evaluated in a prior cultural resource investigation and recommended as ineligible for listing on the NRHP and CRHR (AE(a), p. 25). Built environment resource Site 33-013778 was a large farm/ranch complex, which included five foundations, two Craftsman structures and a barn in 2004. As documented in a prior cultural resource investigation, the five foundations are located on the western-most portion of Site 33-013778, which according to the records search, is within the Project's APE. The remaining

resources, including the Craftsman structures and the barn, are located outside of the Project's APE and have been replaced by the Mt. San Jacinto College campus at the southeast corner of Sun Lakes Boulevard. and Sunset Avenue. The portion of Site 33-013778 within the Project's APE site has been evaluated formally for listing on the CRHR and NRHP and recommended ineligible for nomination to the NRHP and CRHR in a prior cultural resource investigation. AE's field archaeologist reidentified Site 33-013778 and Site 33-013779 (CA-RIV-7544) during the 2024 survey. No other cultural resources were identified during the survey (AE(a), p. 31.)

In addition to the EIC research, AE also reviewed historical maps. Specifically, AE consulted the 1901 San Jacinto 30-minute United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic quadrangle map, the 1943 and 1956 Banning 15-minute USGS topographic quadrangle maps, and the 1953 Beaumont 7.5-minute USGS topographic quadrangle map to assess historical land uses within the Study Area. The 1953 Beaumont 7.5-minute USGS topographic quadrangle map exhibits two houses and outbuildings outside and to the south of the APE on the corner of Sunset Avenue and Westward Avenue/Sun Lakes Boulevard. The same structures are also on the 1956 Banning 15-minute USGS topographic quadrangle map. No structures, roads, or other features of historical interest are shown within, or in the vicinity of, the APE on any of the reviewed historical maps. (AE(a), p. 25.)

The Phase 1 CRA noted that ground surface throughout portions of the APE has been disturbed by road grading, gas pipelines, and historic ranch activity. Most of the APE is overgrown with weeds and annual vegetation resulting in poor ground visibility (0–25 percent). The existing unpaved segment of Westward Avenue, and multiple buried pipelines within the APE as well as land use for ranching are all indicative of significant previous ground disturbance. Although the maximum depth of previous subsurface disturbance is unknown, the lack of known prehistoric resources within 1 mile of the APE has led other investigators to assign a low archaeological sensitivity to the APE (AE(a), p. 8).

Because the two historical archaeological sites documented within the Project's APE (i.e., 33-013779 (CA-RIV-7544) and 33-013788) were previously evaluated and recommended as ineligible for listing on the NRHP and CRHR, it is concluded that intact and significant unknown historic properties (NRHP-eligible) or historical resources (CRHR-eligible) are unlikely to be present. Additionally, since the Project site has been previously disturbed by road grading, gas pipelines and/or historic ranch activity there is a low likelihood that intact significant historical resources are buried. (AE(a), p. 32.) Thus, implementation of the proposed Project will not cause any adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

Sources: AE(a); GP

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

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated. The historic-period archaeological Site 33-013779 (CA-RIV-7544) and Site 33-013788 are discussed above in Response Va.

Geologic data indicate a mixture of alluvial soils within the APE with some potential for buried archaeological deposits. However, all other archaeological sensitivity indicators reflect low potential for buried archaeological resources. Past disturbances from buried pipelines, road grading, and ranching/farming have disturbed the APE. The records search conducted as part of the Phase I CRA did not identify any documented prehistoric resources within a one-mile radius of the Project's APE. Additionally, one of the previous cultural resources investigations (i.e., Tang et al. 2004) that involved the Project's APE conducted a sensitivity assessment for archaeological resources and concluded the Project's APE is within an area of low archaeological sensitivity (AE(a), p. 23). Although the potential to encounter intact and significant buried archaeological deposits is unlikely, the Project shall implement mitigation measure **MM CR-1** to reduce impacts to unknown archaeological resources to a less than significant level. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

> ***MM CR-1: Inadvertent Discovery****. In the event archaeological resources are discovered during Project construction that are not part of Site 33-013779 (CA-RIV-7544) and Site 33-013788, all ground disturbance activities within 100 feet of the discovered archaeological resource shall be halted until a qualified archaeologist (meeting the Secretary of the Interior Standards) can visit the site of discovery, assess the significance and integrity of the find, and determine the appropriate treatment (documentation, recovery, avoidance, etc.) and disposition of the cultural resource. Further ground disturbance shall not resume within the area of discovery until the appropriate treatment has been accomplished. Work on the other portions of the Project outside of the buffered area may continue. Any such discoveries and subsequent evaluation and treatment shall be documented and submitted to the EIC for archival purposes.*

Source: AE(a)

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

Less than significant impact. The proposed Project Site is not located in any known cemetery and human remains are not expected to be disturbed during Project construction. However, if human remains are encountered during Project construction, the steps and procedures specified in the California Health and Safety Code § 7050.5, State CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5(d), and California Public Resource Code § 5097.98, in accordance with PRC § 5097.98, must be implemented. In accordance with PRC § 5097.98, the Riverside County Coroner must be notified within 24 hours of the discovery of potentially human remains. The Coroner must then determine within two working days of being notified if the remains are subject to his or her authority. If the Coroner recognizes the remains to be Native American, he or she must contact the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) by phone within 24 hours, in accordance with PRC § 5097.98. The NAHC then designates a Most Likely Descendant (MLD) with respect to the human remains within 48 hours of notification. The MLD will then have the opportunity to recommend to the Project proponent, in this instance the City Public Works Department, means for treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and associated grave goods within 24 hours of notification. Therefore, through regulatory compliance impacts will be less than significant.

Sources: HSC 7050.5; PRC 5097.98

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

Energy Discussion:

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

Less than significant impact. The proposed Project, which is the construction and operation of Sun Lakes Boulevard, is an infrastructure project. As an infrastructure project, the majority of impacts will be short-term with only infrequent, routine maintenance occurring post-construction. As described in the AQ/GHG Analysis prepared (WEBB(a)) and included as **Appendix A** of this Initial Study, the Project's short-term construction would last approximately 24 months. Project construction would require the use of construction equipment for grading, paving, as well as construction workers and vendors traveling to and from the Project Site. Construction equipment requires diesel as the fuel source and construction worker and vendor trips use both gasoline and diesel fuel. Project-related fuel consumption was estimated in Energy Tables (WEBB(c)), which are included as **Appendix D** to this Initial Study. Construction of the Project is estimated to use approximately 251,270 gallons of diesel fuel and 8,985 gallons of gasoline.

Fuel energy consumed during construction would be temporary in nature and would not represent a significant demand on energy resources. Construction equipment is also required to comply with regulations limiting idling to five minutes or less (13 CCR § 2449(d)(3)). Furthermore, there are no unusual Project Site characteristics that would necessitate the use of construction equipment that would be less energy-efficient than at comparable construction sites in other parts of the state. For comparison, the State of California consumed 13.6 billion gallons of gasoline and 3.0 billion gallons of diesel fuel in 2023, which is the most recent published data. (CAL-A.) Thus, the fuel usage during Project construction would account for a negligible percent of the existing gasoline and diesel fuel related energy consumption in the State of California. Furthermore, it is expected that construction-related fuel consumption associated with the Project would not be any more inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary than at other construction sites in the region.

Energy used during operation of the Project would primarily result from electricity usage from the proposed street lighting and from infrequent maintenance vehicles. The proposed street light electricity consumption was estimated in CalEEMod using the default electricity rate for parking lot lighting of 0.35 Kilowatt-hours/square feet per year. Based on the street light electricity use from CalEEMod, the estimated electricity consumption is 154 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year. This represents a negligible demand on City of Banning

Electric Utility energy resources and would not operate in a manner that is wasteful or inefficient. Based on the latest data available from the California Energy Commission (CEC), City of Banning produced approximately 151.55 million kWh in 2022.

For these reasons, the Project would not result in a potentially significant impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy during Project construction or operation. Impacts will be less than significant.

Sources: WEBB(a);WEBB(c); CAL-A; CEC; Project Description

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

No impact. As discussed above in Response VIa, the Project is an infrastructure improvement project and as such, the Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. No impact will occur.

Source: Project Description

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

Geology and Soils Discussion:

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

The analysis in this section is based on findings and recommendations from the *Geotechnical Pavement Investigation, Sun Lakes Boulevard Realignment, South Highland Home Road to Sunset Avenue, Banning California* which was prepared by Geocon West, Inc. and is included as **Appendix E.1** of this Initial Study (hereinafter referred to as "Geotechnical Investigation"). The Geotechnical Investigation includes the results of: subsurface investigation with borings to depths of 6.5 and 26.5 feet below existing ground surface in areas of the planned improvements and laboratory tests; scour evaluation; seismic evaluation; and recommendations for new pavements, earthwork, utility trench backfill, foundation recommendations for RCB culverts, and additional field work and laboratory testing. (Geocon, pp. 3, 5–21.)

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.

Less than significant impact. The Project Site is located approximately 1.2 miles southwest of the nearest Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault, known as the San Gorgonio Pass Fault, according to the California Department of Conservation. The Project Site is also approximately 1 mile northeast of a Riverside County Fault Zone. Because the Project Site is not located within or adjacent to a State of California Earthquake Fault Zone or a Riverside County Fault Hazard Zone, and it is not located on any known active earthquake fault trace, the potential for ground rupture due to active faulting on the Project Site is considered to be low. (Geocon, p. 6.)

Additionally, due to the nature of the proposed Project it does not pose a substantial risk of loss, injury, or death because the Project does not propose any habitable structures and will be designed and constructed in accordance with Caltrans, City standard specifications, and the recommendations of the Geotechnical Investigation, potential substantial adverse impacts resulting from the rupture of a known earthquake fault are considered less than significant.

Sources: GP; GP DEIR; Geocon; DOC

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less than significant impact. Given its physical and geologic location, the Banning area, like most regions in Southern California, is susceptible to potential intense seismic ground shaking that could affect the safety and welfare of the general community. (GP DEIR, p. III-74.) Because the Project is not located within a fault zone, a fault rupture hazard analysis is not required. A seismic evaluation was conducted as part of the Project's Geotechnical Investigation using Caltrans' *Acceleration Response Spectrum (ARS) Online* web tool (V3.1.0). The results of the *ARS Online* provide recommended design response spectrum for use in the Project's seismic design recommendations. Because the Project will be designed and constructed in accordance with applicable Caltrans and City standards and incorporate the recommendations of the Geotechnical Investigation, potential substantial adverse impacts resulting from strong seismic ground-shaking will be less than significant.

Source: GP DEIR; Geocon

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less than significant impact. Liquefaction occurs when shallow, fine to medium-grained sediments saturated with water are subjected to strong seismic ground shaking. It generally occurs when the underlying water table is 50 feet or less below the surface. According to the City's GP, the Project Site is located in an area with low liquefaction susceptibility (GP, Exhibit V-4; GP DEIR, Exhibit III-14.).

The subsurface investigation conducted as part of the Project's Geotechnical Investigation did not encounter groundwater during the investigation. Historical well data immediately in the vicinity of the Project Site indicated that the shallowest groundwater levels were measured at depth ranging from 243

and 271 feet below ground surface. (Geocon, p. 4.) Moreover, the nature of the Project will not expose people to substantial risk from seismic-related ground failure including liquefaction, since there are no habitable structures proposed. Further, the Project will incorporate and implement the recommendations from the Project's Geotechnical Investigation in addition to standard engineering and construction protocols from Caltrans and the City to address ground failure/liquefaction. Therefore, Project impacts will be less than significant.

Sources: Geocon; GP; GP DEIR

iv) Landslides?

No impact. The proposed Project Site is not located adjacent to any areas with low, moderate, or high risk of seismically induced settlement and slope instability and no known landslides have occurred in the Project vicinity. (GP, Exhibit V-2; GP DEIR, Exhibit III-15.) No topographical features that could potentially create landslides are located within the immediate vicinity of the Project Site. Therefore, no impact will occur.

Sources: GP; GP DEIR; Geocon

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

Less than significant impact. Construction of the proposed Project will entail grading, excavation, and construction in unpaved areas, may lead to localized erosion as wind and water carry loose soil offsite. Compliance with current regulations and implementation of a State-required Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that incorporates effective erosion and sediment control measures would reduce these impacts to less than significant.

Source: Project Description

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?

Less than significant impact. Impacts related to landslides are addressed in Response VIa.iv, above; impacts related to liquefaction are addressed in Response VIa.iii, above; both were found to have less than significant impacts. The following analysis addresses impacts related to unstable soils, as a result of lateral spreading, subsidence, or collapse.

Lateral spreading refers to the lateral movement of gently to steeply sloping saturated soil deposits caused by earthquake-induced liquefaction. As discussed in Response VIa.iii, above, the Project Site is located in an area of low liquefaction susceptibility; thus, during an earthquake lateral spreading could occur. Subsidence in the Banning area is closely associated with groundwater levels and the most populated part of the City occurs in an area with geologic conditions vulnerable to ground subsidence. In particular, the alluvial sediments within the groundwater basins from which the City's water is withdrawn are subject to subsidence if rapid groundwater extraction occurs in response to increased water demands as a result of population growth or prolonged drought. (GP DEIR, p. III-69.) Structures sensitive to slight changes in elevation, such as

canals, sewers and drainage improvements are generally sensitive to the effects of subsidence and may be damaged if subsidence occurs. As discussed in Response VIa.iii, the shallowest groundwater in the Project area is 243 to 271 feet below ground surface. (Geocon, p. 4.)

A substantial portion of the City's valley and canyon areas are underlain by potentially compressible and/or collapsible soils consisting of young sediments with low density that will settle under the added weight of fill embankments or buildings. (GP DEIR, p. III-81.) The Project will be designed and constructed in accordance with applicable City standards and incorporate the recommendations of the Geotechnical Investigation, and will incorporate engineering and construction protocols to address, among other things, lateral spreading and collapse, Therefore, Project impacts will be less than significant.

Sources: Geocon; GP DEIR

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

Less than significant impact. Expansive soils are those that contain significant amount of clay particles that have a high shrink (dry) and swell (wet) potential. The upward pressures induced by the swelling of expansive soils under moist conditions can have harmful effects upon structures. In the City, expansive soils are primarily associated with areas underlain by older fan deposits containing argillic (clay-rich) soil profiles, which are in the moderately expansive range. Since the low-lying areas of the City are underlain by alluvial fan sediments that are composed primarily of granular soils, the expansion potential ranges from very low to moderately low. (GP DEIR, p. III-69.)

The Geotechnical Investigation found that the geologic material within the Project area consists of undocumented fill (afu), Holocene-age alluvium (Qa), and Pleistocene-age alluvial fan of the San Gorgonio Pass (Qf) deposits. (Geocon, p. 4.) These are granular soils and, as indicated in the GP DEIR, the potential for expansion ranges from very low to moderately low. Since the Project will be designed and constructed in accordance with applicable Caltrans and City standards and incorporate the recommendations of the Geotechnical Investigation, potential substantial direct or indirect risks from expansive soil will be less than significant.

Sources: Geocon; GP DEIR

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?

No impact. The Project does not include wastewater or tying into existing infrastructure for disposal of wastewater and no septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems will be required. Therefore, no impact will occur.

Source: Project Description

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

The analysis in this section is based on findings and recommendations from the *Paleontological Memorandum: Constraints Analysis for Sun Lakes Boulevard Realignment, Riverside County, California,* (hereinafter referred to as "Paleontological Memorandum") prepared by AE, which is included as Appendix E.2 of this Initial Study. The Paleontological Memorandum was prepared by AE paleontology staff who meet the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology qualification standards following guidelines developed by the County of Riverside to determine the likelihood of the presence of paleontological resources at the Project Site.

The County has developed its own guidelines that establish detailed protocols for the assessment of the paleontological sensitivity of a project area and outline measures to follow in order to mitigate adverse impacts to known or unknown fossil resources during project development (i.e., Riverside County General Plan, Multipurpose Open Space Element, Policies OS 19.6 – 19.9). The County assigns the paleontological sensitivity of a geologic unit(s) (or members thereof) to one of four categories—Low, Undetermined, High A (Ha), and High B (Hb) potential. Geologic units are "sensitive" for paleontological resources and have a High paleontological resource potential if they are known to contain significant fossils anywhere in their extent, even if outside the Project Site. High A (Ha) sensitivity is based on the occurrence of fossils that may be present at the ground surface of the Project Site, while High B (Hb) sensitivity is based on the occurrence of fossils at or below 4 feet of depth, which may be impacted during construction activities. (AE(b), pp. 1-3.)

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated. Geology at the Project Site is characterized by Holocene-age alluvial deposits across the ground surface. Holocene-age deposits, particularly those less than 5,000 years old, are typically too young for the fossilization process to occur. Therefore, the Holocene-age alluvial deposits across the ground surface of the Project Site are unlikely to preserve fossils. However, these deposits are underlain by older Holocene- and Pleistocene-age alluvial deposits, which have yielded significant fossils throughout Southern California from the coastal areas to the inland valleys. (AE(b), pp. 3-4.)

AE conducted a record search of paleontological resources at the Project Site. No specimens or localities are listed on the Project Site; however numerous localities are within 10 miles of the Project Site which include subsurface geologic units likely found in the Project Site at unknown depths. There is a high likelihood of fossil preservation underlying the Project Site. This finding supports the Project Site's mapping as High A (Ha), as the surficial Holocene-age alluvial deposits overlie very shallow Pleistocene deposits with recorded vertebrate fossils throughout Southern California. (AE(b), pp. 4-5.) Since the proposed Project will entail excavations to depths greater than three feet, and especially at the dry gully crossings, there is a high likelihood of encountering paleontological resources in previously undisturbed sediments of Middle to Late Pleistocene ages. Therefore, in order to reduce potential direct or indirect impacts to unique paleontological resources or sites or unique geologic features, mitigation measure **MM GEO-1,** which requires construction crews to receive Paleontological Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training, mitigation measure **MM GEO-2**, which requires preparation of a paleontological resource impact mitigation program (PRIMP), and mitigation measure **MM GEO-3**, which sets forth the process to follow in the event of a fossil discovery, shall be implemented. Therefore, the Project will have less than significant impacts with mitigation incorporated.

MM GEO-1: Paleontological Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP). *To educate construction crews about the types of paleontological resources that may be encountered along*

the Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project, prior to the start of the construction, the City of Banning shall retain a professional paleontologist (the "Project Paleontologist") to prepare a Paleontological Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP). The Paleontological WEAP shall provide a description of the laws and ordinances protecting fossil resources, the types of fossil resources that may be encountered in the area, the role of the paleontological monitor, outline steps to follow in the event that a fossil discovery is made and provide contact information for the Project Paleontologist. The Project Paleontologist or designee(s) shall present the Paleontological WEAP to the construction contractor and each of the construction crews working on the Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project during a preconstruction meeting. The Paleontological WEAP shall be taped and presented to any construction crew members not present at the preconstruction meeting during which it was initially presented prior to such crew members working on the Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project. This training may be conducted concurrent with other preconstruction training (e.g., biological resources, safety).

MM GEO-2: Paleontological Resource Impact Mitigation Program (PRIMP). *Prior to the commencement of ground-disturbing activities, the Project Paleontologist (retained under MM GEO-1) shall prepare and implement a Paleontological Resource Impact Mitigation Program (PRIMP) for the Project. The PRIMP shall describe the monitoring required during excavations that extend into locations of areas deemed to have a high paleontological resource potential, which include older Holocene-age and Pleistocene-age alluvial deposits. Monitoring shall entail the visual inspection of excavated or graded areas and trench sidewalls. If the Project Paleontologist determines full-time monitoring is no longer warranted, based on the geologic conditions at depth, the Project Paleontologist may recommend monitoring be reduced or ceased entirely.*

MM GEO-3: Fossil Discoveries. *In the event that a paleontological resource is discovered, the Project Paleontologist shall have the authority to temporarily divert the construction equipment around the find until it is assessed for scientific significance and, if appropriate, collected. If the resource is determined to be of scientific significance, the Project Paleontologist shall complete the following:*

1. *Salvage of Fossils. If fossils are discovered, all work in the immediate vicinity should be halted to allow the paleontological monitor, and/or Project Paleontologist to evaluate the discovery and determine if the fossil may be considered significant. If the fossils are determined to be potentially significant, the Project Paleontologist (or paleontological monitor) should recover them following standard field procedures for collecting paleontological as outlined in the PRIMP prepared per **MM GEO-2**. Typically, fossils can be safely salvaged quickly by a single paleontologist and not disrupt construction activity. In some cases, larger fossils (such as complete skeletons or large mammal fossils) require more extensive excavation and longer salvage periods. In this case the Project Paleontologist shall have the authority to temporarily direct, divert or halt construction activity to ensure that the fossil(s) can be removed in a safe and timely manner.*

2. *Fossil Preparation and Curation. The PRIMP (**MM GEO-2**) shall identify the museum that has agreed to accept fossils that may be discovered during project-related excavations. Upon completion of fieldwork, all significant fossils collected shall be prepared in a properly equipped laboratory to a point ready for curation. Preparation may include the removal of excess matrix from fossil materials and stabilizing or repairing specimens. During preparation and inventory, the fossil specimens will be identified to the lowest taxonomic level practical prior to curation at an accredited museum. The fossil specimens must be delivered to the accredited museum or repository no later than 90 days after all fieldwork is completed. The cost of curation will be assessed by the repository and will be the responsibility of the City of Banning.*

3. *Final Paleontological Mitigation Report. Upon completion of ground disturbing activities (and curation of fossils if necessary) for the Sun Lakes Extension Project, the Project Paleontologist shall prepare a final report documenting the WEAP (**MM GEO-1**) and outlining the results of the PRIMP (**MM GEO-2**). The report shall include discussion of the location, duration, and methods of monitoring, stratigraphic sections, any recovered fossils, and the scientific significance of those fossils, and where fossils were curated.*

Source: AE(b)

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

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Discussion:

The focus of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) analysis is to evaluate the impacts of GHG. GHG like carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), and fluorinated gases are responsible for trapping heat in the Earth's atmosphere, leading to global warming and climate change. For analysis purposes, emissions of CO_2, CH_4, and N_2O were evaluated because these gases are the primary contributors to GHG from development.

GHGs are not presented in lbs/day like criteria pollutants; they are typically evaluated on an annual basis using the metric system. Additionally, unlike the criteria pollutants, GHG do not have adopted significance thresholds associated with them at this time. Several agencies, at various levels, have proposed draft GHG significance thresholds for use in CEQA documents. SCAQMD has been working on GHG thresholds for development projects. The most recent draft proposal was in September 2010 and included significance thresholds for residential, commercial, and mixed-use projects at 3,500, 1,400, and 3,000 metric tonnes per year of carbon dioxide equivalents ($MTCO_2E/yr$), respectively. Alternatively, a lead agency has the option to use 3,000 $MTCO_2E/yr$ as a threshold for all non-industrial projects. Although both options are recommended by SCAQMD, a lead agency is advised to use only one option and to use it consistently. In December 2008, the SCAQMD adopted a threshold of 10,000 $MTCO_2E/yr$ for stationary source projects where SCAQMD is the lead agency. The SCAQMD significance thresholds evaluate construction emissions by amortizing them over an expected project life of 30 years. The analysis herein uses the threshold of 3,000 $MTCO_2E/yr$.

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

Less than significant impact. The AQ/GHG Analysis prepared for the Project (WEBB(a)) estimated GHG emissions from fuel usage by construction equipment and construction-related activities, such as construction worker trips, for the Project. The CalEEMod estimate does not analyze emissions from construction-related electricity or natural gas. Construction-related electricity and natural gas emissions vary based on the amount of electric power used during construction and other unknown factors which make them too speculative to quantify. The results of the GHG analysis for construction equipment are shown in **Table G – Project Construction Equipment GHG Emissions**.

Table G – Project Construction Equipment GHG Emissions

Year	Metric Tons per year (MT/yr)			
	Total CO_2	Total CH_4	Total N_2O	Total CO_2E
2023	1,129.57	0.29	0.03	1,146.84
2024	1,238.34	0.32	0.04	1,257.15
2023	108.18	0.03	0.00	109.81
Total	2,476.09	0.64	0.07	2,513.80
			Amortized[1]	**83.79**

Source: WEBB(a), Table 4 - Project Construction Equipment GHG Emissions

Note: [1] Construction emissions were amortized over a 30-year period, as recommended by SCAQMD.

Table G indicates that an estimated 2,513.80 $MTCO_2E$ will occur from Project construction equipment over the course of the estimated 24-month construction period. The draft SCAQMD GHG threshold guidance document released in October 2008 recommends that construction emissions be amortized for a project lifetime of 30 years to ensure that GHG reduction measures address construction GHG emissions as part of the operational reduction strategies. Therefore, the total GHG emissions from Project construction were amortized and are included in **Table G**.

CalEEMod estimates the operational GHG emissions associated with building electricity and natural gas usage for each land use type. Electricity and natural gas used in buildings is typically generated at an off-site power plant which indirectly generates GHG emissions. As a roadway infrastructure project, the Project's energy use results in indirect GHG emissions from the proposed street lighting and those GHG emissions were estimated in CalEEMod using the default electricity rate for parking lot lighting. Utility-specific carbon intensity information from the City of Banning Electric Utility was used. As shown on **Table H – Total Project-Related GHG Emissions**, using the emissions quantified above, the total GHG emissions generated from the Project is approximately 105.66 $MTCO_2E/yr$, which includes construction-related emissions amortized over a typical project life of 30 years.

Table H – Total Project-Related GHG Emissions

Source	Metric Tons per year (MT/yr)			
	CO_2	CH_4	N_2O	Total CO_2E
Amortized Construction (30 years)	--	--	--	83.79
Operational Energy (lighting)	21.73	0.00	0.00	21.87
Total GHG Emissions	**21.73**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**105.66**

Source: WEBB(a), Table 5 – Total Project-Related GHG Emissions

Note: Emissions reported as zero are rounded and not necessarily equal to zero.

The total GHG emissions from the Project do not exceed the SCAQMD threshold of level of 3,000 $MTCO_2E/yr$ for non-industrial projects. Due to the estimated amount of emissions from Project construction and the proposed street light electricity usage as well as the negligible operational emissions from infrequent maintenance vehicles, the proposed Project will not generate GHG emissions that exceed the screening threshold.

Therefore, the Project will not generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment, and therefore the Project impacts will be less than significant.

Sources: WEBB(a); Project Description

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

Less than significant impact. As the proposed Project involves the construction of roadway and drainage improvements, it is not considered a significant source of operational GHG emissions. The roadway improvements are consistent with the City's Circulation Element in the General Plan. There are no applicable plans, policies, or regulations for smaller infrastructure improvements such as the proposed Project. The Project will not result in any changes to the existing land use patterns within the Project area and its construction and operation does not generate significant amounts of GHG; therefore, the Project will not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation for the reduction in GHG emissions. Impacts will be less than significant.

Source: WEBB(a)

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

Hazards and Hazardous Materials Discussion:

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

Less than significant impact. Project construction will include the transport of fuels, lubricants, and various other liquids for operation of construction equipment. These materials will be transported to the Project Site by equipment service trucks. In addition, workers will commute to the Project via private vehicles and will operate construction vehicles and equipment on the Project Site and public streets. A number of federal and state agencies prescribe strict regulations for the safe transportation of hazardous materials. Hazardous material transport, storage and response to upsets or accidents are primarily subject to federal regulation by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Hazardous Materials Safety in accordance with Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). California regulations applicable to hazardous material transport, storage, and response to upsets or accidents are codified in Title 13 (Motor Vehicles), Title 8 (Cal/OSHA), Title 22 (Management of Hazardous Waste), Title 26 (Toxics) of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), and the Chapter 6.95 of the Health and Safety Code (Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventory).

These hazardous materials regulations were established at the state level to ensure compliance with federal regulations intended to reduce the risk to human health and the environment from the routine use of hazardous substances. Compliance with the measures is intended to significantly reduce a project's risk to the environment. To ensure that workers and others at the Project Site and surrounding area are not exposed to unacceptable levels of risk associated with the use and handling of hazardous materials, the City is required to implement existing hazardous materials regulations, with compliance monitored by state (e.g., OSHA in the workplace or DTSC for hazardous waste) and local jurisdictions. Compliance with existing safety standards related to the handling, use, and storage of hazardous materials, and compliance with the safety procedures mandated by applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations (as noted above) would be required for the proposed Project. Compliance with all applicable laws and regulations regarding the transportation, use, storage, and response to upsets or accidents that may involve hazardous materials would reduce the likelihood and severity of upsets and accidents during transit and storage. Therefore, potential impacts in this regard would be less than significant. No mitigation is required.

Sources: Project Description; CCR 8; CCR 13; CCR 22; CCR 26; CFR; CHSC 6.95, BMC

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?

Less than significant impact. As discussed in Response IXa above, there is a potential for hazardous materials and chemicals to be stored at the site for short periods of time prior to transport and distribution which could cause a release. However, the storage and transport of these products would be regulated by Federal, State, and local policies regarding storage and transportation of hazardous waste. Post construction, only infrequent and routine maintenance activities would occur, which would also be regulated by Federal, State, and local policies. Nonetheless, the Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor Database identified a hazards material cleanup site, Community Day School No. 1 site (ID: 33010034), located approximately three-quarter of a mile to the north of the Project Site. As of February 14, 2002, DTSC determined that there is no further action. (DTSC-A.) Therefore, impacts would be less than significant, and no mitigation is required.

Sources: Project Description; DTSC-A

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Less than significant impact. Across the southeast corner of the proposed Project Site is home to the San Gorgonio Pass Campus, which is one of the four Mt. San Jacinto College campuses. (MSJC). As previously discussed in Response IXa, during Project construction hazardous materials and substances would be introduced to the Project Site. Hazardous materials and substances that could be found on the Project Site would consist of; fuels, lubricants, and other liquids required for operation of construction equipment. Nonetheless, these materials would be limited to the Project Site. Therefore, students of the San Gorgonio Pass Campus would not be exposed hazardous materials found at the Project Site during construction. Additionally, Project construction would comply with state and federal regulations governing the use and transport of hazardous materials. Therefore, the proposed Project will not expose nearby schools to hazardous materials, substances, or waste, and impacts would be less than significant.

Source: MSJC

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?

No impact. The Project Site, and adjacent areas are not listed on the Department of Toxic Substance Control's Cortese List, compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. (DTSC-B.) Thus, because the proposed Project Site and it's adjacent areas are not on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, the Project will not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Therefore, no impacts will occur.

Source: DTSC-B

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

Less than significant impact. The Banning Municipal Airport is located approximately four miles to the east of the Project Site. Land use designations within the City have been arranged to accommodate for continued safe operation of the Banning Municipal Airport. (GP DEIR, p. III-62.) The Project Site is not within the Banning Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUC). Additionally, the proposed project is a roadway and does not propose housing or job centers. Thus, the proposed Project will not result in a safety hazard for people working or residing in the Project area. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

Sources: ALUC; GP DEIR

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

Less than significant impact. The City adopted the Multi-Hazard Functional Planning Guidance document in 1996. The document is organized into three-parts, which include: 1) the Banning Emergency Plan; 2) twelve functional Annexes that describe the emergency response organization; and 3) a listing of operational data such as resources, key personnel, and essential facilities and contacts. (GP, p. VI-42.) According to the City's GP, the City does not have established evacuation routes, although depending on the location and extent of emergency, major surface streets could be utilized to route traffic through the City. (GP, p. VI-45.)

The Project Site is currently an undeveloped dirt road between South Highland Home Road and Sunset Avenue. In its current condition, the Project Site is gated and does not provide vehicular access from South Highland Home Road to Sunset Avenue. Construction and operation of the Project, a planned roadway, would provide vehicular connectivity and access. Additionally Sun Lakes Boulevard, a designated Arterial Highway, could reasonably be expected to be used as part of an evacuation route in the event of an emergency. Therefore, Project impacts will be less than significant.

Source: GP

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

No impact. The Project Site is located north of the City's High Fire Hazard Zone, within which relief is minimal and hardscape (e.g., concrete, asphalt, and structures) and landscaping vegetation predominate. (GP, Exhibit V-10.) The proposed Project is the construction and operation of Sun Lakes Boulevard, which would not likely aid the spread of wildland fires and could serve as a fire break in the event of a fire. Further, since the Project does not include habitable structures, Project implementation would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. Therefore, the Project has no impact.

Source: GP

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

Hydrology and Water Quality Discussion:

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

Less than significant impact. Construction of the Project may result in the discharge of sediment and other construction by-products to surface waters. Since the Project will disturb more than one acre of land, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is required to comply with the statewide Construction General Permit (CGP) issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) (Order No. 2012-0006-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002). The SWPPP must be developed by a Qualified SWPPP Developer (QSD) and implemented onsite for the duration of the Project by a Qualified SWPPP Practitioner (QSP). The focus of a construction SWPPP is to minimize soil disturbance, non-stormwater discharges, construction materials, and construction wastes during the construction phase of the Project to prevent discharge of polluted runoff from the construction site. Coverage under the CGP requires submittal of a Notice of Intent (NOI) and payment of fees and annual reporting to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). Staff from the RWQCB may inspect the construction site periodically to ensure compliance with the SWPPP.

The Project will provide drainage improvements currently not provided by the existing roadway. Said improvements will convey storm water runoff to catch basins that will be fitted with City-approved filters to capture debris and treat post-construction runoff generated by the roadway. The storm drain catch basins with filters in and of themselves will not contribute to a violation of water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, but rather they are expected to improve downstream water quality because of Project implementation. Through Project design and compliance with existing regulations related to water quality standards and waste discharge requirements, impacts will be less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; CGP; NHC

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

Less than significant impact. Groundwater basins are naturally recharged through the infiltration of runoff, direct precipitation, subsurface inflow, and artificial recharge. The Banning Canyon area receives water from percolation of canyon flows through the gravelly soils of the canyon bottom. In addition, a stone ditch running southerly though the Banning Canyon provides intake areas to distribute water to spreading ditches, which interconnect with spreading ponds to enhance percolation. The San Gorgonio Subbasin is also recharged naturally with runoff from the adjacent San Jacinto and San Bernardino Mountain. (GP, p. IV-2.)

The Project Site is not a groundwater recharge site. Because the Project is a transportation improvement, implementation of the proposed Project will not result in an increase in the use or production of groundwater. For these reasons, the Project will not affect existing groundwater supplies or interfere with recharge in a manner that would impede management of the groundwater basin. Therefore, Project impacts will be less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; GP

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

This discussions in Responses Xc)i through Xc)iv are based, in part, on the *Technical Memorandum – High Level Assessment of Potential Sediment Transport Impacts Associated with the Updated Sun Lakes Boulevard Improvement Project* (included as **Appendix F** to this Initial Study). The Project Site is located within the Banning MDP and existing drainage patterns generally occur in a north-west to south-east direction. The Project Site is subjected to large tributary areas north of I-10 draining via MDP facilities to several existing culverts under I-10 and subsequently under the railroad. Specifically MDP Line J – Highland Springs Channel, Line I – Smith Creek Channel, and Line K – West Pershing Channel as shown on **Figure 14 – Existing MDP Facilities**.[8] (WEBB(d.).) As discussed in the Project Description and shown on **Figure 6a – Project Components West Extent** and **Figure 6b – Project Components East Extent**, the Project crosses Highland Wash, Smith Creek, and Pershing Creek. The Project's drainage facilities at these crossings have been sized to mimic existing

[8] Figure is on page 56.

flow conditions (i.e., existing water surface elevation) and to not exacerbate the existing, i.e. without Project, sediment transport condition.

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

Less than significant impact.

During construction, the Project has the potential to result in downstream erosion impacts. The creeks and substrates in the Banning area do not lend to siltation concerns, therefore siltation impacts would not be a concern and are not discussed further. Rather, the analysis below focuses on the hydrologic regime changes related to the Project and resultant impacts to sediment transport (i.e. sand sources) and erosion impacts.

During construction, the Project will implement and comply with existing regulations for the minimization of erosion as outlined in the Statewide CGP through implementation of a SWPPP. Therefore, short-term erosion impacts from construction activities are less than significant due to compliance with the existing water quality regulations.

The operation of the Project as a roadway crossing over the creeks/drainages could result in erosion impacts and negatively affect sediment transport. However the design of the Project has been to limit the amount of these impacts over the long term by ensuring that the design of the culvert crossings are wide enough and set at the correct grades to not trigger further erosional impacts in the local drainage systems affected by the Project.

As previously discussed in Threshold IV, Biological Resources, sediment transport through the Project creeks east towards Coachella Valley is an important component to maintaining sand dune habitat for sensitive desert species. Because of concerns related to sediment transport effects, a technical memorandum was prepared by Northwest Hydraulic Consultants (NHC) for the Project entitled, *High Level Assessment of Potential Sediment Transport Impacts Associated with the Updated Sun Lakes Boulevard Improvement Project* (included as **Appendix F** to this Initial Study). The purpose of the technical memorandum was to perform a qualitative assessment of changes in sediment transport potential of a given creek segment through comparison of computed flow velocities, pre-and post-project, under a given flow condition. The intent of the NHC analysis (Appendix F) was to determine if velocities in the various creek segments upstream of the proposed Project are relatively unchanged in the post project condition compared to the existing condition, and if that change was negligible, then the likelihood is that the Project-related impacts to sediment transport (and downstream scour and incising) are minimal.

As documented in the NHC technical memorandum, the existing Westward Avenue has two concrete-lined dip crossings (or, Arizona low-flow crossings) located at the confluence of Smith Creek and Highland Wash and at Pershing Creek, which currently act as grade controls to the Smith Creek/Highland Wash and Pershing Creek. Downstream of existing Westward Avenue, Smith Creek/Highland Wash and Pershing Creek are incised and demonstrate scour effects under current conditions. Scour can occur during high flow events due to sediment trapping upstream of flow barriers such as undersized culverts located upstream. The NHC analysis determined that the scour situation currently occurring downstream of Westward Avenue would worsen if the Project resulted in slower flows (i.e. decreased velocities) than the existing condition.

The Project includes the construction and operation of three separate sets of multiple RCBs in order to allow flows to continue underneath the proposed roadway through Highland Wash, Smith Creek, and Pershing Creek. As documented in the NHC analysis, the design of the RCBs allows for the velocities not to slow down to the point where sediment is deposited above the RCBs, and keep the velocities consistent with existing conditions so that downstream scour/erosion will also not be exacerbated.

Flows within the Project creeks, which are termed alluvial channels, typically carry sediment in concentrations that increase with flow rate. The ability of flow to move sediment as it passes downstream is termed its sediment transport capacity. Hydraulic properties, particularly flow velocity, and bed material properties, such as median grain size, determine the sediment transport capacity of a given river reach. (NHC, pp. 6-7).

Results of the NHC qualitative analysis suggest that the proposed design of the three sets of RCBs will result in minimal changes to existing upstream flow velocities in each of the creeks. There would be a local increase in velocity within the RCBs themselves; however, that is to be expected since the RCBs are concrete-lined and the increased speed will assist in keeping the crossings clear of deposition during flood events (NHC, p. 8). The analysis concludes: "Comparison of the provided hydraulic modeling results indicates that there would likely be minimal sediment transport impacts associated with the current crossing improvement plans. Hydraulic conditions upstream of all three of the proposed crossings are very comparable under pre- and post-project scenarios" (NHC, p. 13). Because the upstream conditions are very comparable between the existing and proposed conditions, downstream conditions will also be comparable.

Therefore, through the design of the RCBs to minimize post-construction effects to existing sediment transport rates as demonstrated in the technical memorandum (Appendix F), and implementation of existing regulations for construction-phase activities, the Project's impacts to downstream erosion and siltation on- or off-site will be less than significant and no mitigation is necessary.

Sources: Project Description; CGP; NHC

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

Less than significant impact. Stormwater runoff on the Project Site currently flows into existing drainages or percolates into the undeveloped dirt area. The Project's proposed crossings at Highland Wash, Smith Creek, and Pershing Creek will ultimately be sized, shaped, and designed to mimic the existing downstream flow conditions (velocity and durations) and the size of the planned RCB culverts have taken into consideration the need to allow for sediment transport as well. The current design does not exacerbate the existing sediment transport condition (NHC, p. 13). The roadway will introduce new impervious areas including the travel lanes, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and curb and gutters. Once the Project is complete, all runoff on the roadway would be conveyed into catch basins with City-approved filters to capture debris and treat post-construction runoff generated by the roadway. Therefore, through Project design and compliance with the water quality regulations discussed in Response Xa, Project impacts regarding erosion or siltation or an increase in surface runoff that would result in on- or off-site flooding will be less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; CGP; NHC

iii) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

Less than significant impact. The proposed drainage system consists of storm drain lines located under the sidewalks on both north and south sides of the Sun Lakes Boulevard extension. The storm drains disconnect at the major utility crossings and at the street intersections. Catch basins will be placed at the low points of the street and at the downstream end of each storm drain to collect and convey the street

flow to the underground pipe for storage and infiltration. Therefore, through Project design, the proposed Project would not 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. Project impacts will be less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; NHC

iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less than significant impact. The Project area is within Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panel 06065C0816G, which indicates that the Project Site is not within the 100-year flood hazard area. (FEMA.) According to the *Hydraulic Analysis for Sun Lakes Blvd. Extension, City of Banning, Technical Memorandum*, the Project's proposed improvements to the Highland Wash, Smith Creek, and Pershing Creek drainage crossings have sufficient capacity to convey both interim and ultimate stormwater flows in the Project Area. (NHC.) The Project's curb, gutters, and catch basins have been designed to handle up to a 100-year, 24-hour storm event. Because the Project incorporates adequately-sized drainage facilities that will mimic the existing drainage patterns, flood flows would not be impeded or redirected. Therefore, Project impacts would be less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; FEMA;NHC

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

Less than significant impact. Regarding the release of pollutants, in the post-Project condition, pollutants that could be released from the Project in the event the roadway is inundated are gasoline, oil, grease, dirt, and trash/debris. Regarding flooding, as discussed in Response Xc)iv, the Project Site is not within a 100-year flood hazard area. (FEMA). The GP identifies three flood hazards in the City's area: flash flooding through natural channels; ponding, with flows impeded by man-made obstructions; and sheet flooding across the alluvial fans upon which most of the City's development is currently located. (GP, p. V-27.) Although the proposed Sun Lakes Boulevard extension will cross Highland Wash, Smith Creek, and Pershing Creek, which have the potential to flash flood, flash floods are not expected to release pollutants because the *Hydraulic Analysis for Sun Lakes Blvd. Extension, City of Banning, Technical Memorandum*, concluded that the Project's proposed drainage crossings have sufficient capacity to convey both interim and ultimate stormwater flows in the Project Area. Further, the Project includes catch basins with RWQCB-approved inserts to trap pollutants generated by the proposed roadway prior to them entering the watershed. Therefore, Project implementation would not result in an increased risk for the release of pollutants due to inundation.

Tsunamis are large waves that occur in coastal areas. The City of Banning is not located in a coastal area; therefore there is no risk for the release of pollutants due to Project inundation by tsunami.

Seiches are seismically-induced oscillations or sloshing of water contained in enclosed bodies including lakes, ponds, reservoirs, and swimming pools. This hazard is dependent upon the frequency of seismic waves, distance and direction from the epicenter, and site-specific design criteria of the enclosed body of water. There are no such bodies of water in the immediate Project Site vicinity; therefore, there is no risk for the release of pollutants due to Project inundation by seiche would occur.

For the reasons set forth in the preceding paragraphs, Project impacts regarding the release of pollutants due to inundation would be less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; GP; NHC

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

Less than significant impact. The Project Site is located within the boundaries of the water quality control plan (Basin Plan) for the Colorado River RWQCB. The Basin Plan is the primary document supporting the RWQCB's regulatory efforts. As previously described, the Project will implement the requirements of an effective SWPPP during construction pursuant to the CGP. The Project will include catch basins with City-approved filters to capture debris and treat post-construction runoff generated by the roadway. Through implementation of a SWPPP during construction and [Project design features], Project implementation is consistent with the requirements of the Basin Plan and will not conflict with or obstruct its implementation.

The Project Site is located within the boundaries of the Cabazon Storage Unit within the San Gorgonio Pass Groundwater Subbasin (Basin No. 7-021.04). Pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 (SGMA), the San Gorgonio Pass Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) has formed and prepared a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) that includes the Cabazon Storage Unit. The GSP was approved by California Department of Water Resources on October 26, 2023. The goal of GSPs is to achieve sustainable groundwater basins by 2042. The GSP describes two future projects to benefit the Cabazon Storage Unit. Specifically, *Project #4 New Pipeline with Additional Imported Water Spreading in the Cabazon Storage Unit* in the vicinity north of I-10 and the existing Robertson's Ready Mix Quarry site in Banning and *Project #6 New Imported Colorado River Aqueduct Spreading in the Cabazon Storage Unit (Phase 2)* in the vicinity of the San Jacinto Tunnel east portal, just south of Cabazon. (GSP, pp. 6-9, 6-15.) Because the GSP does not identify the Project Site as part of future projects, impacts to a sustainable groundwater plan are less than significant.

Sources: Project Description, GSP

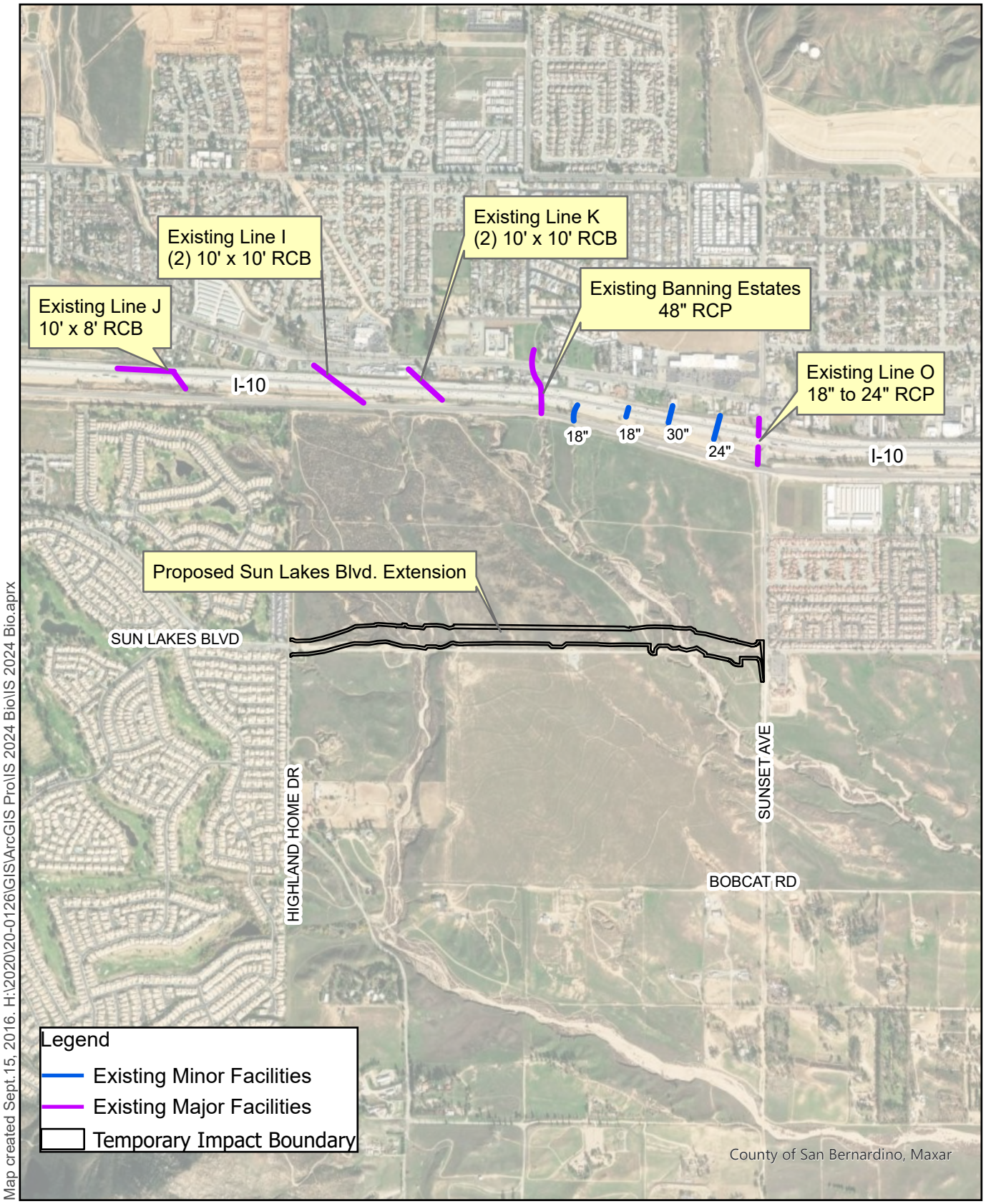


Figure 14 - Existing MDP Facilities

Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project

ALBERT A. WEBB ASSOCIATES

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING Would the project:				
a. Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Land Use and Planning Discussion:

a) Physically divide an established community?

No impact. The physical division of an established community typically refers to the construction of a physical feature (such as a wall, interstate, highway, or railroad tracks) or the removal of a means of access (such as a local road or bridge) that would impair mobility. The proposed Project is construction of a Circulation Element Arterial Roadway.

The Project Site and the areas to its north and south are vacant and undeveloped; there are two established residential neighborhoods at its west and east ends. Due to the Project Site's existing undeveloped condition and the presence of gates, there is no direct connection between these neighborhoods. Implementation of the proposed Project will provide access to nearby areas including the two established residential communities. Therefore, the Project has no impact.

Source: Project Description

b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Less than significant impact. The proposed Project involves the expansion of Sun Lakes Boulevard between Highland Home Road and Sunset Avenue. This roadway is a planned Arterial Highway and is designed in conformance with the City's Circulation Element. Thus, the Project, which is implementing a portion of the City's Circulation Element, will not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Therefore, impacts will be less than significant.

Source: Project Description

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
XII. 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Mineral Resources Discussion:

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

Less than significant impact. Sand and gravel, collectively referred to as aggregate, is the primary mineral resource that is actively being developed in the eastern portion of the City. Weathering, erosion, and other geologic processes have deposited materials from the surrounding mountains and hills, forming an alluvial fan with significant deposits of these mineral resources. The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) was developed to assure the preservation of mineral resources while concurrently addressing the need for protecting the environment. Under the direction of SMARA, the State of California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology, released a report identifying regionally significant mineral deposits in an effort to conserve and develop them; and to help in anticipating aggregate production needs of the region. (GP, p. IV-82.)

Although the Project Site is located within Mineral Resource Zone 3, which is an area that contains mineral deposits, the significance of these deposits cannot be evaluated from available data (GP, Exhibit IV-8 and p. IV-83). The City has specific areas designated as Industrial-Mineral Resources (I-MR) land uses in the City's GP to allow for surface mining operations on lands designated by the City or State as having significant potential for mineral resources. (GP DEIR, Table I-18.) As shown on **Figure 3 – General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations**, the Project Site is not within one of these zones, and is therefore not targeted for mineral resources mining by either the City or the State. Additionally, due to the existing residential development to the west and east of the Project Site, it is unlikely that a mining operation could operate at the Project Site. Therefore, Project impacts regarding the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state will be less than significant.

Sources: GP; GP DEIR

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?

No impact. An approximately 6.5-acre area of Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) 2, where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or that a high likelihood for their presence exists, is located in the eastern portion of the City along the alluvial fan of the San Gorgonio River that lies southeast

of the Banning Bench, north and south of Interstate 10. (GP Exhibit IV-8 and p. IV-83.) The Banning Quarry, operated by Robertson's Ready Mix, was the only aggregate producer within the MRZ-2 designated area of the City. (GP, p. IV-83.)

The proposed Project is not located within or adjacent to the Banning Quarry or any other locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. Further, as described in Response XIa, above, the Project Site is not within the Industrial-Mineral Resources land use designation in the City's GP. Therefore, Project implementation will not 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 and there will be no impact in this regard.

Source: GP

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

Noise Discussion:

The analysis in this section is based on the findings of the Noise Analysis Report, Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension, Banning, CA, prepared by dBF Associates, Inc., which is included as **Appendix G** of this Initial Study (hereinafter referred to as "Noise Study"). The Noise Study uses the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Traffic Noise Model (TNM) Version 2.5 to estimate traffic noise levels, based on peak-hour traffic volume, average estimated vehicle speed, and estimated vehicle mix, i.e., percentage of cars, medium trucks, heavy trucks, buses and motorcycles.

Noise is generally defined as loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired sound typically associated with human activity, which interferes with or disrupts normal activities. Constant noise levels are called ambient noise. Human response to noise events is influenced by the type of noise, perceived importance of the noise, and its appropriateness in the setting, time of day and type of activity during which the noise occurs and the sensitivity of the individual. The intensity of a sound's loudness is measured in decibels (dB). Studies have shown that the smallest perceptible change in sound level for a person with normal hearing sensitivity is approximately 3 dBA. A change of at least 5 dBA would be noticeable and would likely evoke a community reaction. A 10 dBA increase is subjectively heard as a doubling in loudness and would cause a community response. (dBF, p. 7.) Since community noise fluctuates over time, a single measure called Equivalent Sound Level (Leq) is used to describe time-varying character of community noise. The Leq is the energy-averaged A-weighted sound level during a measured time interval and is equal to the level of a continuous steady sound containing the same total acoustical energy over the averaging time period as the actual time varying sound. The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is a descriptor representing a 24-hour, time-weighted annual average noise level based on the "A-weighted" decibel. (dBF, p. 8.)

Sound levels caused by line sources (i.e., variable or moving sound sources such as traffic) generally decrease at a rate of 3 to 4.5 dBA when the distance from the road is doubled, depending on the ground

surface hardness between the source and receiving property. The model assumed "hard soil" propagation conditions, which corresponds to a drop off rate of approximately 3 dBA per doubling distance. The actual sound level at any receptor location is dependent upon such factors as the source-to-receptor distance and the presence of intervening structures (walls and buildings), barriers, and topography. The noise attenuating effects of changes in elevation, topography, and intervening structures were not included in the model. Therefore, the modeling effort is considered a worst-case representation of the roadway noise. (dBF, p. 12.)

a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Less than significant impact. Temporary increases to ambient noise levels would occur during Project construction. Noise would derive from the use of various types of construction equipment such as, excavators, graders, rubber tired dozers, scrapers, pavers and rollers, and from a worker-related increase in traffic in the vicinity of the Project Site. Maximum noise levels (L_{max}) associated the construction equipment expected to be used ranges from 80 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet to 85 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet. Once construction is complete, the Project would produce noise from vehicles using the roadway. Sensitive receptors are residences at the west and east ends of the Project Site and the Mt. San Jacinto College San Gorgonio Pass Campus at the southeast end of the Project Site.

The Project Site is located within Banning and the unincorporated territory of Riverside County, and is adjacent to the City of Beaumont (to the southwest). Construction noise standards for these jurisdictions are summarized below.

- Banning Code of Ordinances Chapter 8.44 Noise. According to Section 8.44.085, sound emanating from capital improvement projects of a governmental agency or maintenance; and repair of public properties by a governmental agency are exempt. (BMC.)

- Riverside County Ordinance No. 847 Regulating Noise. According to Section 2, sound emanating from facilities owned or operated by or for a governmental agency; capital improvement projects of a governmental agency; or maintenance; and repair of public properties are among the noise sources exempt from the provisions of Ordinance No. 847. (Ord. 847.)

- Beaumont Code of Ordinances Chapter 9.02 Noise. According to Section 9.2.100, sound emanating from capital improvement projects of a governmental agency; maintenance and repair of public properties by a governmental agency; utility and street repairs, street sweepers, garbage services, emergency response warning noises, emergency generators and fire alarm systems; and other public/governmental services or operations including, but not limited to trains and railway or airplanes and helicopter machinery, equipment or vehicles are exempt. (BCO.)

Because the proposed Project is a capital improvement project and sound emanating from capital improvement projects is exempt in all three agencies in which Project-generated construction noise is likely to be heard, Project construction will not exceed the noise standards established by Banning, Riverside County, or Beaumont.

Regarding operational noise impacts from the Project, (i.e., noise generated once construction is complete), the City's GP Plan Noise Element land use compatibility thresholds for community noise environments is shown in **Table I - City of Banning Noise Thresholds**, below. The Banning Noise Element does not provide guidance for undeveloped or vacant land.

Table I – City of Banning Noise Thresholds

Land Use	Highest Normally Acceptable Noise Level	Highest Conditionally Acceptable Noise Level
Single-Family Residential	55 dBA CNEL	65 dBA CNEL
Commercial	65 dBA CNEL	72.5 dBA CNEL
School	65 dBA CNEL	65 dBA CNEL
Industrial/Manufacturing	70 dBA CNEL	75 dBA CNEL

Source: Appendix G, Table 2

The Riverside County General Plan Noise Element identifies noise levels of 75 dBA CNEL as Normally Acceptable for industrial land uses and noise levels up to 80 dBA CNEL as Conditionally Acceptable. Likewise, the Riverside County Noise Element has not provided guidance for undeveloped or vacant land. (dBF, pp. 9-10.)

The Beaumont General Plan Safety Element identifies the noise thresholds for single family residential and commercial land uses shown below in **Table J- City of Beaumont Noise Threshold**.

Table J – City of Beaumont Noise Threshold

Land Use	Desirable Maximum Noise Level	Maximum Acceptable Noise Level
Single-Family Residential	55 dBA CNEL	65 dBA CNEL
Commercial	65 dBA CNEL	75 dBA CNEL

Source: Appendix G, Table 3

The Project Site is located primarily along the existing unpaved roadway ROW, with existing residences to the west and east, and a community-college campus at the southeastern intersection of Sun Lakes Boulevard/Sunset Avenue. Land to the north and south of the Project Site are currently vacant and undeveloped. As shown on **Figure 3 – General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designations**, these areas are currently designated for future residential, open space, and agricultural uses. However, as discussed in the Surrounding Land Uses and Setting section on page 6 of this Initial Study, the City has received development applications and released the Draft EIR for the Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan and related entitlements for public review, which, if approved, would ultimately designate this area for industrial and commercial uses as

shown on **Figure 8 – Proposed Sunset Crossroads Specific Plan**. Since this development application is pending with the City, the Noise Report evaluated the areas north and south of the Project Site as non-residential land uses. (dBF, p. 12.)

Since the majority of the existing land use surrounding the Project Site is vacant land, the primary noise source in the vicinity of the Project Site is natural activity and vehicular traffic on nearby roadways. As such, the ambient sound level along the Project Site is approximately 42 dBA L_{eq}. (dBF, p. 11.)

Implementation of the Project would result in redistribution of traffic on segments in the existing and future roadway network. (dBF, p. 12.) *Table 4. Project Roadways* (located in **Appendix G**) shows the estimated traffic volumes, that were used to determine noise levels.

In order to calculate noise levels the following information and assumptions were used (dBF, p. 12.):

- Traffic mixes on Sunset Ave and Sun Lakes Boulevard were obtained from Translutions, Inc., resulting in the assumption that other roadway segments traffic mixes would be similar.
- The peak hour traffic noise level was considered equivalent to the CNEL.
- For the horizon year (2050) Project traffic volumes calculated assumed that Highland Home Road would be extended to 4 lanes from Sun Lakes Boulevard to a new interchange at I-10, based on the City of Banning General Plan.

The Project's contribution to traffic noise for the following scenarios was calculated for existing noise levels, Without Project in 2050, and With Project in 2050. The results of these calculations are presented in **Table K – Noise Levels Along Roadways in Proximity to the Project Site.**

Page Left Intentionally Blank

Table K– Noise Levels Along Roadways in Proximity to the Project Site

Roadway	Segment	Closest Adjacent Land Use	Noise Levels			Project Effect on 2050 Noise Levels	Noise Thresholds*	Impact
			Existing	Without Project (2050)	With Project (2050)			
East 1st Street	West of Highland Springs Avenue	Single-family residential; 57 feet from CL, 6 foot tall wall	60.3	63.3	64.0	+ 0.7 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL	None
Sun Lakes Boulevard	East of Highland Spring Avenue	Single-family residential; 53 feet from CL, 6 foot tall wall	56.5	59.6	62.1	+2.5 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL	None
	West of Highland Home Road	Single-family residential; 53 feet from CL, 6 foot tall wall	49.1	51.7	62.7	+11.0 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL	Noise level increases to Conditionally Acceptable
	East of Highland Home Road	Currently vacant, industrial land use planned	N/A	N/A	69.4	N/A	70/75 dBA CNEL (Banning) 75/80 dBA CNEL (Riverside)	None
	West of Sunset Avenue	Currently vacant, industrial land use planned	N/A	68.6	70.0	+1.4 dBA CNEL	70/75 dBA CNEL (Banning) 75/80 dBA CNEL (Riverside)	None
Westward Avenue	East of Sunset Avenue	Single-family residential; 30 feet from CL, 6 foot tall wall	50.5	56.6	60.6	+4.0 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL	None
Lincoln Street	East of Sunset Avenue	Single-family residential; 32 feet from CL, 6 foot tall wall	52.8	62.8	63.7	+0.9 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL	None
Highland Springs Avenue	South of I-10 Eastbound Ramps	Commercial; 80 feet from CL	66.5	68.5	68.4	-0.1 dBA CNEL	65/75 dBA CNEL (Beaumont) 65/72.5 dBA CNEL (Banning)	None
	North of Sun Lakes Boulevard	Commercial; 75 feet from CL	64.6	67.4	67.4	0 dBA CNEL	65/75 dBA CNEL (Beaumont) 65/72.5 dBA CNEL (Banning)	None
	South of Sun Lakes Boulevard	Single-family residential; 50 feet from CL, 6 foot wall	57.7	62.0	62.7	+0.7 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL (Beaumont) 55/65 dBA CNEL (Banning)	None

Table K– Noise Levels Along Roadways in Proximity to the Project Site

Roadway	Segment	Closest Adjacent Land Use	Noise Levels			Project Effect on 2050 Noise Levels	Noise Thresholds*	Impact
			Existing	Without Project (2050)	With Project (2050)			
Highland Home Road	North of Sun Lakes Boulevard	Vehicle storage	N/A	62.6	67.6	+5.0 dBA CNEL	N/A	None
	South of Sun Lakes Boulevard	Single-family residential; 30 feet from CL, 6 foot wall	49.3	51.7	54.8	+3.1 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL (Banning) 75/80 dBA CNEL (Riverside)	None
Sunset Avenue	1-10 Eastbound Ramps-Lincoln Street	Vacant	60.1	69.9	67.7	-2.2 dBA CNEL	N/A	None
	South of Lincoln	Single-family residential; 30 feet from CL, 6 foot wall	54.1	63.7	63.5	-0.2 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL	None
	North of Westward Avenue	Single-family residential; 40 feet from CL, 6 foot wall	50.1	62.2	61.3	-0.9 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL	None
	South of Westward Avenue	Educational; 70 feet form CL	50.9	57.2	58.2	+1.0 dBA CNEL	65 dBA CNEL (Banning) 75/80 dBA CNEL (Riverside)	None
802 Bay Hill Road (Sun Lakes Boulevard & Highland Home Road)			49.9	52.9	62.4	+9.5 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL	Noise level increases to Conditional Acceptable
783 Sunshine Street(Westward Avenue and Sunset Avenue)			51.3	61.4	62.4	+1.0 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL	None
447 Soboba Drive (Lincoln Street & Sunset Avenue)			54.6	64.5	64.6	+0.1 dBA CNEL	55/65 dBA CNEL	None

Source: Appendix G, Table 5.

Notes:

- At vacant or non-noise sensitive land uses, noise level reported at 50 feet from centerline.
- *Normally/Conditionally Acceptable or Desirable Maximum/Maximum Acceptable

Based on the results shown in **Table K**, there are two locations on two separate roadways, Sun Lakes Boulevard at West Highland Home Road and Bay Hill Road (Sun Lakes Boulevard & Highland Home Road), that affect the noise levels at nearby receptors closest to the intersection. Along the Sun Lakes Boulevard at West and Highland Home the noise levels would increase from Normally Acceptable to Conditionally Acceptable, and at Bay Hill Road noise levels would increase from below Normally Acceptable to Conditionally Acceptable. Along all other segments, the noise environment descriptor would not change as a result of the Project. (dBF, p. 12.)

The City of Banning General Plan states that Conditionally Acceptable noise environments, "New construction of development should be undertaken only after detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirement is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. It is assumed the Conditionally Acceptable noise environments are not incompatible with residential land uses. (dBF, pp. 12-13.). As such it is determined that Project would not substantially increase ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies. For these reasons, impacts regarding a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in excess of applicable agency standards are less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; dBF; BMC; BOC; Ord. 847

b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less than significant impact. Typically, ground-borne vibration generated by man-made activities attenuates rapidly with distance from the source of vibration. Man-made vibration issues are therefore, usually confined to short distances (i.e., 500 feet or less) from the source. Sensitive receptors for vibration include structures (especially older masonry structures), people (especially the elderly and the sick), and vibration-sensitive equipment. Ground vibrations from construction activities do not often reach the levels that can damage structures, but they can achieve the audible and feelable ranges in buildings very close to the site.

Various types of construction equipment have been measured under a wide variety of construction activities with an average of source levels reported in terms of velocity as shown in **Table L – Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment**. Although the table gives one level for each piece of equipment, it should be noted that there is a considerable variation in reported ground vibration levels from construction activities. The data provide a reasonable estimate for a wide range of soil conditions.

Table L – Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment

Equipment	Peak Particle Velocity (PPV) at 25 feet (inch/second)	Root Mean Square (RMS) Velocity at 25 feet (micro-inch/second)
Large Bulldozer	0.089	87
Loaded Truck	0.076	86
Small Bulldozer	0.003	58

Source: FTA, Table 7-4

Notes: Root Mean Square (RMS) velocity in decibels (VdB) are 1 micro-inch/second.

Regarding impacts from ground-borne vibration, the City does not have significance thresholds;[9] thus, this analysis is based on guidance published by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in its document titled *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*. According to the FTA, although the perceptibility threshold for humans is approximately 65 VdB, human response to vibration is not usually significant unless the vibration exceeds 70 VdB. If the vibration level at a residence reaches 85 VdB, most people would be strongly annoyed by the vibration.

Table M– Typical Human Reaction and Effect on Buildings Due to Groundborne Vibration, displays some of the common human reactions to various levels of groundborne vibration (expressed in PPV) and its effect on buildings.

Table M – Typical Human Reaction and Effect on Buildings Due to Groundborne Vibration

Vibration Level (PPV) (inches/second)	Human Reaction	Effect on Buildings
0.006-0.019	Threshold of perception	Vibrations unlikely to cause damage of any type
0.08	Vibration readily perceptible	Recommended upper level of vibration to which ruins ancient monuments should be subjected
0.10	Level at which continuous vibration begins to annoy people	Virtually no risk of "architectural" (i.e., not structural) damage to normal buildings
0.20	Vibrations annoying to people in buildings	Threshold at which there is a risk to "architectural" damage to normal dwelling – houses with plastered walls and ceilings
0.4-0.6	Vibrations considered unpleasant by people subjected to continuous vibrations and unacceptable to some people walking on bridges	Vibrations at a greater level than normally expected from traffic, but would cause "architectural" damage and possibly minor structural damage

Source: Caltrans, compiled from Table 5 (p. 22) and Table 12 (p. 24).
Note: PPV = Peak Particle Velocity.

Project construction would require standard construction equipment and methods that could produce ground-borne vibrations as shown in **Table L**. There are some residences, but no historic structures within 25 feet of the Project Site. At approximately 25 feet from the Project Site, ground-borne vibration generated during Project construction from a large bulldozer would be approximately 0.89 PPV which, based on the

[9] The Banning GP Noise Element Policy 6 states, *All development proposals within the noise impact area of the Interstate and the railroad shall mitigate both noise levels and vibration to acceptable levels through the preparation of focused studies and analysis in the development review and environmental review process*.(GP, p. V-56.) The Project is not a development proposal and the Project Site is not within the noise impact area of the interstate or railroad; therefore, this policy is not applicable to the proposed Project.

information in **Table M**, would be considered readily perceptible, but would not reach the threshold of beginning to annoy people.

Regarding vibration once the Project is complete, vehicles traveling on roadways are supported on flexible suspension systems and pneumatic tires and as such are not an efficient source of ground vibration. They can, however, impart vibration into the ground when they roll over pavement that is not smooth. Continuous traffic traveling on a smooth highway creates a fairly continuous but relatively low level of vibration. (Caltrans, p. 10.) According to *Exhibit III-10 Banning General Plan Proposed General Plan Truck Routes*, the Project Site is not a designated truck route. (GP DEIR, p. III-51.) Therefore, vibrations would arise from smaller vehicles.

For these reasons set forth in the preceding paragraphs, impacts regarding the exposure and generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels would be less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; BMC; Caltrans; GP; GP DEIR

c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No impact. The nearest airport to the Project Site is the Banning Municipal Airport, which is located approximately three miles east of the Project Site. The Project Site is located outside of the Airport Influence Boundary and the Airport Compatibility Zones of the Banning Municipal Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. (ALUC.) The Project does not propose any habitable structures. Therefore, Project implementation will not result in the exposure of people to excessive noise levels sourced from airports and no impacts will occur in this regard.

Sources: ALUC; GP DEIR

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

Population and Housing Discussion:

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) describes what to consider when analyzing whether a project has a growth-inducing impact, such as fostering economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth. The analysis must not assume that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

Less than significant impact. The proposed Project involves the construction and operation of Sun Lakes Boulevard, a planned roadway (Arterial Highway) in the City's GP. This Project is in response to the population growth planned for and envisioned in the GP. The Project does not include new homes, businesses, or other infrastructure, which would remove an impediment to growth. Although the Sunset Crossroads project (**Figure 8**) is proposed in proximity to the Project Site, the Sun Lakes Boulevard Expansion was contemplated prior to the submittal of the entitlement applications for Sunset Crossroads and the City would proceed with implementation of the proposed Project regardless. Since the Project is implementing a portion of the City's Circulation Element and not removing an impediment to growth, the Project will not substantially induce direct or indirect unplanned population growth that was not previously analyzed and disclosed in the City's GP EIR. Therefore, impacts are considered less than significant.

Source: Project Description, GP, GP DEIR

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

No impact. The proposed Project Site is a vacant undeveloped dirt road with no existing housing. Therefore, implementing the proposed Project, will not displace existing people or housing, nor necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Source: Project Description

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
XV. 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:				
i. Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii. Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii. Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv. Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
v. Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Public Service Discussion:

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

i) Fire protection?

No impact. Fire protection services are provided to the City of Banning through a contractual agreement with the Riverside County Fire Department, which in turn contracts with California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire). The contract provides various fire related services, including emergency medical services, fire prevention, disaster preparedness, fire safety inspections, hazardous materials business plan programs and plan reviews. When an emergency call is received, the station that is physically closest to the emergency will respond, even if the emergency is located outside the station's official "jurisdiction." (GP, p. VI-35.)

Per the Riverside County Fire Department, there are two fire stations located in the City: Fire Station 63, located at 49575 Orchard Road, and Fire Station 89, located at 172 North Murray Road (RCFD). Fire Station 20, located in the City of Beaumont at 1550 E. 6th Street, also responds to fire emergencies that occur in the City. Fire Station 20 is approximately 1.5 miles to the northwest of the Project Site and would likely provide emergency response services to the Project Site (the closest fire station in the City is Fire Station 89, approximately 2.2 miles to the northeast of the Project). The Riverside County Fire Department is rated as Class 4 by the Insurance Service Office (ISO), a private company, which rates fire departments throughout the country based on a scale of 1 to 10, with Class 1 being the highest possible score. The City aims for a ratio of more than 0.70 fire personnel per 1,000 residents, which would be 58 firefighters at GP buildout. (GP DEIR, p. III-202.)

As discussed in Response XIV, the Project will not increase population. As such, implementation of the Project will not necessitate additional fire services and would not adversely impact service ratios, response times, or performance objectives. Additionally, the construction of Sun Lakes Boulevard would add another access route for firefighters to nearby residents. Therefore, the Project has no impact.

Sources: GP; GP DEIR; RCFD

vi. Police protection?

No impact. Police protection services within City limits are provided by the Banning Police Department (GP, p. VI-32). The Banning Police Department has 35 sworn officers and maintains a ratio of 1.4 sworn officers for every 1,000 residents. (GP DEIR, p. III-200.) The City's police station is located at 125 East Ramsey Street, approximately 2.2 miles east of the Project Site.

As discussed in Response XIV, the Project will not increase population. As such, implementation of the Project will not necessitate additional police services and would not adversely impact service ratios, response times, or performance objectives. Additionally, the construction of Sun Lakes Boulevard would add another access route for police to nearby residents. Therefore, the Project has no impact.

Sources: GP; GP DEIR

vii. Schools?

No impact. Most of the City is served by the Banning Unified School District, with a small area in the western portion of the City served by the Beaumont Unified School District. (GP, pp. VI-24 – VI-25.)

As discussed in Response XIV, the Project will not increase population. As such, implementation of the Project will not necessitate additional school services and would not adversely performance objectives. Additionally, the construction of Sun Lakes Boulevard would add another access route for nearby residents. Therefore, the Project has no impact.

Source: GP

viii. Parks?

No impact. Parks and recreation services within the City are provided by the City Community Services Department. The Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District also provides recreational facilities and services at County owned parks facilities within the City. (GP, p. III-83.)

As discussed in Response XIV, the Project will not increase population. As such, implementation of the Project will not necessitate additional park services. Therefore, the Project has no impact.

Source: GP

ix. Other public facilities?

No impact. Other public facilities in the City include one U.S. Post Office, the Banning Municipal Airport, San Gorgonio Memorial Hospital, and several public utility facilities operated by the City Public Works Department.

As discussed in Response XIV, the Project will not increase population. As such, implementation of the Project will not necessitate other public facilities. Therefore, the Project has no impact.

Source: GP

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
XVI. 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Recreation Discussion:

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

No impact. Parks and recreation services within the City are provided by the City Community Services Department. The Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District also provides recreational facilities and services at County owned parks facilities within the City. (GP, p. III-83.) The Project involves the construction and operation of Sun Lakes Boulevard, a planned roadway, between South Highland Home Road and Sunset Avenue. As discussed in Response XIV, the Project will not increase population. As such, the Project would not necessitate additional park facilities. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Sources: GP; Project Description

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?

No impact. The proposed Project involves the construction of Sun Lakes Boulevard, a planned roadway. As discussed in Response XIV, the Project will not increase population. As such, additional park facilities will not be required. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Source: Project Description

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

Transportation and Traffic Discussion:

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

No impact. Each county in California is required to develop a Congestion Management Program (CMP) that analyzes the links between land use, transportation, and air quality. The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) is the County of Riverside's Congestion Management Agency. The RCTC prepares and periodically updates the County's CMP to meet federal Congestion Management System guidelines and state CMP legislation. The most recent CMP is included within RCTC's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which was completed in December 2019. According to Appendix A of the LRTP, in the 2011 Riverside County Congestion Management Program, Interstate 10 and Highway 243 are the only roads in proximity to the Project Site listed as part of the CMP System of Highways and Roadways. These roads are not directly adjacent to the Project Site. Thus, the Project will not conflict with a CMP due to the distance between the Project Site and these covered roadways and the trips using the proposed Project have been accounted for in the GP.

The GP identifies that sidewalks, bike lanes, off-street trails, and golf cart routes are especially important along major roadways in the community. The PASS Transit System has local routes in and serves Banning, Beaumont, Cabazon, and Cherry Valley and is considered part of the City's local transit network. Regional bus service is provided by the Riverside Transit Agency (RTA), with service to Hemet/San Jacinto (Route 31), Moreno Valley (Route 35), and Calimesa/Redlands (Route 36). The Project is implementing GPA 19-2502, by constructing Sun Lakes Boulevard, a designated Arterial Highway, that would be designed and constructed in conformance with City's GP Circulation Element with four lanes, left turn pockets, sidewalks, one bicycle lane, and stop signs. As such, the Project is implementing the City's Circulation Element. For these reasons implementation of the proposed Project will not conflict with any program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities; therefore, there would be no impacts in this regard.

Sources: GP; LRTP; PASS; RTA

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Less than significant impact. The City adopted the *Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines for Local Transportation Analysis and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Analysis for the City of Banning*, hereinafter referred to as the Guidelines. According to the Guidelines, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) attributable to the project (including induced demand) are to be calculated by evaluating the No Project and With Project conditions under the horizon scenario using the RIVTAM or RIVCOM traffic model. (LSA, p. 22.) Based on the Guidelines, a significant impact would occur if a proposed transportation project results in a net increase in VMT during the horizon year. The increase in VMT is calculated by comparing the horizon year No Project VMT with the horizon year With Project VMT. The Guidelines indicate model adjustment may be necessary to account for induced growth and potential increases in future land use as a result of a capacity enhancing transportation project. (Translutions, p, 1.)

Translutions, Inc prepared a VMT Screening Analysis for the proposed Project using the Riverside Transportation Analysis Model (RIVTAM) in compliance with the City's Guidelines to ascertain if further VMT analysis is required. (The VMT screening analysis is included as **Appendix H** to this Initial Study.) Due to the small size of the proposed Project, from a transportation project perspective, The VMT Screening Analysis compared the Project's effect on VMT at a 5-mile, a 10-mile, and Countywide levels.

As shown in **Table N**, the With Project condition results in a substantial reduction of VMT within a 5-mile and 10-mile radius of the Project Site. As also shown in **Table N**, the modeling results shows the With Project condition is likely to increase Countywide VMT by approximately 0.0005%. This increase is well within the margin of error for transportation models, and as such might not be indicative of a significant adverse impact, and could be a result of rounding at various stages of the modeling process. (Translutions, p. 2.)

Table N – Change in Horizon Year (2040) VMT

	No Project VMT	With Project VMT	Change (in VMT)	Change in VMT (percentage)
5-Mile Radius	3,596,100	3,581,022	(15,078)	(0.4193)
10-Mile Radius	8,374,519	8,359,646	(14,873)	(0.1776)
Riverside County	92,860,800	92,861,278	478	0.0005

Source: Translutions, Table A
VMT = Vehicle Miles Traveled

To verify whether the Project would indeed result in an increase in VMT, the base year model was also run to identify if the With Project VMT increase results are similar to the horizon year VMT results. **Table O – Change in Base Year (2012) VMT** shows the results of the Base Year model runs. (Translutions, p. 2.)

Table O – Change in Base Year (2012) VMT

	No Project VMT	With Project VMT	Change (in VMT)	Change in VMT (percentage)
5-Mile Radius	1,980,031	1,979,158	(872)	(0.0441)
10-Mile Radius	4,457,790	4,456,431	(1,359)	(0.0305)
Riverside County	53,677,825	53,657,144	(20,681)	(90.0020)

Source: Translutions, Table B
VMT = Vehicle Miles TraveledT

As shown in **Table O,** the Project results in decreased VMT under all analysis geographic limits, validating the argument that the increase in future County-wide VMT is within the margin of error of the model and not the result of the proposed Project. (Translutions, p. 2.) For these reasons, impacts with regard to an increase in VMT are less than significant.

Sources: SB 743; LSA; Translutions

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

Less than significant impact. The proposed Project does not include any design features that would increase traffic hazards, as the Project is designed and will be constructed in accordance with the amended City's GP Circulation Element (GP Amendment No. 19-2502, Resolution No. 2020-37) and the City's standards for Arterial Roadways. The Project is not introducing a substantially different land use to the area and will be compatible with adjacent uses. As such, the Project will not increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible use. Therefore, the Project has no impact.

Sources: Project Description; Resolution No. 2020-37

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

No impact. In its existing condition, the Sun Lakes Boulevard is a gated unimproved dirt road that does not provide through vehicular access from South Highland Home Road to Sunset Avenue. Construction and operation of Sun Lakes Boulevard, a designated Arterial Highway in the City's GP circulation element, would improve vehicular connectivity and access to the land uses with the surrounding area. Therefore, implementation of the Project will beneficially impact emergency access.

Sources: Project Description; GP

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

Tribal Cultural Resources Discussion:

a. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resource Code section 5020.1(k)

b. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

As part of the Phase 1 CRA, a request was sent on September 13, 2019 to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to search the Sacred Lands File (SLF). The SLF is a repository of Native American cultural properties (e.g., traditional use or gathering areas, places of religious or sacred activity, etc.). Results of the SLF search received on September 24, 2019 suggest no known Native American cultural resources within the APE (AE(a), p. 26).

On October 15, 2020, representatives of the City and WEBB (as the City's consultant) met virtually with the Morongo Band of Mission Indians' (MBMI) Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) (Ann Brierty) to introduce the Project and provide background regarding the prior consultation efforts conducted by the City regarding GPA 19-2502. On that same date, the results of the Project's Phase 1 CRA records search were provided to the MBMI THPO. On December 3, 2021, the Phase I CRA was provided to the MBMI THPO. WEBB, on the City's behalf, made follow-up phone calls to the MBMI THPO in January and February 2021 and received no return calls. City staff followed up with the MBMI THPO in September 2021 and concluded consultation on November 15, 2021. No tribal cultural resources were identified during this consultation process.

As discussed in Response Va Cultural Resources, the Phase I CRA (included as **Appendix C**) concluded there are no CRHR-eligible or NRHP-eligible resources present on the Project Site and since much of the Project Site has been previously disturbed by road grading, gas pipelines, and historic ranch activity, there is a low likelihood that intact significant historical resources are buried. (AE(a), p. 32.) Furthermore, the results of the NAHC SLF search did not indicate the presence of any sacred sites or locations or religious or ceremonial importance within the Project's APE.

Regarding inclusion on a local register of historical resources, there are six local historical sites in the central core of the City that are designated as Riverside County Landmarks (GP DEIR, p. III-137). These historical resources are not within, or in proximity to, the Project Site.

Although no tribal cultural resources were identified during the Project's AB 52 process, the Project will implement mitigation measure **MM CR-1**, which requires construction in the vicinity of the find to halt until a qualified archaeologist makes a determination as to the significance of the find. For these reasons, Project implementation would not result in a substantial adverse change to tribal cultural resources and impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

Sources: AE(a); GP DEIR

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

Utilities and Service Systems Discussion:

a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less than significant impact. As discussed in the Project Description, the Project crosses three major drainage channels. Thus, the Project includes three sets of multiple RCBs, concrete swales, un-grouted riprap, v-gutters, storm drain laterals and catch basins, and trapezoidal channels. These drainage designs would conform to local, state, and federal regulations. The Project also includes catch basins and will discharge into existing Line J, Line I or Line K located north of the Project Site. As discussed in Responses Xc)i through Xc)iv, the *High Level Assessment of Potential Sediment Transport Impacts Associates with the Updated Sun Lakes Boulevard Improvement Project, Technical Memorandum* (("NHC") included as **Appendix F** to this Initial Study) determined that the size and placement of the Project's RCB culverts will have minimal sediment transport impacts because the hydraulic conditions upstream of all three of the proposed crossings are very comparable under pre- and post-project scenarios (NHC, p. 31). The Project would also adjust and relocate various utilities to grade (such as sewer manhole, storm drain manhole, telecommunication manhole, power poles, and electrical vault).

In order to irrigate the proposed landscaping along the median and on the slope easements, the Project would connect to existing water lines; thus the Project would not result in the construction of new water facilities.

Electricity is provided to the City by the Banning Department of Public Works, which buys its electricity from Southern California Edison (SCE). SCE facilities include an existing substation located on east Ramsey Street, and high-voltage transmission lines, which range from 12 kilovolts (KV) to 115 KV. Currently the Project Site has existing power poles that may be relocated as part of the Project; thus, the Project would not result in the construction of new or expanded electric lines. Rather, as mentioned above, the Project would adjust existing utility lines to grade.

The Gas Company (formerly Southern California Gas) provides natural gas services and facilities to the City. (GP DEIR, pp. III-205.) However, the proposed Project, a roadway extension, would not require natural gas services. As such, the proposed Project would not result in the in expansion of natural gas lines. Kinder Morgan owns and operates a high pressure gas line in Westward Avenue. At the request of Kinder Morgan, the project's drainage crossings at Highland Wash, Smith Creek, and Pershing Creek will be designed and constructed to avoid conflict with that facility.

Telephone services are provided by Verizon, while cable is provided by Time Warner to the City of Banning residents. (GP DEIR, p. III-207.) While the Project would not require any telecommunication services, as part of the Project footprint, as mentioned above, the Project would adjust existing telecommunication man hole to grade.

For the reasons set forth in the preceding paragraphs, impacts regarding the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities would be less than significant.

Sources: Project Description; GP DEIR; NHC

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

Less than significant impact. The City Public Works Department provides domestic water services to the City of Banning and unincorporated County of Riverside lands located southwesterly of the City limits. The City owns and operates wells, reservoirs, and a distribution line system to deliver domestic water within their service area. The City has water lines ranging from 2 inches to 30 inches in diameter. (GP PSF, p. VI-1.) According to the City's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), the City will be able to meet future demands through 2045. The UWMP shows that recent water use in 2020, landscaping irrigation for both non-potable and potable range between 301 Acre-Feet (AF) and 599 AF, respectively. Previous year's show that water consumption within the landscaping irrigation sector fluctuate between 267 AF and 306 AF for non-potable water and 505 AF and 579 AF for potable water. In general, landscape irrigation for both potable and non-potable water uses combined account for approximately 10.3 percent of the City's water use. (UWMP, p. 6-7.) The UWMP has projected water demand in 2045 for landscape irrigation for non-potable and potable water range from 484 AF and 900 AF. (UWMP, p. 6-15.)

As mentioned above, the proposed Project is implementing GPA 19-2502 by constructing a Circulation Element Arterial Highway. The Project includes landscaping within roadway median and hydroseeding for

slope protection along the slope easement. This quantity of landscaping would not consume significant quantities of water.

Therefore, since the Project would not require extensive amounts of water use and the UWMP has concluded it will be able to meet future development demands, the proposed Project would have sufficient water supply during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. Thus, implementation of the Project would less than significant impacts.

Source: GP; UWMP

c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

No impact. The City of Banning Public Works Department provides sanitary wastewater services to the City of Banning, including the Project Site. (GP, p. VI-2.) The Project consists of a roadway extension and there is no Project component that would produce wastewater requiring treatment. Therefore, the Project has no impact.

Source: Project Description; GP

d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

Less than significant impact. The proposed Project is a roadway extension and after construction is complete would not generate solid waste. Solid waste would be generated during Project construction; however, since the Project Site is vacant no structures are anticipated to be demolished and construction waste is expected to be minimal. As discussed in the Project Description, the Project may include the removal of approximately 14 existing power poles.

Solid waste collection and disposal services are provided by Waste Management Inland Empire and trash collected from the City is disposed at the Lamb Canyon Sanitary Landfill, El Sobrante Landfill, and the Badlands Landfill. (GP DEIR, p. III-211.) According to CalRecycle databases, the Badlands Landfill will remain operational until 2026, Lamb Canyon Landfill until 2032, and El Sobrante Landfill until 2051 (CAL-R). Given the number of landfills to which the solid waste could be redirected and their estimated closure dates, sufficient capacity is expected for the temporary increase of solid waste produced during construction as a result of Project implementation.

Thus, since the Project will only produce minimal construction waste and there are three landfills that could potentially accept construction generated solid waste, the Project will have a less than significant impact.

Source: CAL-R; GP DEIR

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

No impact. The collection and disposal of solid waste would conform to applicable federal, state, and local plans and regulations, including AB 939 (Integrated Waste Management Act) that require local jurisdictions divert at least 50% of all solid waste. Implementation of the Project would adhere to all federal, state and local regulations related to solid waste during construction and operation. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no impact in terms of complying with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

Source: AB 939

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

Wildfire Discussion:

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

No impact. CalFire adopted Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps for State Responsibility Areas (SRA) and Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) in November 2007. According to CalFire's most recent FHSZ maps, the Project Site is not within or immediately adjacent to an SRA or LRA classified very high fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ). (CalFire.) According to the City GP, the proposed Project is within an area classified as high fire threat zone, with a small portion of the right-of-way within a very high fire threat zone and is adjacent to an area of very high fire threat zone to the south within the City's sphere of influence (GP, Exhibit V-10).

The City adopted the Multi-Hazard Functional Planning Guidance document in 1996. The document is organized into three-parts, which include: 1) the Banning Emergency Plan; 2) twelve functional Annexes that describe the emergency response organization; and 3) a listing of operational data such as resources, key personnel, and essential facilities and contacts. (GP, p. VI-42.) According to the City's GP, the City does not have established evacuation routes, although depending on the location and extent of emergency, major surface streets could be utilized to route traffic through the City. (GP, p. VI-45.) The Project Site is currently an undeveloped dirt road between South Highland Home Road and Sunset Avenue. The Project Site is gated and does not provide vehicular access from South Highland Home Road to Sunset Avenue. Construction and operation of the Project, a planned arterial highway, would provide vehicular connectivity and access and could be used as an evacuation route in the event of an emergency. Therefore, the Project has no impact.

Sources: GP; CalFire

b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

No impact. As discussed in the previous Response XXa, the Project Site is not within or immediately adjacent to a SRA or LRA classified very high fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ). (CalFire.) The Project involves the construction and operation of Sun Lakes Boulevard, a planned roadway, between South Highland Home Road and Sunset Avenue. This proposed roadway would be constructed in a relatively flat area and no component of the Project, would contribute to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. Therefore, the Project has no impact.

Source: CalFire

c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

No impact. As noted above in Response XXa, the Project Site is not within or immediately adjacent to a SRA or LRA classified very high fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ). (CalFire.) The Project involves the construction and operation of Sun Lakes Boulevard, a planned roadway, between South Highland Home Road and Sunset Avenue. This proposed roadway would not include fuel breaks, the use of emergency water sources, new power lines, or new utilities. No impact is anticipated.

Source: CalFire

d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

No impact. As noted above in Response XXa, the Project Site is not within or immediately adjacent to a SRA or LRA classified very high fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ). (CalFire.) The Project involves the construction and operation of Sun Lakes Boulevard, a planned roadway, between South Highland Home Road and Sunset Avenue. This proposed roadway would be constructed in a relatively flat area and no component of the Project, would contribute to a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. No impact is anticipated.

Source: CalFire

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

Mandatory Findings of Significance Discussion:

a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or an endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

Potential to Substantially Degrade the Quality of the Environment: Implementation of the proposed Project would not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment. As indicated in the foregoing analysis, either no impacts, less than significant impacts, or less than significant impacts with mitigation incorporated would occur with regard to each to the environmental issues analyzed in this Initial Study.

Potential to Impact Biological Resources: As discussed in Section IV Biological Resources, implementation of the proposed Project would not:

- substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species;
- cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels;
- threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; or
- substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or an endangered plant or animal.

The results of the MSHCP Consistency Report, LAPM Survey Report, Burrowing Owl Focused Survey Report, NEPSSA Report, Fairy Shrimp Technical Memo, and the JD Report (included in **Appendix B** of this Initial Study), and the analysis in Section IV Biological Resources indicate that with implementation of existing regulations,

mitigation measures **MM BIO-1, through MM BIO-5** and compliance with the condition of any regulatory permits issued by the RWQCB and/or CDFW, impacts to biological resources would be less than significant.

Potential to Eliminate Important Examples of the Major Periods of California History or Prehistory: As discussed in the response to Section V Cultural Resources, according to the Phase I CRA, there are no historic period built-environment resources present on the Project Site. Although the potential to encounter intact and significant buried archaeological deposits are unlikely, with implementation of mitigation measure **MM CR-1**, potential impacts regarding the elimination of important examples of California History or Prehistory would be less than significant.

Source: Above Environmental Checklist; AE(a); WSP(a); WSP(b); WSP(c); WSP(d); WSP(e); WSP(f)

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)?

Less than significant impact. The proposed Project is implementing GPA 19-2502 and is therefore consistent with local and regional transportation plans. The Project's air quality emissions do not exceed established thresholds of significance (Table A and Table B). The Project adheres to all other City and County land use plans and policies, and would not increase VMTs within a 5-mile radius, 10-mile radius, or Riverside County, service area (Table O). The Project is not considered growth-inducing as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) and would not induce, either directly or indirectly, population and/or housing growth beyond what is envisioned by the Banning GP. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

Source: Above Environmental Checklist; WEBB(a); Translutions

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

Less than significant. Effects on human beings were evaluated as part of the aesthetics, air quality, cultural resources as it relates to human remains, geology and soils, GHGs, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, and utilities and service systems sections in this Initial Study. All impacts would be less than significant.

Source: Above Environmental Checklist; AE(a); dBF; Geocon; WEBB(a); NHC

Note: Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21083.05, Public Resources Code. Reference: Sections 65088.4, Gov. Code; Sections 210808(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21083, 21083.05, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21095, and 21151, Public Resources Code; *Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino,* (1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296; *Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors,* (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 1337; *Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka* (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; P*rotect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency* (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109*; San Francisco Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco* (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656

EARLIER ANALYSES

Earlier analysis may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration as per California Code of Regulations section 1503 (c) (3) (D).

Earlier Analysis Used, if any: *Initial Study/Negative Declaration for Sun Lakes Boulevard Circulation Element, General Plan Amendment GPA 19-2502;* January 2020; *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of Banning Comprehensive General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, SCH Number 2005011039,* June 2005. Both documents are available at the City of Banning.

REFERENCES

The following documents were referred to as information sources during preparation of this document. They are available for public review at the locations abbreviated after each listing and spelled out at the end of this section.

Cited As:	Reference:
AB 52	California State Legislature, *Assembly Bill No. 52*, September 25, 2014. (Available at https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB52, accessed December 23, 2019).
AB 939	California Legislative Information, *Assembly Bill No. 939 Solid waste management, source reduction, recycling, composting and market development,* September 29, 1989. (Available at https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=198919900AB939, accessed June 8, 2022.)
AE(a)	Applied Earthworks, *Phase I Cultural Resource Assessment for the Sun Lakes Boulevard Realignment Project in the City of Banning, Riverside County, California,* April 2024 revised. (Appendix C)
AE(b)	Applied Earthworks, *Paleontological Memorandum: Constraints Analysis for Sun Lakes Boulevard Realignment Project in the City of Banning, Riverside County, California,* April 30, 2024. (Appendix E.2)
ALUC	Riverside County, Airport Land Use Commission, *BN. Banning Municipal Airport,* Adopted October 2004. (Available at http://www.rcaluc.org/Portals/13/06-%20Vol.%201%20Banning%20Municipal.pdf?ver=2016-09-19-114352-640, accessed October 5, 2020.)
BMC	City of Banning, *Banning Municipal Code*, April 29, 2020. (Available at https://library.municode.com/ca/banning/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=16203, accessed October 5, 2020.)

Cited As:	Reference:
CalFire	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, *Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map – Riverside West, State Responsibility Area and Local Responsibility Area*. (Available at https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/wildland-hazards-building-codes/fire-hazard-severity-zones-maps/, accessed June 7, 2022.)
CAL-A	California Department of Energy Commission Fuel Data, *Facts and Statistics*. (Available at https://www.cdtfa.ca.gov/taxes-and-fees/spftrpts.htm, accessed June 5, 2024.)
CAL-R	California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, *SWIS Facility/Site Search*. (Available at https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/Site/Search, accessed June 8, 2022.)
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation, *Transportation and Construction Vibration Guidance Manual,* April 2020. (Available at https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/env/tcvgm-apr2020-a11y.pdf, accessed July 11, 2022.)
CARB 2005	California Air Resources Board. *Guidance Document for Addressing Air Quality Issues in General Plans and Local Planning,* dated May 6, 2005. (Available at http: //www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/planning/air-quality-guidance/complete-guidance-document.pdf?sfvrsn=4, accessed June 6, 2024.)
CARB 2022	California Air Resources Board, *State and Federal Standard Area Designations,* webpage, 2022. (Available at https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/maps-state-and-federal-area-designations, accessed June 4, 2024)
CEC	California Energy Commission, Energy Consumption Data Management System, California Energy Consumption Database, *Electricity Consumption by Entity*, interactive web tool. (Available at http://www.ecdms.energy.ca.gov/elecbyutil.aspx, accessed June 6, 2024.)
CCR 8	California Code of Regulations, *Title 8*. (Available at https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=ICBC28DB0D47911DE8879F88E8B0DAAAE&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default)&bhcp=1, accessed October 52020.)
CCR 13	California Code of Regulations*, Title 13*. (Available at https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=I143B9530D46811DE8879F88E8B0DAAAE&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default), accessed October 5, 2020.)
CCR 22	California Code of Regulations, *Title 22*. (Available at https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=I6F56A7E1D4B611DE8879F88E8B0DAAAE&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default), accessed October 5, 2020.)
CCR 26	California Code of Regulations, *Title 26*. (Available at https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=I5B751C00D44F11DEB97CF67CD0B99467&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default), accessed October 5, 2020.)

Cited As:	Reference:
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations, *Title 49*, October 2012. (Available at https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2012-title49-vol2/pdf/CFR-2012-title49-vol2.pdf, accessed October 5, 2020.)
CGP	State Water Resources Control Board, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities, Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ, NPDES No. CAS000002. (Available at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/docs/constpermits/wqo2009_0009_dwq.pdf , accessed October 7, 2020.)
CHSC 6.95	California Health and Safety Code, Chapter 6.95. (Available at http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?division=20.&chapter=6.95.&lawCode=HSC&article=1, accessed October 5, 2020.)
dBF	dBF Associates, Inc., *Noise Analysis Report – Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension, Banning CA,* April 8, 2022. (Appendix G)
DOF	California Department of Finance, *Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State – January 1, 2023 and 2024.* May 2024 (Available at https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates-e1/, accessed June 7, 2024.)
DTSC-A	California Department of Toxic Substances Control, *EnviroStor Database Community Day School No.1 (33010034).* (Available at https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report?global_id=33010034, accessed October 5, 2020.)
DTSC-B	California Department of Toxic Substances Control, *Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List (Cortese)*.2022.(Available at https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/search?cmd=search&reporttype=CORTESE&site_type=CSITES,FUDS&status=ACT,BKLG,COM&reporttitle=HAZARDOUS+WASTE+AND+SUBSTANCES+SITE+LIST+%28CORTESE%29, accessed on June 23, 2022.)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency, *FEMA Flood Map Center: FIRM Panel Map No. 06065C0816G*, Effective Date August 28, 2008.(Available at https://map1.msc.fema.gov/idms/IntraList.cgi?displ=wsp/item_06065C0816G.txt, accessed October 7, 2020.)
FMMP	California Department of Conservation, *Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, Riverside County Important Farmland 2016 West.* (Available online at https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp, accessed September 18, 2020.)
FTA	Federal Transit Administration, *Transmit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual,* September 2018. (Available at https://www.transit.dot.gov/research-innovation/transit-noise-and-vibration-impact-assessment-manual-report-0123, accessed July 8, 2022.)
Geocon	Geocon West, Inc., *Geotechnical Pavement Investigation, Sun Lakes Boulevard Realignment, South Highland Home Road to Sunset Avenue, Banning, California*, October 14, 2019, Revised June 5, 2024. (Appendix E.1)

Cited As:	Reference:
Google Earth	Google Earth Pro, 2021, Version 7.3.4.8248 (Accessed on June 22, 2022.)
GP	City of Banning, *General Plan*, Adopted January 31, 2006. (Available at the City of Banning.)
GP DEIR	City of Banning, *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of Banning Comprehensive General Plan and Zoning Ordinance*, June, 2005. (Available at http://www.ci.banning.ca.us/DocumentCenter/Home/Index/19, accessed September 18, 2020.)
HSC 7050.5	California Health and Safety Code, Division 7, Part 1, Chapter 2, Section 7050.5, last amended 1987. (Available at http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&sectionNum=7050.5, accessed October 3, 2020.)
IDA	International Night Sky Association, *What is Light Pollution.* (Available at https://www.darksky.org/light-pollution/, accessed May 26, 2022.)
LRTP	Riverside County Transportation Commission, *Riverside County Long Range Transportation Study,* December 2019. (Available at https://www.rctc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/RCTC-Draft-LRTS-120119-GV22.pdf, accessed October 2, 2020.)
LSA	LSA Associates, *Traffic Impact Analysis Guidelines for Local Transportation Analysis and Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis for the City of Banning,* October 2021. (Available at *https://www.banningca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/12605/City-of-Banning-TIA-Guidelines, accessed on June 6, 2024.)*
MSJC	Mt. San Jacinto College, *MSJC Campus Locations,* 2022. (Available at https://msjc.edu/locations/index.html, accessed June 23, 2022.)
NHC	Northwest Hydraulic Consultants. *Technical Memorandum – High Level Assessment of Potential Sediment Transport Impacts Associated with the Updated Sun Lakes Boulevard Improvement Project.* May 28, 2024. (Appendix F)
Ord 847	County of Riverside, *Ordinance No. 847 (As Amended Through 847.1), An Ordinance of The County Of Riverside Amending Ordinance No. 847 Regulating Noise,* effective July 19, 2007.(Available at https://www.rivcocob.org/ords/800/847.pdf, accessed June 22, 2022.)
PASS	City of Banning, *Bus Schedules*. (Available at http://www.banning.ca.us/351/Bus-Schedules, accessed October 2, 2020).
PRC 5097.98	California Public Resources Code, Division 5, Chapter 1.75, Section 5097.98, last amended 2009, effective January 1, 2010. (Available at https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=5097.98.&lawCode=PRC, accessed October 2, 2020.)

Cited As:	Reference:
Resolution No. 2020-37	City of Banning, *Resolution No. 2020-037: A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Banning, California, Adopting a Negative Declaration (Environmental Assessment 19-1503) and Approving Proposed General Plan Amendment No. 19-2502 For A Proposed General Plan Circulation Element Amendment For The Extension of Sun Lakes Boulevard, In The City Of Banning, California (APN's 537-110-007, 537-110-008, 537-110-009 And 537-110-010), January 17, 2020*. (Available at https://banningca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7109/Att-1-Resolution-2020-37?bidId=, accessed June 7, 2022.)
RCFD	Riverside County Fire Department, *Fire Stations*. (Available at http://www.rvcfire.org/stationsAndFunctions/FireStations/Pages/default.aspx, accessed October 2, 2020.)
RCZO	County of Riverside, *Ordinance No. 348 – Providing for Land Use Planning and Zoning Regulations and Related Functions of the County of Riverside, as amended through Ordinance No. 348.4896,* effective January 10, 2019. (Available at https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/Ord_348_clean_version.pdf?ver=2019-01-22-170021-000, accessed September 18, 2020.)
RTA	Riverside Transit Agency, *Bus Route Schedules,* September 8, 2019. (Available at https://www.riversidetransit.com/index.php/riding-the-bus/maps-schedules, accessed October 2, 2020.)
SB 18	California Senate Bill 18 (2004), Burton, Chapter 905, Statutes of 2004. Traditional Tribal Cultural Places. (Available at http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/03-04/bill/sen/sb_0001-0050/sb_18_bill_20040930_chaptered.html, accessed June 7, 2024.)
SB 743	California State Legislature, *Senate Bill No. 743*, September 27, 2013. (Available at http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB743, accessed December 23, 2019).
SCAG RTP SCS	Southern California Association of Governments*, Connect Socal; The 2024-2050 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy*, Adopted April 4, 2024. (Available at https://scag.ca.gov/sites/main/files/file-attachments/23-2987-connect-socal-2024-final-complete-040424.pdf?1714175547, accessed Juen 6 2024.)
SCAQMD 1993	South Coast Air Quality Management District, *CEQA Air Quality Handbook*, November 1993. (Available at SCAQMD.)
SCAQMD 2003	South Coast Air Quality Management District, *White Paper on Potential Control Strategies to Address Cumulative Impacts from Air Pollution*, August 2003 (Available at http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/Agendas/Environmental-Justice/cumulative-impacts-working-group/cumulative-impacts-white-paper.pdf, accessed June 4, 2024.)
SCAQMD 2022	South Coast Air Quality Management District, *2022 Air Quality Management Plan*, Adopted December 2, 2022. (Available at https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/clean-air-plans/air-quality-management-plans/2022-air-quality-management-plan/final-2022-aqmp/final-2022-aqmp.pdf?sfvrsn=16, Accessed June 6, 2024.)

Cited As:	Reference:
USCB	United States Census Bureau, *Quick Facts Banning City, California,* July 1,2023. (Available at https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/banningcitycalifornia, accessed June 7, 2024.
UWMP	West & Associates Engineering, Inc and John Robinson Consulting, Inc., *City of Banning 2020 Urban Water Management Plan,* June 2021. (Available at https://www.ci.banning.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/9110/Banning-Final-2020-UWMP---06282021?bidId=, accessed on June 7, 2022.)
WEBB(a)	Albert A. Webb Associates, *Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Analysis for Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project in the City of Banning*, November 2, 2021. (Appendix A)
WEBB(c)	Albert A Webb Associates, *Energy Tables*. (Appendix D)
WSP(a)	WSP USA, Inc., *Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Consistency Analysis, Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project,* June 2024. (Appendix B.1)
WSP(b)	WSP USA, Inc., *Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project Los Angeles Pocket Mouse Focused Survey, City of Banning,* June 2024. (Appendix B.2)
WSP(c)	WSP USA, Inc, *Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project Burrowing Owl Focused Survey, City of Banning,* May 2024. (Appendix B.3)
WSP(d)	WSP USA, Inc, *Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Narrow Endemic Plan Species Survey, City of Banning,* June 2024. (Appendix B.4)
WSP(e)	WSP USA, Inc, *Technical Memorandum, Sun Lakes Boulevard Results of 2020-2021 Wet and Dry Season Fairy Shrimp Focused Surveys, City of Banning,* May 14, 2024. (Appendix B.5)
WSP(f)	WSP USA, Inc, *Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) Report, Sun Lakes Boulevard Extension Project,* July 2024. (Appendix B.7)
WSP(g)	WSP USA, Inc. *Sun Lakes Blvd Project Delineation of Jurisdictional Waters, City of Banning, July 2024.* (Appendix B.8)

LIST OF INITIAL STUDY PREPARERS

Albert A. Webb Associates
3788 McCray Street
Riverside, CA 92506
951-686-1070

Planning and Environmental Services Department
Project Manager: Autumn DeWoody, Senior Environmental Analyst
Quality Control: Stephanie Standerfer, Vice President
Cheryl DeGano, Environmental Services Practice Area Leader
Eliza Laws, Senior Environmental Analyst
Monica Tobias, Associate Environmental Analyst
Noemi Avila, Assistant Environmental Analyst
Jacqueline Gamboa, Assistant Environmental Analyst
Virginia Waters, Assistant Environmental Analyst