FORM APPROVED COUNTY COUNSEL
BY: GREGORY P. PRIAMOS DATE 1/6/16

Departmental Concurrence

# SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
# COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

4.14 A

**FROM:** TLMA – Transportation Department

**SUBMITTAL DATE:**
December 22, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Intent to Adopt a Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Approve the Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project. 4th District; [$0]

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt the Final Initial Study With Mitigated Negative Declaration for Environmental Assessment No. OM900 and adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program based on the findings in the initial study and conclusion that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment;

2. Approve the Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project; and

3. Direct the Clerk of the Board to file the Notice of Determination with the County Clerk for posting within five (5) working days of approval of the project.

**BACKGROUND:**
**Summary (continued on p. 2)**

Patricia Romo
Assistant Director of Transportation

Juan C. Perez
Director of Transportation and Land Management

| FINANCIAL DATA | Current Fiscal Year: | Next Fiscal Year: | Total Cost: | Ongoing Cost: | POLICY/CONSENT (Per Exec. Office) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| COST | $ 0 | $ 0 | $ 0 | $ 0 | Consent ☐ Policy ☒ |
| NET COUNTY COST | $ 0 | $ 0 | $ 0 | $ 0 | |

**SOURCE OF FUNDS:**

**Budget Adjustment:**

**For Fiscal Year:** 15/16

**C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION:**

APPROVE
BY: Tina Grande

**County Executive Office Signature**

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On motion of Supervisor Jeffries, seconded by Supervisor Tavaglione and duly carried by unanimous vote, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

| | |
|---|---|
| Ayes: | Jeffries, Tavaglione, Washington, Benoit and Ashley |
| Nays: | None |
| Absent: | None |
| Date: | January 26, 2016 |
| xc: | Transp., Recorder |

Kecia Harper-Ihem
Clerk of the Board
By: Deputy

☐ Positions Added ☐ Change Order
☐ A-30 ☐ 4/5 Vote

**Prev. Agn. Ref.:** | **District:** 4 | **Agenda Number:** 3-29

**BACKGROUND:**
**Summary (continued)**

The County of Riverside (County) as the lead agency under CEQA, proposes to construct a new grade separation and roadway to cross the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and Highway 111 from Avenue 66 to Lincoln Street in the Community of Mecca. The total length of the project is approximately 1.7 miles. Currently, the only UPRR crossing in the area is at 4th Street; because the 4th Street crossing is at-grade, east-west travel is delayed when trains cross.

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) identifies grade separations of streets from rail lines as a key part of the region's goods movement strategy. Avenue 66 is a major street within the Coachella Valley and serves as a connection between State Route 86, State Route 111, and the Community of Mecca. Increasing vehicular traffic due to regional population growth and rising train traffic along this rail trade corridor has increased the congestion which is causing increasing delays at the existing 4th Street at-grade crossing with State Route 111, UPRR, and Hammond Road.

The proposed project will consist of the construction of a new two lane roadway that will connect State Route 195/Avenue 66 west of the UPRR tracks to Avenue 66 east of the UPRR tracks, and will add two new signals at the new connections to Avenue 66, approximately 1.7 miles in length, and a new bridge over the existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks, as shown in figures 1-3.

Adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP) will complete the environmental documentation for the project. Final design is currently on going and will be completed by early 2016. Construction is expected to commence in December 2016. Construction is anticipated to take 18 months.

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and the Riverside County Implementing Procedures for CEQA, the County of Riverside, as lead agency, has prepared an Initial Study/Environmental Assessment No. OM900 (SCH#2014051063) to analyze the proposed project to determine if any potential significant effects on the environment would result from the proposed project. The public Notice of Intent (NOI) to adopt the CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) was published in the Press Enterprise with Spanish language affiliates on May 21, 2014. The CEQA IS/MND was circulated for public comment from May 21, 2014 through June 21, 2014. As a result of the public comments received during the first circulation, the Build Alternative was re-evaluated. The document was recirculated during July 1, 2015 through July 30, 2015. Issues raised in the public circulations (May 21, 2014 – June 21, 2014 and July 1, 2015- July 30, 2015) of the Initial Study have been addressed by incorporation of response-to-comments located within Appendices of Initial Study Environmental Document. The Initial Study evaluated one Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative. The Build Alternative is the proposed project.

The results from the analysis demonstrate the following: The proposed project would have no impact on Mineral Resource and Recreation. The project would have less than significant impact on Agriculture and Forest Resources, Population and Housing, Transportation/Traffic, and Utilities and Service Systems. The project would have no significant impacts to Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Public Services, and Mandatory Findings of Significance with mitigation implemented.

**Impact on Residents and Businesses**
The Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project will improve traffic circulation and safety; as well as provide uninterrupted and efficient access for motorists, residents, businesses, pedestrians and emergency vehicles in the area.

**SUPPLEMENTAL:**

**Additional Fiscal Information**

This project will be funded with a combination of State, Federal, and local funds, including CVAG TUMF, CMAQ, Federal Highway Administration funds, Developer Impact fees, and Gas Tax.

**Contract History and Price Reasonableness**

N/A

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Figure 1- Project Vicinity
Figure 2- Project Location
Figure 3- Build Alternative
Notice of Determination
Final Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration

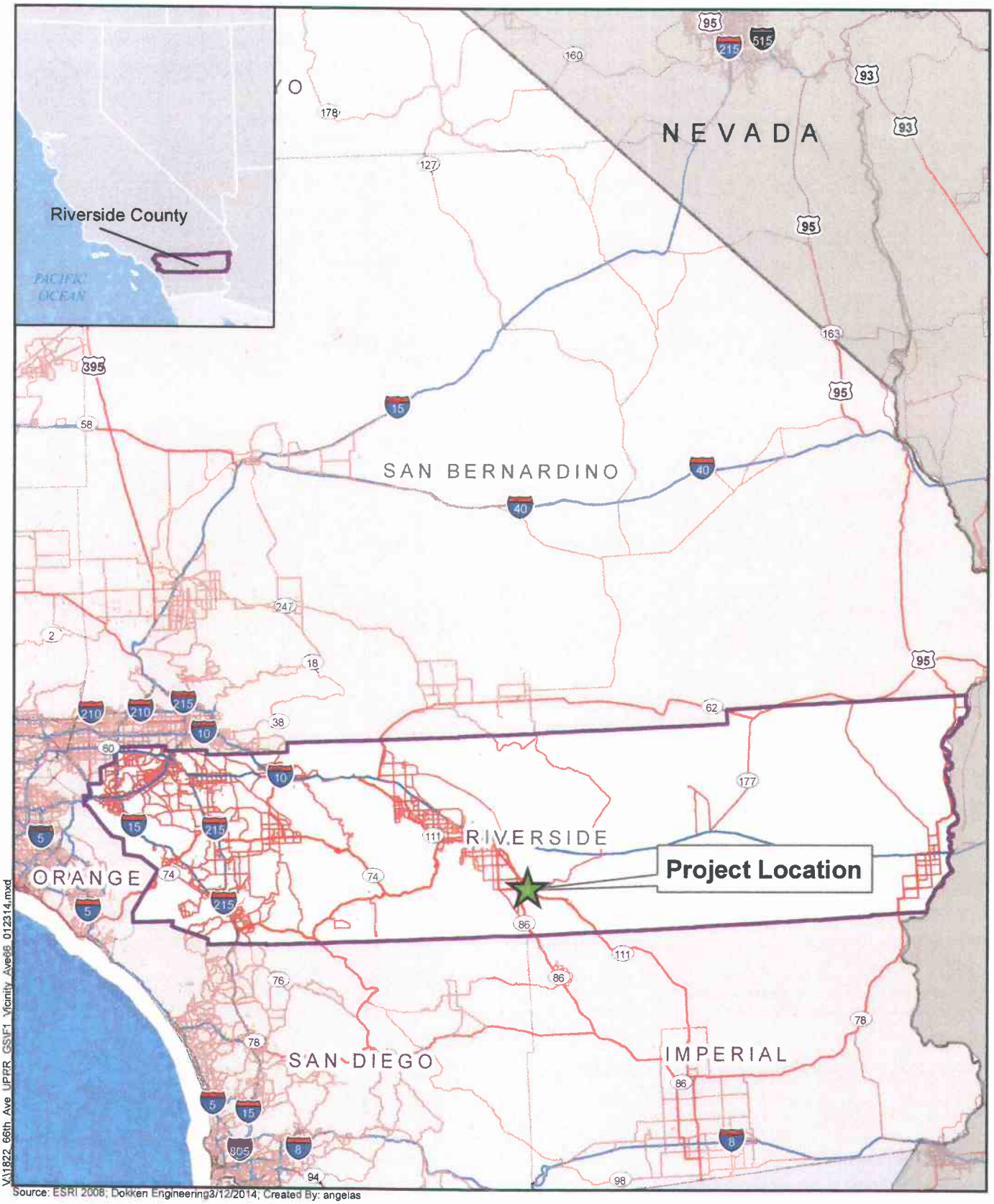
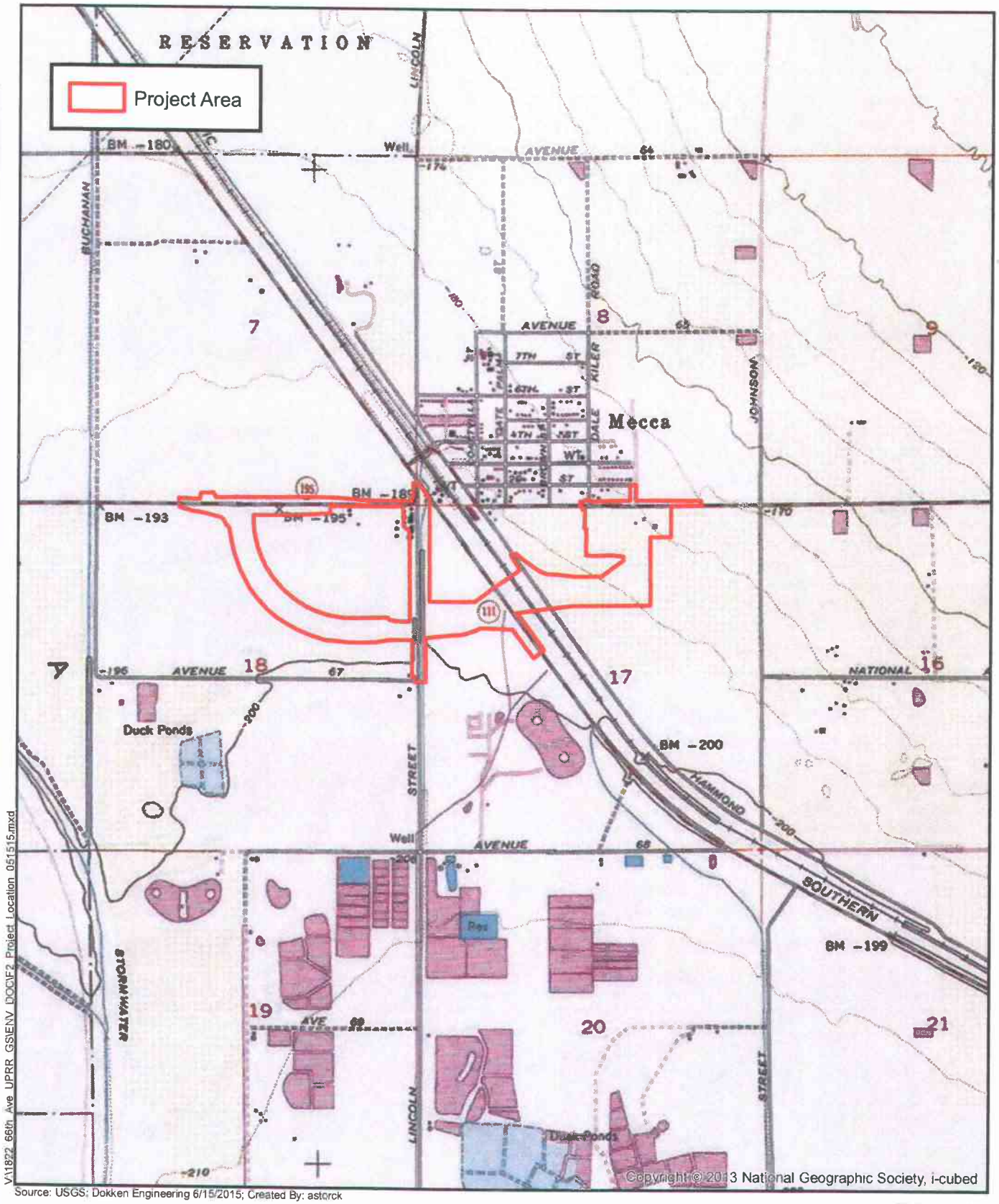



**FIGURE 1**
**Project Vicinity**
Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)
Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project
Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California




V:\1822_66th Ave_UPRR_GIS\ENV_DOC\F2_Project_Location_051515.mxd

Source: USGS; Dokken Engineering 6/15/2015; Created By: astorck

0 0.5 1 Miles

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

Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)
Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project
Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California

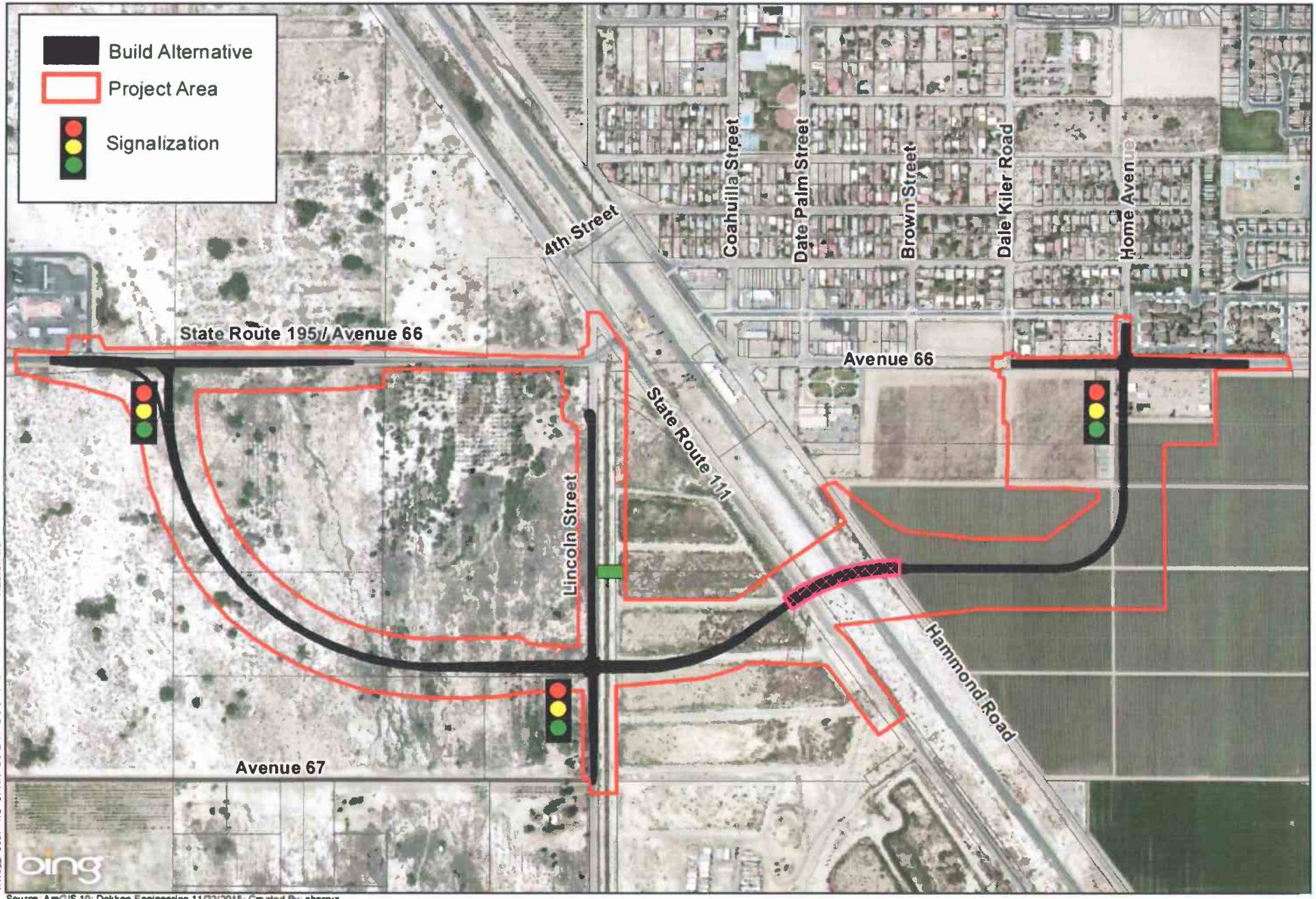



**FIGURE 3**
**BUILD ALTERNATIV**
Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)
Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project
Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California

# NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

Original Negative Declaration / Notice of Determination was routed to County Clerks for posting on. 1/26/16 Date KD Initial

EA No.OM900 SCH #2014051063

**PROJECT NAME: Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project**

**DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION:** The County of Riverside (County) proposes to connect SR-195 to Avenue 66 with a new railroad grade separation bypass south of the existing Avenue 66 alignment. The new bypass would begin approximately 1,100 feet east of SR-86 (2,600 feet west of Lincoln Street) and crosses Lincoln Street approximately 1,900 feet south of SR 195. The new bypass then would continue east from Lincoln Street going over SR-111, the UPRR railroad corridor, and Hammond Road with a bridge. The road would extend further to the east and connect to the existing Avenue 66 at Home Avenue. The proposed bypass consists of approximately 1.7 mi of two lane (1 lane each direction) roadway and a bridge with sufficient width to allow an ultimate four lane cross section. The bridge would be approximately 750 feet long, 94 feet wide, and striped for 2 lanes. Lincoln Street would no longer connect to SR 195, but would become a cul-de-sac, providing access to adjoining properties. The project would include the construction of a bridge or culvert to span the Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel's ultimate condition per the completed Mecca/North Shore Stormwater Master Plan. Existing utilities, including electricity, phone, gas, and irrigation would be relocated or protected in place. Current access from adjacent properties would be maintained or modified. The project does not preclude affected properties from having access similar to current access. Modifications to 12-inch and 18-inch sewer force mains located at Avenue 66/Lincoln Street intersection are included. A proposed 6-inch sewer force main along the eastern roadway shoulder of Lincoln Street from Avenue 66 towards Avenue 68, within the project area, is included. A 30-inch domestic water main within the project area between State Route 195/Avenue 66 to Avenue 66/Home Avenue in Mecca is also included. Right-of-way would be acquired along the project alignment. Partial acquisitions are anticipated at 12 parcels. Temporary construction easements would be needed throughout the project as well. The project would allow traffic to use Avenue 66 and the 4th Street crossing during and after construction.

A Final Initial Study/ Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared and completed in compliance with the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines and Riverside County CEQA Implementing Procedures. On January 26, 2016, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project Final Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration (October 2015). The public Notice of Intent (NOI) to adopt the CEQA IS/MND was published in a newspaper of general circulation on May 21, 2014. The CEQA IS/MND was circulated for public comment from May 21, 2014 through June 21, 2014. As a result of the public comments received during the first circulation, the Build Alternative was re-evaluated. The CEQA IS/MND was recirculated during July 1, 2015 through July 30, 2015, with the NOI to adopt the CEQA IS/MND published on July 1, 2015 in newspapers of general circulation. Issues raised in the public circulations (May 21, 2014 – June 21, 2014 and July 1, 2015- July 30, 2015) of the Initial Study have been addressed by incorporated in the response-to-comments. The Initial Study evaluated one Build Alternative and a No-Build Alternative. The Build Alternative is the proposed project. The Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project Final Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration (October 2015) may be examined, along with administrative record, at the Transportation Department, 4080 Lemon Street, 8th floor, Riverside, California 92501.

1. The project [☐ will ☒ will not] have a significant effect on the environment.
2. ☐ An Environmental Impact Report was prepared and certified for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
   ☒ A Mitigation Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. ☐ A Mitigation Monitoring Report Plan [☒ was ☐] was not adopted for this project
4. ☐ A statement of Overriding Consideration [☐ was ☒ was not] adopted for this project.
5. ☒ **This is to certify that the Final Initial Study, Mitigated Negative Declaration, public comments and responses, and record of project approval, is available to the General Public at: Transportation Department, 4080 Lemon Street, 8th floor, Riverside, California 92501.**

Russell Williams — Title: Environmental Division Mgr. — Date: 1/7/16

Russell Williams

Juan C. Perez — Title: Director of Transportation — Date: 1/11/16

Juan C. Perez

**HEARING BODY OR OFFICER**

XX Board of Supervisors

____ Planning Commission

**ACTION ON PROJECT**

X Approval

____ Disapproval

JAN 26 2016 3-29

Date: Jan. 26, 2016

Verifying: Board Assistant — Title: — Date: 1/26/16

**For County Clerk Use**

# Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA
DISTRICT 08 – RIV – COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
FEDERAL PROJECT NUMBER: PNRSCML 5956 (221)

# Final Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration

**Prepared by the**
**County of Riverside**

**October 2015**

## General Information about this Document

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, large print, on audiocassette, or computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write to County of Riverside, Attn: Marcia Frances Rose, 3525 14th Street, Riverside, CA 92501, phone number (951) 955-1505.

08-RIV-18-PNRSCML 5956 (221)
EA Number: 0M900
SCH #2014051063

# Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project

## FINAL INITIAL STUDY
## with Mitigated Negative Declaration

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

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
Transportation Department

10/15/15
Date of Approval

Russell Williams
Environmental Division Manager
Riverside County Transportation Department-Environmental Division
County of Riverside

# Mitigated Negative Declaration

Pursuant to: Division 13, Public Resources Code

***Project Description***

The County of Riverside (County) is the lead agency under CEQA. The Department of Transportation (Department) is the lead agency under NEPA.

The County proposes to construct a new grade separation and roadway to cross the Union Pacific Railroad and Highway 111 from Avenue 66 to Lincoln Street in the community of Mecca. The total length of the project is approximately 1.7 miles. Currently, the only UPRR crossing in the area is at 4th Street; because the 4th Street crossing is at-grade, east-west travel is delayed when trains cross.

The project is included in the Fiscal Year 2015 Federal Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and is proposed for funding from a Federal earmark, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program, the Eastern Riverside Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF) program, and funds from sales taxes. It is also included in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The purpose of the project is to:

- Provide a grade separated crossing of UPRR and State Route 111 for traffic in the Mecca Community
- Provide improved access for emergency vehicles across the railroad tracks
- Address projected increased delays due to future increases in rail and vehicular traffic
- Help reduce emissions from vehicle idling at the 4th Street at-grade train crossing
- Provide a facility consistent with regional and local General Plans. The 2013 FTIP and 2012-2035 RTP describes a 2-lane (1-lane in each direction) elevated structure. The County General Plan Circulation Element indicates Lincoln Street as a Secondary Road. West of Lincoln Street, Avenue 66 is designated as an arterial and east of Lincoln Street, Avenue 66 is a Major Road.

Avenue 66 is a major street within this part of Riverside County and serves as a connection between State Route 86, State Route 111, and the Community of Mecca. Increasing vehicular traffic due to regional population growth and rising train traffic along this rail trade corridor has increased the congestion which is causing increasing delays at the existing 4th Street at-grade crossing with State Route 111, UPRR, and Hammond Road. These delays affect the traveling public and potentially hinder access by emergency vehicles and increases emergency response times in the area. Air quality may also worsen due to increased vehicle idling without improvements.

UPRR will not authorize widening the existing crossing at 4th Street which necessitates creating a new grade-separated crossing in the area. The nearest at-grade railroad crossing from the project area is on 62nd Avenue, approximately 1.2 miles to the northwest. Another at-grade railroad crossing is near 69th Avenue, approximately 2.5 miles to the southeast. Without

improvements, 62nd Avenue would continue to be the closest alternate route for crossing UPRR. There are no other grade-separated crossings in the vicinity.

The 2012-2035 RTP identifies grade separations of streets from rail lines as a key part of the region's goods movement strategy.

The proposed project will connect SR-195 to Avenue 66 with a new railroad grade separation bypass south of the existing Avenue 66 alignment. The new bypass begins approximately 1,100 feet east of SR-86 (2,600 feet west of Lincoln Street) and crosses Lincoln Street approximately 1,900 feet south of SR 195. The new bypass then continues east from Lincoln Street going over SR-111, the UPRR railroad corridor, and Hammond Road with a bridge. The road then extends further to the east and connects to the existing Avenue 66 at Home Avenue. The proposed bypass will consist of approximately 1.7 mi of two lane (1 lane each direction) roadway and a bridge with sufficient width to allow an ultimate four lane cross section. The bridge will be approximately 750 feet long, 94 feet wide, and striped for 2 lanes. Lincoln Street will no longer connect to SR 195, but will become a cul-de-sac, providing access to adjoining properties. The project would include the construction of a bridge or culvert to span the Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel's ultimate condition per the completed Mecca/North Shore Stormwater Master Plan.

Existing utilities, including electricity, phone, gas, and irrigation would be relocated or protected in place. Current access from adjacent properties will be maintained or modified. The project does not preclude affected properties from having access similar to current access. A proposed 6-inch sewer force main along the eastern roadway shoulder Lincoln Street from Avenue 66 towards Avenue 68, within the project area, is included. A 30-inch domestic water main within the project area between State Route 195/Avenue 66 to Avenue 66/Home Avenue in Mecca is also included.

Right-of-way would be acquired along the project alignment. Partial acquisitions are anticipated at 12 parcels. Temporary construction easements would be needed throughout the project as well. The project would allow traffic to use Avenue 66 and the 4th Street crossing during and after construction. Construction is anticipated to take 18 months.

***Determination***

This proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is included to give notice to interested agencies and the public that it is the the County's intent to adopt an MND for this project. This does not mean that the County's decision regarding the project is final. This MND is subject of modification based on comments received by interested agencies and the public. The County has prepared an Initial Study for this project, and following public review, has determined from this study that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The proposed project would have no impact on Mineral Resource and Recreation.

The project would have less than significant impact on Agriculture and Forest Resources, Population and Housing, Transportation/Traffic, and Utilities and Service Systems.

The project would have no significant impacts to Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous

Materials, Hyrdology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Noise, Public Services, and Mandatory Findings of Signficance with mitigation implemented. The avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are:

AES-1: Re-vegetation: Exposed slopes shall be revegetated with standard erosion control planting.

AES-2: Lighting shall be appropriately shielded. The project's lighting design shall be consistent with Caltrans, Community of Mecca, and Riverside County lighting guidelines and standards and will be developed in coordination with Caltrans Landscape Architecture staff for areas within state right-of-way. Lights will be designed to face away and be shielded away from the adjacent Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Species Conservation Plan area.

AES-3 The overcrossing over State Route 111 will harmonize with the natural surroundings by applying aesthetic treatment(s) such as artwork, color, and/or veneer. Such aesthetic treatment(s) will be determined by the County and incorporated during final design.

AES-4: Should landscaping be installed within and/or adjacent to the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and Delta Conservation Area , the project shall not incorporate invasive, non-native plant species or plants listed in the CVMSHCP Table 4-113. Any landscape treatments within or adjacent to the Conservation Area shall incorporate native plant materials to the maximum extent feasible; recommended native species are listed in CVMSHCP Table 4-112. This list may be amended from time to time through a Minor Amendment with Wildlife Agency Concurrence.

AQ-1: The construction contractor shall comply with Caltrans' Standard Specifications Section 14-9.03 Dust Control of Caltrans' Standard Specifications (2010).

AQ-2: The Wind Erosion Control BMP (WE-1) from Caltrans' Construction Site Best Management Practices Manual will be implemented as follows:

- Water shall be applied by means of pressure-type distributors or pipelines equipped with a spray system or hoses and nozzles that will ensure even distribution.
- All distribution equipment shall be equipped with a positive means of shutoff
- Unless water is applied by means of pipelines, at least one mobile unit shall be available at all times to apply water or dust palliative to the project.
- If reclaimed water is used, the sources and discharge must meet California Department of Health Services water reclamation criteria and the Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements. Non-potable water shall not be conveyed in tanks or drain pipes that will be used to convey potable water and there shall be no connection between potable and non-potable supplies. Non-potable tanks, pipes and other conveyances shall be marked "NON-POTABLE WATER – DO NOT DRINK."
- Materials applied as temporary soil stabilizers and soil binders will also provide wind erosion control benefits.

AQ-3: Construction of the project would comply with the South Coast Air Quality Management District's Rule 403—Fugitive Dust.

BIO-1: The Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel will be designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and will either be staked with high visibility flagging or fenced with orange snow fencing to ensure the construction areas will not encroach further than the designated work limits. Prior to work within the channel, the project will obtain a CWA Section 404 authorization (Nationwide Permit 14) from the USACE, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the RWQCB, a Section 402 NPDES Permit regulated by the SWRCB, and a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the CDFW.

BIO-2: The Conservation Area shall be designated an ESA and fenced with high visibility snow fencing at the project limits. Where feasible, mesquite within the Conservation Area shall be designated an ESA and fenced with high visibility snow fencing at the tree's dripline. Remaining areas within Area #1 (see NES Figure 7. Project Impact Areas) must be provided ESA fencing or staking. Contractor is restricted from encroaching within any areas designated as ESA.

BIO-3: At construction completion, the County shall apply a seed mix comprised of native, locally adapted species to temporarily impacted native habitats (excluding agricultural and developed areas) and within the Conservation Area boundaries. The seed mix shall be approved by a biologist.

BIO-4: The project biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys consistent with the 2015 CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation for burrowing owls within 1-2 weeks before construction activities begin. If no burrowing owls are detected, no further action for burrowing owl will be required.

If active burrowing owl burrows are found in or near the permanent or temporary construction impact area, the County will implement the following:

Occupied burrows must not be disturbed during the breeding season (February 1 to August 31) unless a qualified biologist approved by the CDFW verifies through non-invasive methods that either: 1) the birds have not begun egg-laying and incubation; or 2) that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and are capable of independent survival. If avoidance of active nests is preferred, the biologist must consult with the CDFW to determine appropriate buffer widths and acreage of foraging habitat to be permanently preserved contiguous with the occupied burrow site. The Contractor must not disturb identified burrowing owl burrows until the qualified biologist verifies it has been cleared.

Should destruction of occupied burrows be unavoidable during the non-breeding season (September 1 – January 31) and prior to construction, the approved biologist will consult with CDFW and either, unsuitable burrows must be enhanced (enlarged or cleared of debris) or new burrows created (by installing artificial burrows) at a ratio of 2:1 on protected lands approved by the CDFW. Newly created burrows will follow guidelines established by the CDFW.

BIO-5: If the construction contractor needs to remove vegetation (shrubs or trees) during the migratory bird breeding season (February 15th – September 1st), a pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted within 7 days prior to vegetation removal. Within 2 weeks of the nesting bird survey, all vegetation cleared by the project biologist shall be removed by the contractor.

A minimum 100 foot no-disturbance buffer shall be established around any active nest to limit the impacts of construction activities. The contractor shall immediately stop work in the nesting area until the appropriate buffer is established and is prohibited from conducting work that could disturb the birds (as determined by the project biologist and in coordination with wildlife agencies) in the buffer area until the project biologist determines the young have fledged.

BIO-6: To minimize direct mortality to any roosting bats, each date palm/palm tree requiring removal shall be trimmed using a two-step process conducted over two consecutive days. Contractor shall only trim the outermost fronds for each individual tree on the first day; innermost fronds shall not be trimmed. On the second day the remaining fronds on each tree shall be removed. All fronds shall only be manually trimmed using chainsaws- no dozers, backhoes, cranes, or other heavy equipment is permitted. Should bats emerge during the tree trimming, trimming activities shall temporarily cease at the individual tree until bats are no longer actively emerging from the tree. A survey within 2 weeks of tree removal will be conducted to detect if bats are using trees for roosting. If bats are using trees for roosting, trees must be removed during March 1 – April 15 or August 31 – October 15. Trees with bat presence will be removed following a two-step process; trees will be trimmed with chainsaws on day 1 and will be fully removed on day 2.

BIO-7: To allow subterranean wildlife enough time to escape initial clearing and grubbing activities, equipment used during initial clearing and grubbing shall be operated at speeds no greater than 3 miles per hour.

BIO-8: Prior to arrival at the project site and prior to leaving the project site, the construction contractor shall clean all construction equipment that may contain invasive plants and/or seeds to reduce the spreading of noxious weeds.

BIO-9: Contractor shall remove all tamarisk within the construction limits and shall remove the entire root ball using a large excavator to mechanically remove individual trees from the ground.

BIO-10: The contractor shall not apply rodenticides or herbicides in the project area during construction activities.

BIO-11: The contractor shall dispose of all food-related trash in closed containers, and shall remove it from the project area each day during the construction period. Construction personnel shall not feed or otherwise attract wildlife to the project area.

BIO-12: If any wildlife is encountered during the course of construction, said wildlife shall be allowed to leave the construction area unharmed. In the unlikely event a worker inadvertently injures or kills a special-status species or finds one dead, injured, or entrapped, the worker shall immediately report the incident to the project biologist.

BIO-13: Prior to construction, clearance surveys shall be conducted by an Acceptable Biologist during the Crissal thrasher and Le Conte's thrasher nesting season, January 15 – June 15, to determine if active nest sites for this species occur within 500 feet of the Conservation Area; survey restrictions are not required outside the boundary of the Conservation Area. If nesting Crissal thrashers or Le Conte's thrashers are found within the Conservation Area, a 500-foot buffer within the Conservation Area shall be established; the buffer is not required to extend into areas outside the Conservation Area. The buffer will be staked and flagged. No construction activities will be permitted within the buffer during the breeding season of January 15 – June 15 or until the young have fledged, as determined by the project biologist.

BIO-14: Prior to conducting pre-construction surveys for CVMSHCP covered species, the County must submit the names of biologists to the CVCC for inclusion in the CVMSHCP list of Acceptable Biologists.

BIO-15: Prior to construction, the County's CVMSHCP Acceptable Biologists must survey the Conservation Area to be affected by the project for applicable Covered Species during the appropriate seasons and in accordance with established accepted protocols, if they exist. For those species for which protocols do not exist at the time surveys are needed, the Acceptable Biologist will use a survey protocol generally accepted by biologists familiar with the species. Survey results must be documented in both mapped and text form and must be submitted to the CVCC for review.

BIO-16: Should landscaping be installed within and/or adjacent to the Conservation Area, the project shall not incorporate invasive, non-native plant species or plants listed in CVMSHCP Table 4-112. Any landscape treatments within or adjacent to the Conservation Area shall incorporate native plant materials to the maximum extent feasible; recommended native species are listed in CVMSHCP Table 4-112. This list may be amended from time to time through a Minor Amendment with Wildlife Agency Concurrence.

BIO-17: In areas adjacent to or within the Conservation Area, the project shall incorporate barriers into the project design to minimize unauthorized public access, illegal trespass, or dumping in the Conservation Area. Final design for barriers will occur following consultation with the CVCC.

CUL-1: Within State Right-of-Way, if buried cultural resources are encountered during Project Activities, it is Caltrans policy that work stop within 60 feet of the discovery until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find. The archaeological monitor must notify the Caltrans District Environmental Branch Chief (DEBC), Gabrielle Duff, if buried cultural resources are encountered.

CUL-2: Outside of State Right-of-Way, if buried cultural resources are encountered during Project Activities, work will stop within 60 feet of the discovery until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find. The archaeological monitor must notify the Riverside County Transportation Department Project Manager, Scott Staley, at (951) 955-6800, if buried cultural resources are encountered.

CUL-3: Sampling will be conducted on bores that result in intact stratigraphic samples from which fossils can be recovered. Samples may be collected during geotechnical studies during final design, or alternatively, collected from the sidewalls of trenches dug for geotechnical investigations or during construction.

CUL-4: Within State Right-of-Way, in the event that human remains are found, the county coroner shall be notified and ALL construction activities within 60 feet of the discovery shall stop. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The person who discovered the remains will contact the District 8 Division of Environmental Planning; Gabrielle Duff, DEBC: (909)383-6933 and Gary Jones, DNAC: (909)383-7505. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

CUL-5: Outside State Right-of-Way, in the event that human remains are found, the county coroner shall be notified and ALL construction activities within 60 feet of the discovery shall stop. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native

American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The person who discovered the remains will contact the Riverside County Transportation Department Project Manager, Scott Staley, at (951) 955-6800. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

CUL-6: Within State Right-of-Way, all ground-disturbing activities must be monitored by an archaeological and Native American monitor (approved by the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians [TMDCI]). The archaeological and Native American monitor must attend the pre-construction meeting. Both monitors and the Caltrans DEBC, Gabrielle Duff, must be notified 5 days in advance of ground-disturbing activities. Additionally, the Caltrans DEBC must be notified within 24 hours of construction completion within State Right-of-Way. A monitoring report must be submitted to Caltrans Cultural Studies within 30 days of end of construction in State ROW.

CUL-7: Outside State Right-of-Way, all ground-disturbing activities must be monitored by an archaeological and Native American monitor (approved by the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians [TMDCI]). The archaeological and Native American monitor must attend the pre-construction meeting. Both monitors must be notified 5 days in advance of ground-disturbing activities.

GEO-1: BMPs will be implemented during construction to minimize erosion. BMPs include any facilities and methods used to remove, reduce, or prevent storm water runoff pollutants from entering receiving waters. Erosion control methods, temporary and permanent BMPs, and improvement of drainage facilities along the roadway would minimize impacts from storm water runoff.

GEO-2: The project will be designed in accordance with County design and construction requirements as well as the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Caltrans Design Specifications, and applicable seismic standards.

GEO-3 The project will be designed in accordance with recommendations provided in the final Geotechnical Design Report.

CC-1: The project would incorporate the use of energy-efficient lighting, such as light-emitting diode (LED) traffic signals. LED bulbs cost $60 to $70 each, but last five to six years, compared to the one-year average lifespan of the incandescent bulbs previously used. The LED bulbs themselves consume 10 percent of the electricity of traditional lights, which will also help reduce the project's $CO_2$ emissions.

CC-2: According to the Department's Standard Specifications, the contractor must comply with all local Air Quality Management District rules, ordinances, and regulations for air quality restrictions.

HAZ-1: Based on preliminary plans, right-of-way acquisition is not expected at the Former Coachella Valley Minimex, Former Mecca Chevron or the Riverside County Fire Department Station # 40 Station. These sites are adjacent to the project. Should final plans indicate that a portion of this parcel will be acquired for new right-of-way, a preliminary environmental screening (limited subsurface sampling and laboratory analysis) should be performed for potentially elevated levels of petroleum hydrocarbons and MTBE contamination within the limits of proposed construction, and/or right-of way acquisition.

HAZ-2: If site screening encounters elevated levels of petroleum hydrocarbons and/or MTBE, a limited Phase II ISA should be performed. The Phase II ISA should consist of subsurface sampling and laboratory analysis and be of sufficient quantity to define the extent and concentration of contamination within the areal extent and depths of planned construction

activities adjacent to these sites. The Phase II ISA should also provide both a Health and Safety Plan for worker safety and a Work Plan for handling and disposing contaminated soil during construction.

HAZ-3: Test for potential pesticide and herbicide residuals in soils at the agricultural properties on Parcels 727-272-021, 727-272-027, 727-272-031, 727-272-032, and 727-272-033.

HAZ-4: To avoid impacts from pavement striping during construction it is recommended that testing and removal requirements for yellow striping and pavement marking materials be performed in accordance with Caltrans Standard Special Provision 15-300 REMOVE TRAFFIC STRIPE AND PAVEMENT MARKINGS.

HAZ-5: Any leaking transformers observed during the course of the project should be considered a potential PCB hazard. A detailed inspection of individual electrical transformers was not conducted for this ISA. However, should leaks from electrical transformers (that will either remain within the construction limits or will require removal and/or relocation) be encountered during construction, the transformer fluid should be sampled and analyzed by qualified personnel for detectable levels of PCB's. Should PCBs be detected, the transformer should be removed and disposed of in accordance with Title 22, Division 4.5 of the California Code of Regulations and any other appropriate regulatory agency. Any stained soil encountered below electrical transformers with detectable levels of PCB's should also be handled and disposed of in accordance with Title 22, Division 4.5 of the California Code of Regulations and any other appropriate regulatory agency.

HAZ-6: As is the case for any project that proposes excavation, the potential exists for unknown hazardous contamination to be revealed during project construction. For any previously unknown hazardous waste/ material encountered during construction, the procedures outline in Appendix E (Caltrans Unknown Hazard Procedures) shall be followed.

WQ-1: Best management practices:

- The area of construction and disturbance would be limited to as small an area as feasible to reduce erosion and sedimentation.

- Measures would be implemented during land-disturbing activities to reduce erosion and sedimentation. These measures may include mulches, soil binders and erosion control blankets, silt fencing, fiber rolls, temporary berms, sediment desilting basins, sediment traps, and check dams.

- Existing vegetation would be protected where feasible to reduce erosion and sedimentation. Vegetation would be preserved by installing temporary fencing, or other protection devices, around areas to be protected.

- Exposed soils would be covered by loose bulk materials or other materials to reduce erosion and runoff during rainfall events.

- Exposed soils would be stabilized, through watering or other measures, to prevent the movement of dust at the project site caused by wind and construction activities such as traffic and grading activities.

- All construction roadway areas would be properly protected to prevent excess erosion, sedimentation, and water pollution.

- All vehicle and equipment maintenance procedures would be conducted off-site. In the event of an emergency, maintenance would occur away from the stormwater channel.

- All concrete curing activities would be conducted to minimize spray drift and prevent curing compounds from entering the waterway directly or indirectly.

- All construction materials, vehicles, stockpiles, and staging areas would be situated outside of the stream channel as feasible. All stockpiles would be covered, as feasible.

- Energy dissipaters and erosion control pads would be provided at the bottom of slope drains. Other flow conveyance control mechanisms may include earth dikes, swales, or ditches. Stream bank stabilization measures would also be implemented.

- All erosion control measures and storm water control measures would be properly maintained until the site has returned to a pre-construction state.

- All disturbed areas would be restored to pre-construction contours and revegetated, either through hydroseeding or other means, with native or approved non-invasive exotic species.

- All construction materials would be hauled off-site after completion of construction.

WQ-2: Any requirements for additional avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures will be contained in the permits obtained from all required regulatory agencies.

WQ-3: The proposed project would require a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit for Discharges of storm water associated with construction activities (Construction General Permit 09-2009-DWQ). A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would also be developed and implemented as part of the Construction General Permit.

WQ-4: The construction contractor shall adhere to the SWRCB Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ NPDES Permit pursuant to Section 402 of the CWA. This permit authorizes storm water and authorized non-storm water discharges from Caltrans construction properties, facilities and activities and would be required prior to construction of this project. As part of this Permit requirement, a SWPPP shall be prepared prior to construction consistent with the requirements of the RWQCB. This SWPPP will incorporate all applicable BMPs to ensure that adequate measures are taken during construction to minimize impacts to water quality.

WQ-5: The project shall incorporate plans and design to ensure that the quantity and quality of runoff discharged to the adjacent Conservation Area is not altered in an adverse way when compared with existing conditions.

WQ-6: Stormwater systems shall be designed to prevent the release of toxins, chemicals, petroleum products, exotic plant materials or other elements that might degrade or harm biological resources or ecosystem processes within the Conservation Area.

PS-1: Impacts to traffic flow as a result of construction activities would be reduced by implementing the traffic management plan and a construction phasing plan for the proposed project. The traffic management plan includes requirements to provide the public with information through brochures and mailers, media releases, public meetings, and notification to impacted groups. Under the traffic management plan, travelers would be informed with changeable message signs, traveler information systems (internet), and bicycle community information, if necessary.

Russell Williams

Russell Williams
Environmental Division Manager
Riverside County Transportation Department-Environmental Division
County of Riverside

10/15/15
Date

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## Appendices

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## CEQA Environmental Checklist

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

| | |
|---|---|
| Project Title: | Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project |
| Lead agency name and address: | Riverside County Transportation Department<br>3525 14th Street<br>Riverside, CA 92501 |
| Contact person and phone number: | Marcia Frances Rose, M.S., PMP<br>951-955-1505 |
| Project Location: | Community of Mecca, County of Riverside |
| General plan description: | Arterial, Major Road, Secondary Road, Agriculture, Residential, Commercial |
| Objectives | The purpose of the project is to:<br>• Provide a grade separated crossing of UPRR and State Route 111 for traffic in the Mecca Community<br>• Provide improved access for emergency vehicles across the railroad tracks<br>• Address projected increased delays due to future increases in rail and vehicular traffic<br>• Help reduce emissions from vehicle idling at the 4th Street at-grade train crossing<br>• Provide a facility consistent with regional and local General Plans. The 2013 FTIP and 2012-2035 RTP describes a 2-lane (1-lane in each direction) elevated structure. The County General Plan Circulation Element indicates Lincoln Street as a Secondary Road. West of Lincoln Street, Avenue 66 is designated as an arterial and east of Lincoln Street, Avenue 66 is a Major Road. |
| Zoning: | Light Agricultural (A-1), Scenic Highway Commercial (CPS), Controlled Development Areas (W-2) |
| Description of project: (Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation.) | The proposed project would connect SR-195 to Avenue 66 with a new railroad grade separation bypass south of the existing Avenue 66 alignment. The new bypass would begin approximately 1,100 feet east of SR-86 (2,600 feet west of Lincoln Street) and crosses Lincoln Street approximately 1,900 feet south of SR 195. The new bypass then would continue east from Lincoln Street going over SR-111, the UPRR railroad corridor, and Hammond Road with a bridge. The road would extend further to the east and connect to the existing Avenue 66 at Home Avenue. The proposed bypass consists of approximately 1.7 mi of two lane (1 lane each direction) roadway and a bridge with sufficient width to allow an ultimate four lane cross section. The bridge would be approximately 750 feet long, 94 feet wide, and striped for 2 lanes. Lincoln Street would no longer connect to SR 195, but would become a cul-de-sac, providing access to adjoining properties. The project would include the construction of a bridge or culvert to span the Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel's ultimate condition per the completed Mecca/North Shore Stormwater Master Plan. See Figures 1, 2, and 3.<br><br>Existing utilities, including electricity, phone, gas, and irrigation would be relocated or protected in place. Current access from adjacent properties would be maintained or |

| | |
|---|---|
| | modified. The project does not preclude affected properties from having access similar to current access. A proposed 6-inch sewer force main along the eastern roadway shoulder of Lincoln Street from Avenue 66 towards Avenue 68, within the project area, is included. A 30-inch domestic water main within the project area between State Route 195/Avenue 66 to Avenue 66/Home Avenue in Mecca is also included.<br><br>Right-of-way would be acquired along the project alignment. Partial acquisitions are anticipated at 12 parcels. Temporary construction easements would be needed throughout the project as well. The project would allow traffic to use Avenue 66 and the 4th Street crossing during and after construction. Construction is anticipated to take 18 months.<br><br>Partial acquisition is anticipated at parcels 727-250-016, 727-250-015, 727-250-005, 727-250-007, 727-271-011, 727-271-019, State Route 111, 727-272-027, 727-212-011, 727-272-032,727-272-033, 727-250-006, and 727-250-011. |
| Surrounding land uses and setting; briefly describe the project's surroundings: | Commercial, residential, agricultural. |
| Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g. permits, financial approval, or participation agreements): | <u>State Water Resources Control Board</u><br>National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity (Construction General Permit Order 2009-0009-DWQ). |
| | <u>Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG)</u><br>Coordination with CVAG will take place to insure compliance with the Coachella Valle Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) |
| | <u>Caltrans</u><br>An encroachment permit would be obtained for project features affecting SR-195 and SR-111. |

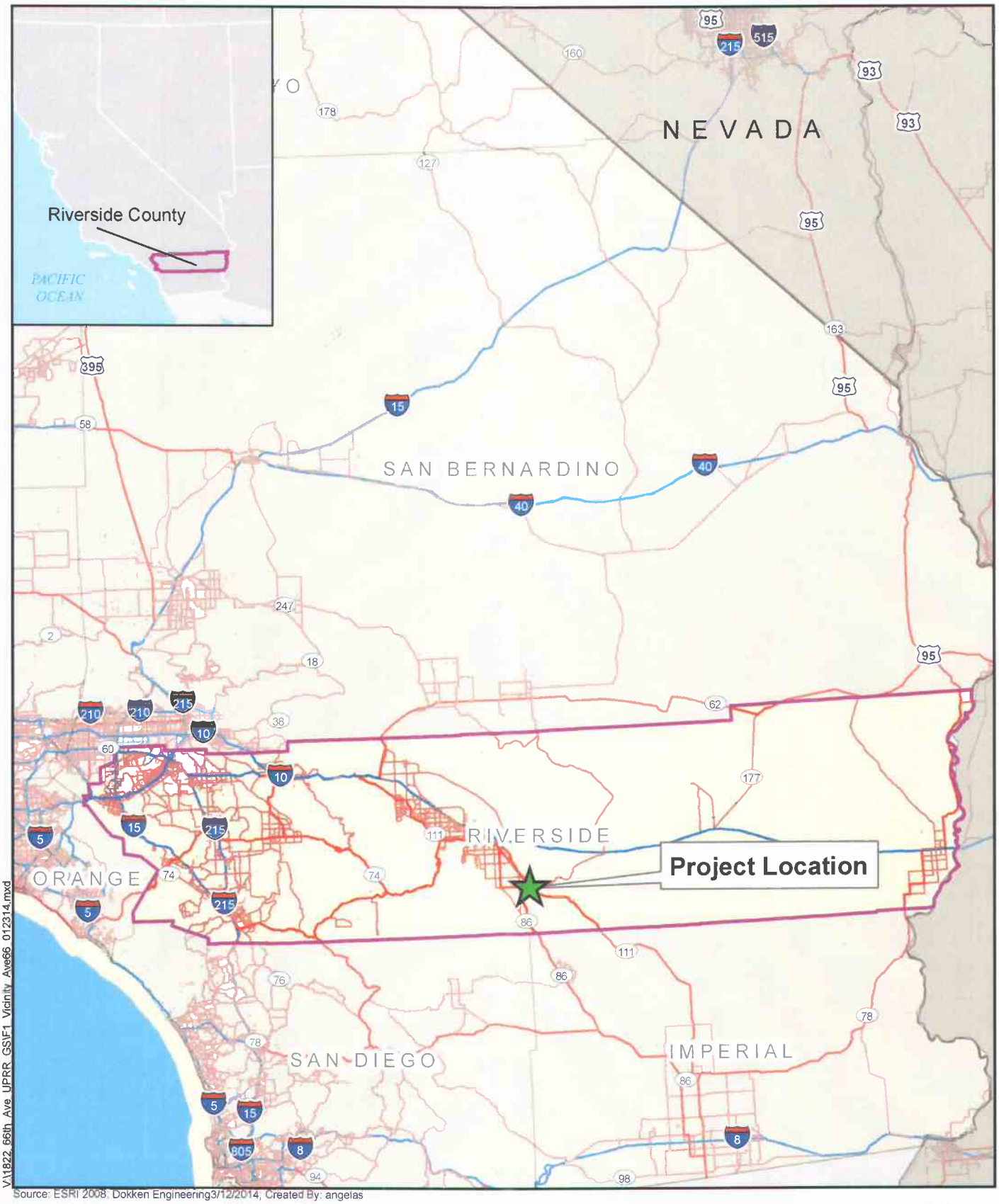
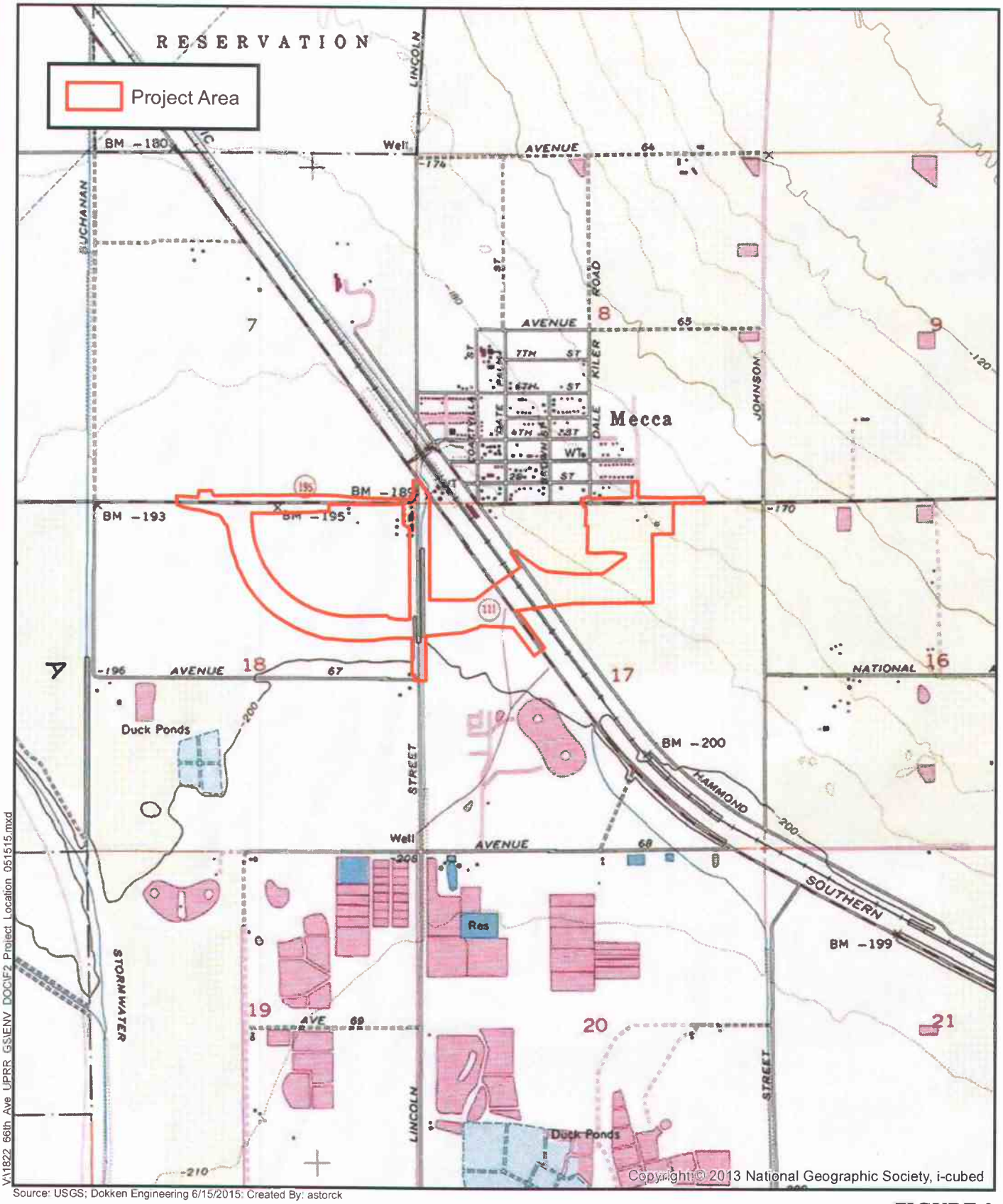



**FIGURE 1**
**Project Vicinity**
Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)
Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project
Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California



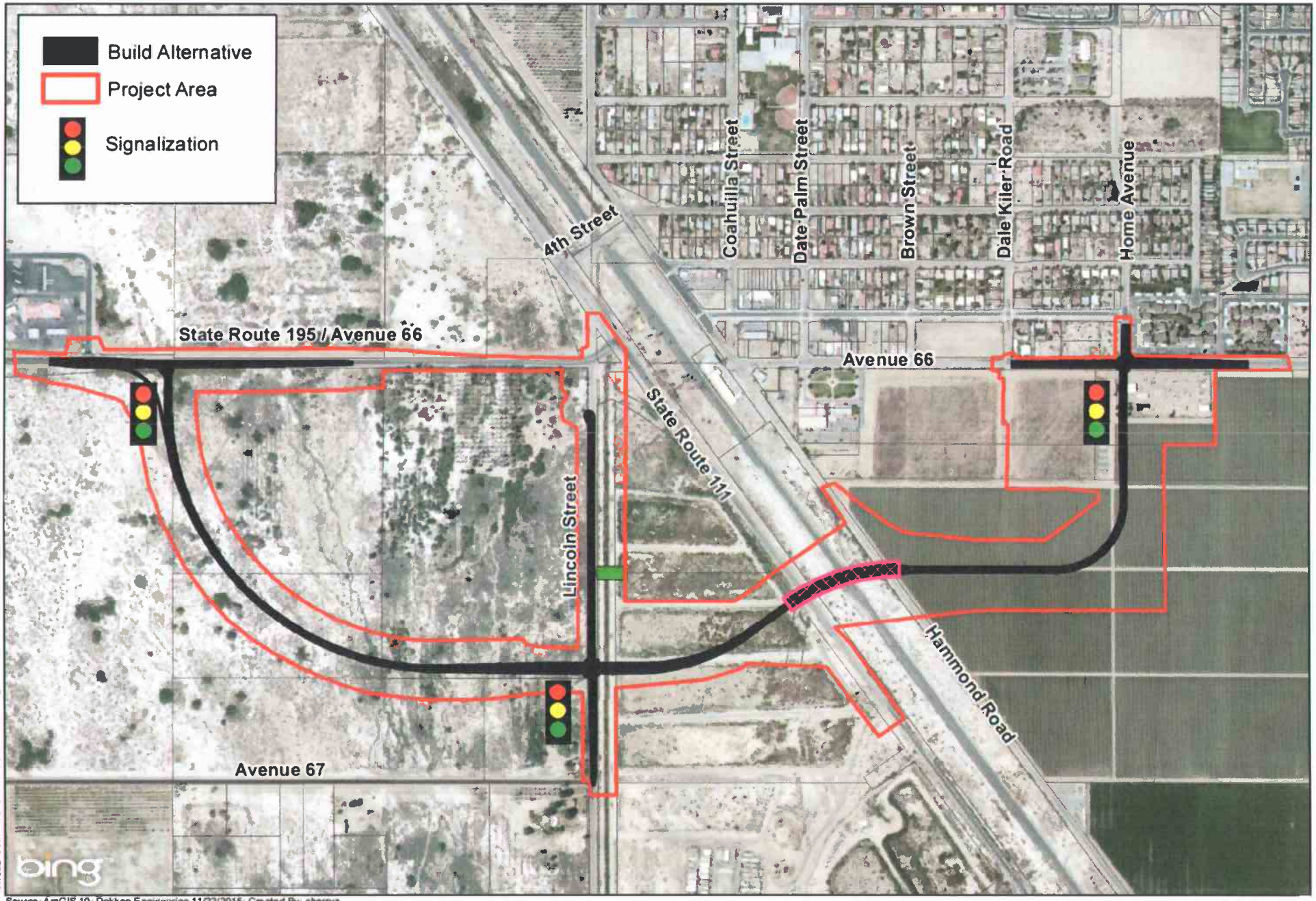

V:\1822 66th Ave UPRR GS\ENV DOC\F2 Project Location 051515.mxd

Source: USGS; Dokken Engineering 6/15/2015; Created By: astorck

0 0.5 1 Miles

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

Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)
Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project
Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California




V:\1822 66th Ave UPRR GSENV DOCS\ Build Alternative 112015.mxd

Source: ArcGIS 10; Dokken Engineering 11/22/2015; Created By: cherryz

0 1,000 2,000 Feet

**FIGURE 3**
**BUILD ALTERNATIV**
Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)
Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project
Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California

## ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project. Please see the checklist beginning on page 23 for additional information.

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

## DETERMINATION

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:** Russell Williams | **Date:** 10/15/15 |
| | |
| **Printed Name:** Russell Williams | **For:** |

## CEQA Environmental Checklist

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

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **I. AESTHETICS**: 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 the site and its surroundings? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

a&b) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated**. SR-111, from Bombay Beach on the Salton Sea to State Route 195 (SR-195) near Mecca, is a State-eligible Scenic Highway. While the proposed grade separation would span over SR-111, its location is near the more developed portion of Mecca and therefore would minimally affect the scenic value of this segment of SR-111. No trees or rock outcroppings are at the project site.

As discussed in the Cultural section (Section V) of this Initial Study, the UPRR within the project area appears eligible for listing in the National Register and California Register of Historic Places, as it is part of the Yuma Main line which connected Los Angeles to Yuma, Arizona, as well as other to midwestern and eastern parts of the United States. The project would span the UPRR and would not affect its alignment or substantially damage the visual setting. Further, AES-3 will be implemented to include aesthetic treatment at the overcrossing.

c) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.** The proposed project would have less than significant impact on degrading the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. The existing visual character is rural and consists largely of agricultural and scrub land cover. Surrounding land cover and character would not change.

The proposed project would temporarily change views experienced by drivers and pedestrians during construction. Various equipment and construction activities would be visible on-site. These impacts are temporary, and therefore, not considered substantial. With re-vegetation of exposed slopes, as discussed in measure **AES-1**, the project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character of the site. **AES-4** would also incorporate native plant materials.

d) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** Standard street lighting would be added to the bridge, which would add a new source of lighting to the area. Standard safety lighting would also be placed at intersections. Lighting would be shielded with downcasting and would be designed to face away and be shielded away from the adjacent CVMSHCP Conservation Area. Substantial light or glare is not anticipated with implementation of measure **AES-2**.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measures will be implemented:

AES-1: Re-vegetation: Exposed slopes shall be revegetated with standard erosion control planting.

AES-2: Lighting shall be appropriately shielded. The project's lighting design shall be consistent with Caltrans, Community of Mecca, and Riverside County lighting guidelines and standards and will be developed in coordination with Caltrans Landscape Architecture staff for areas within state right-of-way. Lights will be designed to face away and be shielded away from the adjacent Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Species Conservation Plan area.

AES-3: The overcrossing over State Route 111 will harmonize with the natural surroundings by applying aesthetic treatment(s) such as artwork, color, and/or veneer. Such aesthetic treatment(s) will be determined by the County and incorporated during final design.

AES-4: Should landscaping be installed within and/or adjacent to the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and Delta Conservation Area, the project shall not incorporate invasive, non-native plant species or plants listed in the CVMSHCP Table 4-113. Any landscape treatments within or adjacent to the Conservation Area shall incorporate native plant materials to the maximum extent feasible; recommended native species are listed in CVMSHCP Table 4-112. This list may be amended from time to time through a Minor Amendment with Wildlife Agency Concurrence.

| **II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES**: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

a) **Less Than Significant.** The project would convert approximately 8 acres of Prime Farmland and 13 acres of Farmland of Local Importance as shown by the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency (California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, 2012). Please see Figure 4. The area east of the UPR Railroad is currently under cultivation and is planted with bell peppers.

The area west of Lincoln Street was once cultivated for date farm production, but is no longer actively planted or cultivated. Based on the location of the farmland near existing development, and the County's General Plan which indicates future Community Development land uses in this area, the conversion of these farmlands to non-agricultural use is less than significant.

A United States Department of Agriculture *Farmland Conversion Impact Rating* (AD-1006) form has been prepared for completion and input by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, for evaluation under the Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act. The form is included in Appendix B as a reference.

b) **No Impact.** The project footprint does not go onto Williamson Act Contract land. While parcel 727-272-021 is nearby and in current non-renewal, the project does not require work within it.

Parcels 727-272-032, 727-272-033, and 727-272-027, located east of Hammond Road, were formerly under Williamson Act Contract. These properties were in non-renewal for Williamson Act Contracts beginning in February 17, 2006. The non-renewal date initiates a nine-year count down to the expiration of the contract. As a result, these parcels are no longer under Williamson Act Contract.

c & d) **No Impact.** There are no forest lands or timberlands (or lands zoned as such) in the project study area. The project would not result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

e) **No Impact.** The project would have no impact to conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use. No Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance is in the project area as mapped by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency. No forest land is in the project area as well.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No avoidance, minimization, and/or avoidance measures are proposed.

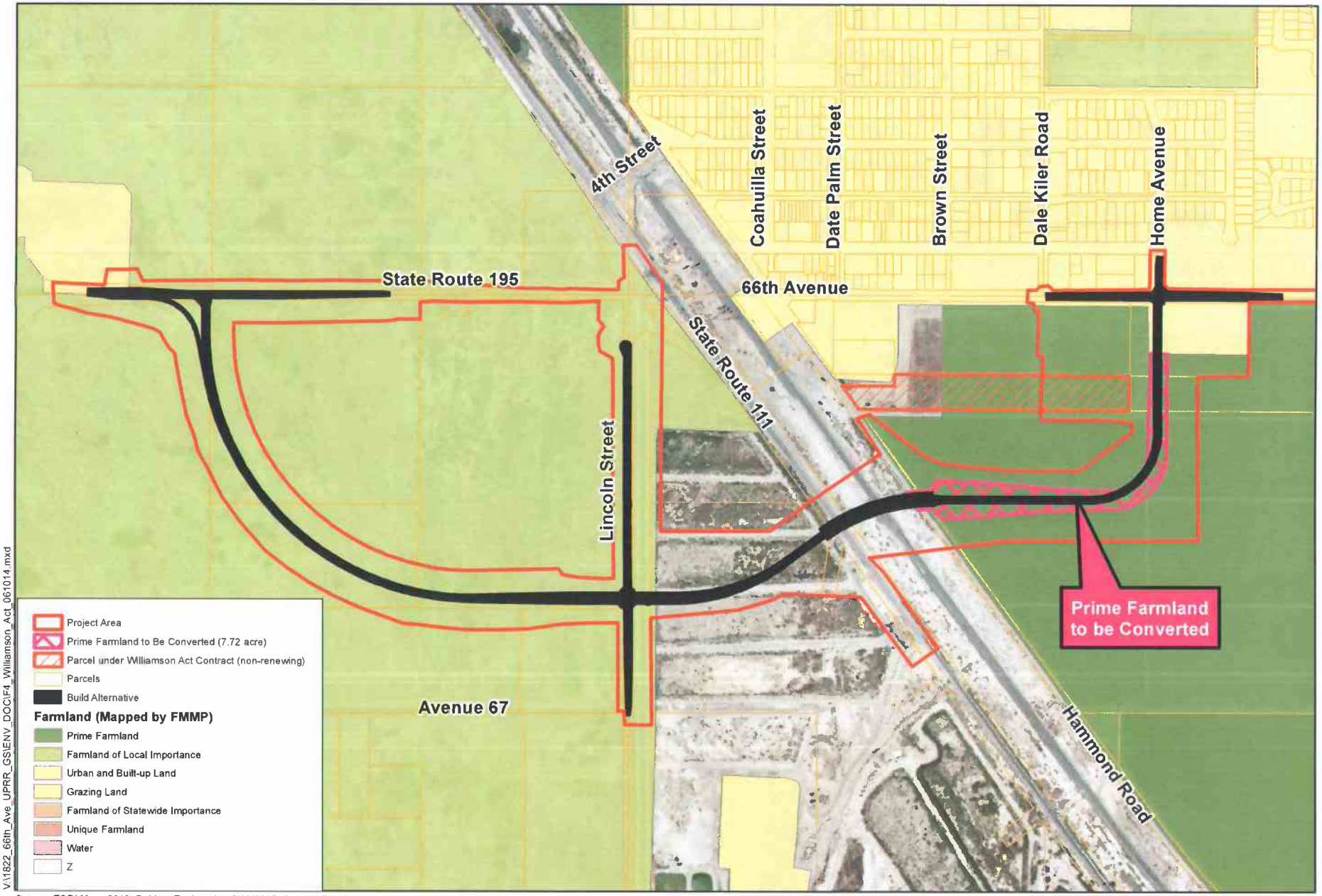



**FIGURE 4**
**Farmland and Williamson Act Land**
Federal Project # PNRSCML 5959 (221)
Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project
Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California

| | 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 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) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non- attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

a - c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would not conflict with obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan, violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, or result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment.

The project was analyzed for regional and project-level conformity with applicable air quality plans. The analyses for regional and project level/local conformity are discussed below:

**Regional Conformity:**

The project is included in the 2013-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy which was found to conform by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) on April 4, 2012, and FHWA and FTA adopted the air quality conformity finding on June 4, 2012. The project is also included in the SCAG 2013 Federal Transportation Improvement Program, page 16 of the Riverside County Project Listing. The SCAG Federal Transportation Improvement Program was found to conform by FHWA and FTA on December 14, 2012. The design concept and scope of the proposed project is consistent with its description in the 2012 RTP, the 2013 FTIP, and the assumptions in SCAG's regional emissions analysis.

## Project Level/Local Conformity

### *Particulate Matter*

The project is subject to PM2.5/PM10 conformity analysis because it is located within a PM10 and PM2.5 nonattainment area. As the first step in demonstrating PM2.5/PM10 conformity, the project underwent Interagency Consultation through the SCAG Transportation Conformity Working Group to determine if it is a Project of Air Quality Concern (POAQC) as defined in 40 CFR 93.116 and 93.123 and U.S.EPA's Hot-Spot Guidance. The SCAG Transportation Conformity Working Group determined the project is not a POAQC on December 3, 2013. Documentation is included in Appendix B.

### *Local Carbon Monoxide Impact Analysis*

The Transportation Project-Level Carbon Monoxide Protocol (University of California, Davis, Institute of Transportation Studies (UCD ITS) (1997) was used to determine the analysis needed regarding potential project-level CO impacts. The guidelines in the Protocol comply with the Clean Air Act, federal and state conformity rules, NEPA, and CEQA. In Figure 1 of the Protocol, a flow chart of questions was followed for the project. The flow chart is in included in Appendix C. Answers are as follows:

*Question 3.1.1: Is the project exempt from all emissions analyses?*
No, the project is not exempt from all emissions analyses. The project does not fit under the project types listed in Table 1 of the CO Protocol (same as 40 CFR Part 93, Table 2).Continue to Question 3.1.2.

*Question 3.1.2: Is the project exempt from regional emissions analyses?*
No, the project is not exempt from regional emissions analyses. It does not fit under the project types listed in Table 2 of the CO Protocol (same as 40 CFR Part 93, Table 3). Continue to Question 3.1.3.

*Question 3.1.3: Is project locally defined as regionally significant?*
Yes. For purposes of this flowchart, the project was considered a regionally significant project. In accordance with the definitions contained in 40 CFR Part 93 (the federal conformity rule), a regionally significant project means a transportation project that is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs and would normally be included in the modeling of a metropolitan area's transportation network, including at a minimum all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer an alternative to regional highway travel. The project is thus considered regionally significant under the definition in 40 CFR Part 93. Continue to Question 3.1.4.

*Question 3.1.4: Is project in a federal attainment area?*
No, the proposed project is located in an area designated as nonattainment for the federal Ozone and PM10 standards. The project area is in attainment or unclassified for all other NAAQS. Continue to Question 3.1.5.

*Question 3.1.5: Is there a currently conforming RTP and TIP?*
Yes. There is a currently conforming 2012 RTP and 2013 FTIP.

*Question 3.1.6: Is the project included in the regional emissions analysis supporting the currently conforming RTP and TIP?*
Yes, the project is included in the 2012 RTP and 2013 FTIP.

*Question 3.1.7: Has the project design concept and/or scope changed significantly from that in the regional analysis?*

No, the project design concept and/or scope has not changed significantly from that in the regional analysis. Continue to 3.1.9—Examine local impacts and proceed to Section 4.

***Local Analysis***

*Question 4.1.1: Is the project located in a CO nonattainment area (Level 1 in Figure 3 of Protocol)?*
No, the proposed project is located in a CO attainment area. Continue to Questions 4.1.2.

*Question 4.1.2: Was the project area redesignated as "attainment" after the 1990 Clean Air Act?*
The project area was not re-designated as 'attainment' after the 1990 Clean Air Act. Proceed to Section 4.7 (Level 7 in Figure 3 of the Protocol).

*Question 4.7.1: Does the project worsen air quality?*
No, the proposed project does not worsen air quality. The following criteria from the Protocol is discussed to help determine whether the project is likely to worsen air quality for the area:

*Does the project significantly increase the percentage of vehicles operating in cold start mode? Increasing the number of vehicles operating in cold start mode by as little as 2% should be considered potentially significant.*

Answer: The project does not increase the number of vehicles operating in cold start mode since it accommodates projected future traffic that is anticipated with or without the project. The project also does not introduce new residential or commercial land uses.

*Does the project significantly increase traffic volumes? Increases in traffic volume in excess of 5% should be considered potentially significant. Increasing the traffic volume by less than 5% may still be potentially significant if there is also a reduction in average speeds.*

Answer: The project does not increase traffic volumes through the project site. Future traffic volumes in the traffic study area total the same with the No-Build and Build Alternatives.

*Does the project worsen traffic flow? For uninterrupted roadway segments, a reduction in average speeds (within a range of 3 to 50 mph) should be regarded as worsening traffic flow. For intersection segments, a reduction in average speed or an increase in average delay should be considered as worsening traffic flow.*

Answer: No the project does not worsen traffic flow. Average delay at all intersections would improve with the Build Alternative. The level of service at all roadway segments would be C or better and would improve Grapefruit Boulevard north of 4th Street from a Level of Service (LOS) D to a LOS C or better.

d, e) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** The project would have less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated, on exposing sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations and creating objectionable odors.

During construction, short-term degradation of air quality may occur due to the release of particulate emissions (airborne dust) generated by excavation, grading, hauling, and various other activities. Emissions from construction equipment also are anticipated and would include CO, nitrogen oxides ($NO_x$), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), directly-emitted particulate matter ($PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$), and toxic air contaminants such as diesel exhaust particulate matter. Ozone is a regional pollutant that is derived from $NO_x$ and VOCs in the presence of sunlight and heat.

Site preparation and roadway construction would involve clearing, cut-and-fill activities, grading, removing or improving existing roadways, and paving roadway surfaces. Construction-related

effects on air quality from most highway projects would be greatest during the site preparation phase because most engine emissions are associated with the excavation, handling, and transport of soils to and from the site. If not properly controlled, these activities would temporarily generate $PM_{10}$, $PM_{2.5}$, and small amounts of CO, $SO_2$, $NO_x$, and VOCs. Sources of fugitive dust would include disturbed soils at the construction site and trucks carrying uncovered loads of soils. Unless properly controlled, vehicles leaving the site would deposit mud on local streets, which could be an additional source of airborne dust after it dries. $PM_{10}$ emissions would vary from day to day, depending on the nature and magnitude of construction activity and local weather conditions. $PM_{10}$ emissions would depend on soil moisture, silt content of soil, wind speed, and the amount of equipment operating. Larger dust particles would settle near the source, while fine particles would be dispersed over greater distances from the construction site.

In addition to dust-related $PM_{10}$ emissions, heavy trucks and construction equipment powered by gasoline and diesel engines would generate CO, $SO_2$, $NO_x$, VOCs and some soot particulate ($PM_{10}$ and $PM_{2.5}$) in exhaust emissions. If construction activities were to increase traffic congestion in the area, CO and other emissions from traffic would increase slightly while those vehicles are delayed. These emissions would be temporary and limited to the immediate area surrounding the construction site.

$SO_2$ is generated by oxidation during combustion of organic sulfur compounds contained in diesel fuel. Off-road diesel fuel meeting Federal Standards can contain up to 5,000 parts per million (ppm) of sulfur, whereas on-road diesel is restricted to less than 15 ppm of sulfur. However, under California law and Air Resources Board regulations, off-road diesel fuel used in California must meet the same sulfur and other standards as on-road diesel fuel, so $SO_2$-related issues due to diesel exhaust will be minimal. Some phases of construction, particularly asphalt paving, would result in short-term odors in the immediate area of each paving site(s). Such odors would be quickly dispersed below detectable thresholds as distance from the site(s) increases.

The project's construction emissions were estimated using the Roadway Construction Emissions Model by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD, 2011), which is the accepted model for all CEQA roadway projects throughout Calfiornia. As summarized in Table 1, construction activities from the project would not exceed emission thresholds established by the SCAQMD (2011). The model printout is also included in Appendix C.

**Table 1. Estimated Construction Emissions and Local Thresholds**

| | Project Construction Emissions | SCAQMD Air Quality Significance Thresholds |
|---|---|---|
| NOX | 77.9 lbs/day | 100 lbs/day |
| VOC | 6.6 lbs/day | 75 lbs/day |
| PM10 | 8.4 lbs/day | 150 lbs/day |
| PM2.5 | 3.9 lbs/day | 55 lbs/day |
| SOX | N/A | 150 lbs/day |
| CO | 36 lbs/day | 550 lbs/day |
| Lead | N/A | 3 lbs/day |

Based on the map of naturally-occurring asbestos locations contained in *A General Location Guide for Ultramafic Rocks in California – Areas More Likely to Contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos* (California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology 2000), major ultramafic rock formations are not found in Riverside County. Therefore, construction and grading would not occur in an area with ultramafic rock that could be a source of emissions of naturally-occurring asbestos.

Construction related impacts to air quality would be temporary in nature and with the inclusion of measures **AQ-1, AQ-2, and AQ-3**, these impacts are not considered to be significant.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the following measures would reduce any air quality impacts resulting from construction activities:

AQ-1: The construction contractor shall comply with Caltrans' Standard Specifications Section 14-9.03 Dust Control of Caltrans' Standard Specifications (2010).

AQ-2: The Wind Erosion Control BMP (WE-1) from Caltrans' Construction Site Best Management Practices Manual will be implemented as follows:

- Water shall be applied by means of pressure-type distributors or pipelines equipped with a spray system or hoses and nozzles that will ensure even distribution.
- All distribution equipment shall be equipped with a positive means of shutoff
- Unless water is applied by means of pipelines, at least one mobile unit shall be available at all times to apply water or dust palliative to the project.
- If reclaimed water is used, the sources and discharge must meet California Department of Health Services water reclamation criteria and the Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements. Non-potable water shall not be conveyed in tanks or drain pipes that will be used to convey potable water and there shall be no connection between potable and non-potable supplies. Non-potable tanks, pipes and other conveyances shall be marked "NON-POTABLE WATER – DO NOT DRINK."
- Materials applied as temporary soil stabilizers and soil binders will also provide wind erosion control benefits.

AQ-3: Construction of the project would comply with the South Coast Air Quality Management District's Rule 403—Fugitive Dust.

| IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES: Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and 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 US Fish and Wildlife Service? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 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? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

a) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** The project would have less than significant impact, with mitigation incorporated, on candidate, sensitive, or special status species. While no candidate, sensitive, or special status species were observed during the biological surveys within the Biological Study Area (BSA) (see Figure 5 and 6). Potential habitat exists and the following seven species have low to high chances of occurrence within the BSA: burrowing owl, Crissal thrasher, Le Conte's thrasher, Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel, American badger, western yellow bat, and Couch's spadefoot. Further information on each of these species follow:

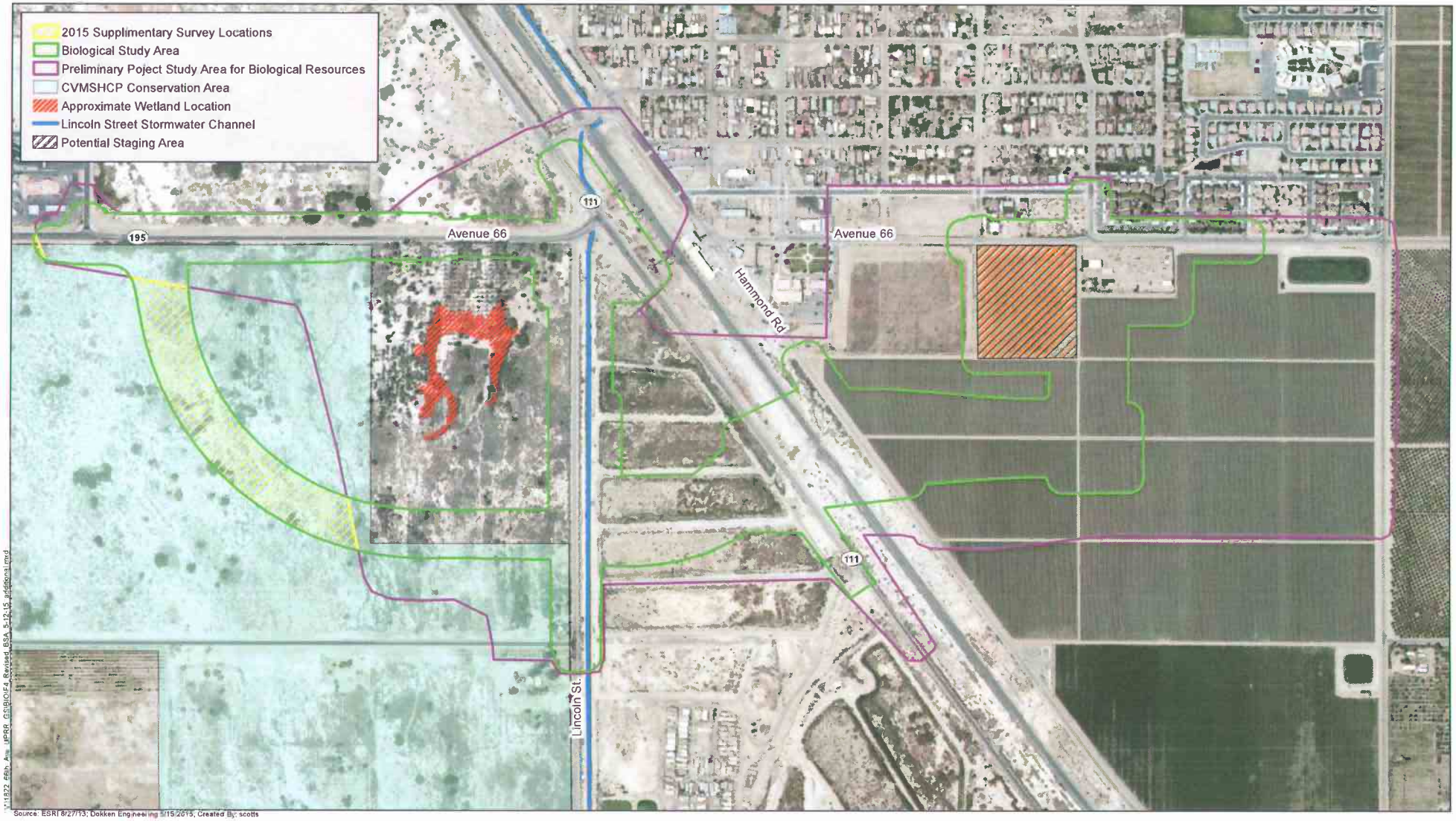



**FIGURE 5**
**Biologicial Study Area**
**Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)**
**Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project**
**Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California**

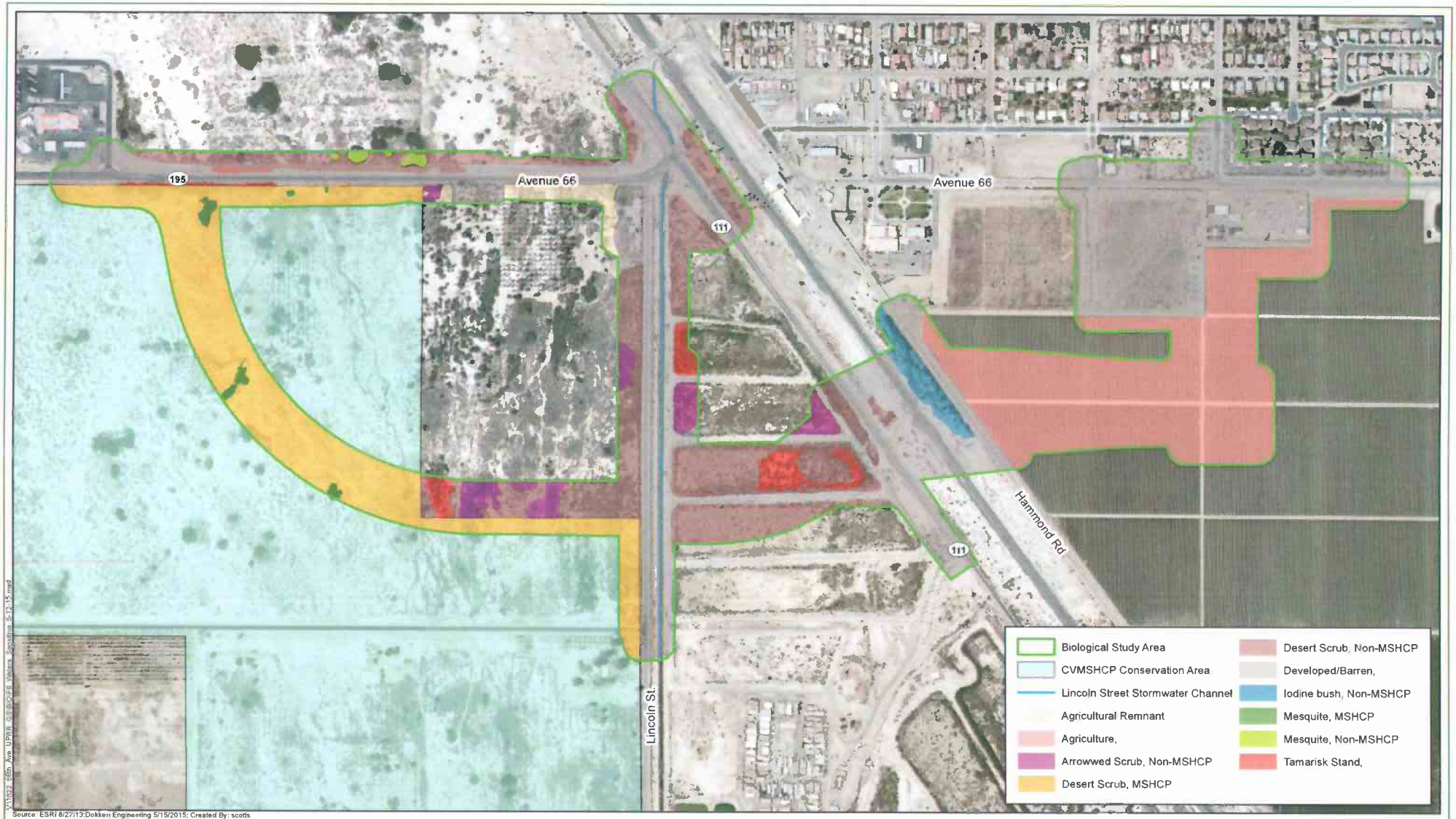



**FIGURE 6**
**Waters and Vegetative Communities**
**Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)**
**Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project**
**Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California**

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia)*

The burrowing owl is not a State or Federally listed species, but is a CDFW Species of Special Concern and a Covered Species under the CVMSHCP. While no signs of burrowing owl or suitable burrowing owl burrows were observed during surveys conducted May 9-10, 2012, July 9, 2012, November 1- 2, 2012, and May 5, 2015 and the CVMSHCP does not consider the burrowing owl to be present within the Conservation Area, the project site does contain mixed saltbush scrub which is potentially suitable for burrowing owl. With implementation of measures **BIO-4, BIO-10, BIO-11, BIO-12, BIO-14, and BIO-15** the project would have less than significant impact on burrowing owl.

Crissal thrasher (*Toxostoma crissale*)

The Crissal thrasher is not a State or Federally listed species, but is a CDFW Species of Special Concern and a Covered Species under the CVMSHCP. While no signs of Crissal thrasher were observed during the May 9-10, 2012, July 9, 2012, November 1- 2, 2012, and May 5, 2015 biological surveys, a portion of the BSA occurs within CVMSHCP designated Crissal thrasher Core Habitat (CVAG 2007). Considering the BSA contains a large amount of mixed saltbush scrub and mixed arrowweed scrub with scattered mesquite potentially suitable for the species nesting and foraging, the species is anticipated to occur in the project vicinity. The nearest CNDDB occurrence was documented in 1930 approximately within the project location. With implementation of measures **BIO-5**, **BIO-10, BIO-11, BIO-12**, **BIO-13, BIO-14, BIO-15**, the project would have less than significant impact on Crissal thrasher.

Le Conte's Thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*)

The Le Conte's thrasher is not a State or Federally listed species, but is a CDFW Species of Special Concern and a Covered Species under the CVMSHCP. While no signs of Le Conte's thrasher were observed during the May 9-10, 2012, July 9, 2012, November 1- 2, 2012, and May 5, 2015 biological surveys, a portion of the BSA occurs within CVMSHCP modeled Le Conte's thrasher habitat and the BSA contains a large amount of relatively undisturbed mixed saltbush scrub and mixed arrowweed scrub potentially suitable for the species nesting and foraging. Considering the BSA has none of the preferred species, such as densely branched cacti and limited thorny shrubs, it was determined the species has low to moderate potential to occur. The nearest CNDDB occurrence was documented in 1908 approximately within the project location. With implementation of measures **BIO-5**, **BIO-10, BIO-11, BIO-12**, **BIO-13, BIO-14, BIO-15**, the project would have less than significant impact on Le Conte's Thrasher.

Palm Springs Round-tailed Ground Squirrel (*Xerospermophilus tereticaudus*)

The Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel, also known as the Coachella Valley round-tailed ground squirrel, is not a State or Federally listed species, but is a CDFW Species of Special Concern and a Covered Species under the CVMSHCP. While no signs of Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel were observed during the May 9-10, 2012, July 9, 2012, November 1- 2, 2012, and May 5, 2015 biological surveys and the CVMSHCP does not consider the Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel to be present within the Conservation Area, the BSA does contain flat, mixed saltbush scrub and mixed arrowweed scrub in fine textured, sandy soils potentially suitable for the Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel.

Considering the limited availability of potentially suitable habitat within the BSA, the Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel has a low to moderate potential to occur. The nearest CNDDB occurrence was documented in 1938 in the project location's vicinity. With the implementation of measures **BIO-10, BIO-11, BIO-12, BIO-14, and BIO-15**, the project would have less than significant impact on Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel.

American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)
The American badger is not a State or Federally listed species, but is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. While no signs of American badger or American badger burrow or prey excavations were observed during the May 9-10, 2012, July 9, 2012, November 1- 2, 2012, and May 5, 2015 biological surveys the BSA contains potentially suitable habitat. The BSA contains fine textured sandy soils and mixed saltbush scrub habitat contiguous with a large undeveloped area (approximately 240 acres). The contiguous undeveloped area is just below the minimum American badger home range (338 acres). The nearest CNDDB occurrence is located approximately 3 miles from the project. The American badger has a low potential to occur. With implementation of measures **BIO-10, BIO-11, and BIO-12** the project would have less than significant impact on American badger.

Western Yellow Bat

The western yellow is not a State or Federally listed species, but is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. While no signs of western yellow bat were observed during the May 9-10, 2012, July 9, 2012, November 1- 2, 2012, and May 5, 2015 biological surveys and the BSA lacks the species preferred riparian areas, the BSA does contain agricultural remnant date palm trees which are potentially suitable for western yellow bat roosting. Considering the project's occurrence outside of preferred riparian areas and the availability of potential roosting habitat, the western yellow bat has a low to moderate potential to occur. The nearest CNDDB occurrence is located approximately 5 miles from the project. With implementation of measures **BIO-6, BIO-10, BIO-11, and BIO-12** the project would have less than significant impact on western yellow bat.

Couch's Spadefoot

The Couch's spadefoot is not a State or Federally listed species, but is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. While no sign of Couch's spadefoot were observed during the May 9-10, 2012, July 9, 2012, November 1- 2, 2012, and May 5, 2015 biological surveys, the BSA contains potentially suitable habitat for it. The project site contains sandy soils and mixed saltbush scrub, which are suitable for Couch's spadefoot's life cycle requirements, near the Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel. Considering the project's proximity to suitable foraging sites, sandy substrate and a desert water source, the Couch's spadefoot has potential to occur. The nearest CNDDB occurrence is approximately within the project location. With implementation of measures **BIO-1, BIO-6, BIO-10, BIO-11, and BIO-12**, the project would not have significant impact on Couch's Spadefoot.

b) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** The project would have less than significant impact on riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community, with mitigation incorporated. The project area lies north of the Salton Sea and partially within Coachella Valley MSCHP Conservation Area.

A jurisdictional delineation was conducted to identify features that are potential waters of the U.S. and State. Within the BSA, the Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel is a jurisdictional Water of the U.S. and State. This is a non-wetland water. The Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel is a natural bottomed feature that runs parallel to Lincoln Street and periodically contains in-channel emergent vegetation. The channel is a tributary to the

Coachella Valley Storm Water Channel which ultimately terminates at the Salton Sea. The project has been designed to minimize temporary and permanent impacts to potential jurisdictional waters to the maximum extent practicable. Although the proposed project will require a total of two crossings over the Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel, use of a pre-cast slab bridge has been selected to avoid impacts to the channel. Project measures BIO-1, BIO-19 – BIO-20, and BMP's incorporated into the design would further minimize construction impacts and significant impacts would not result.

Sensitive Natural Communities

A portion of the proposed project would be within the CVMSHCP Conservation Area (See Figure 7). The project has been designed to minimize and avoid temporary and permanent impacts to sensitive natural communities to the maximum extent practicable. Temporary and permanent impacts to sensitive natural community within the Conservation Area are shown in Table 2. These numbers are worst-case scenario, as they are based on limits of proposed right-of-way.

**Table 2. Impacts to Sensitive Natural Communities within the Project Area**

| Sensitive Natural Community | Temporary | Permanent |
|---|---|---|
| Conservation Area Mixed Saltbush Scrub | 2.28 acre | 8.80 acres |
| Conservation Area Mesquite | 0.00 acre | 0.32 acre |
| **Total** | **2.28 acre** | **9.12 acre** |

With implementation of measures BIO-2 – BIO-4 and BMP's incorporated into the design, the project would have less than significant impact to sensitive natural communities.

c) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.** The project would require two crossings over the Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel, a Waters of the U.S. and State. It is anticipated that the project would avoid impacts to the channel through the use of a pre-cast

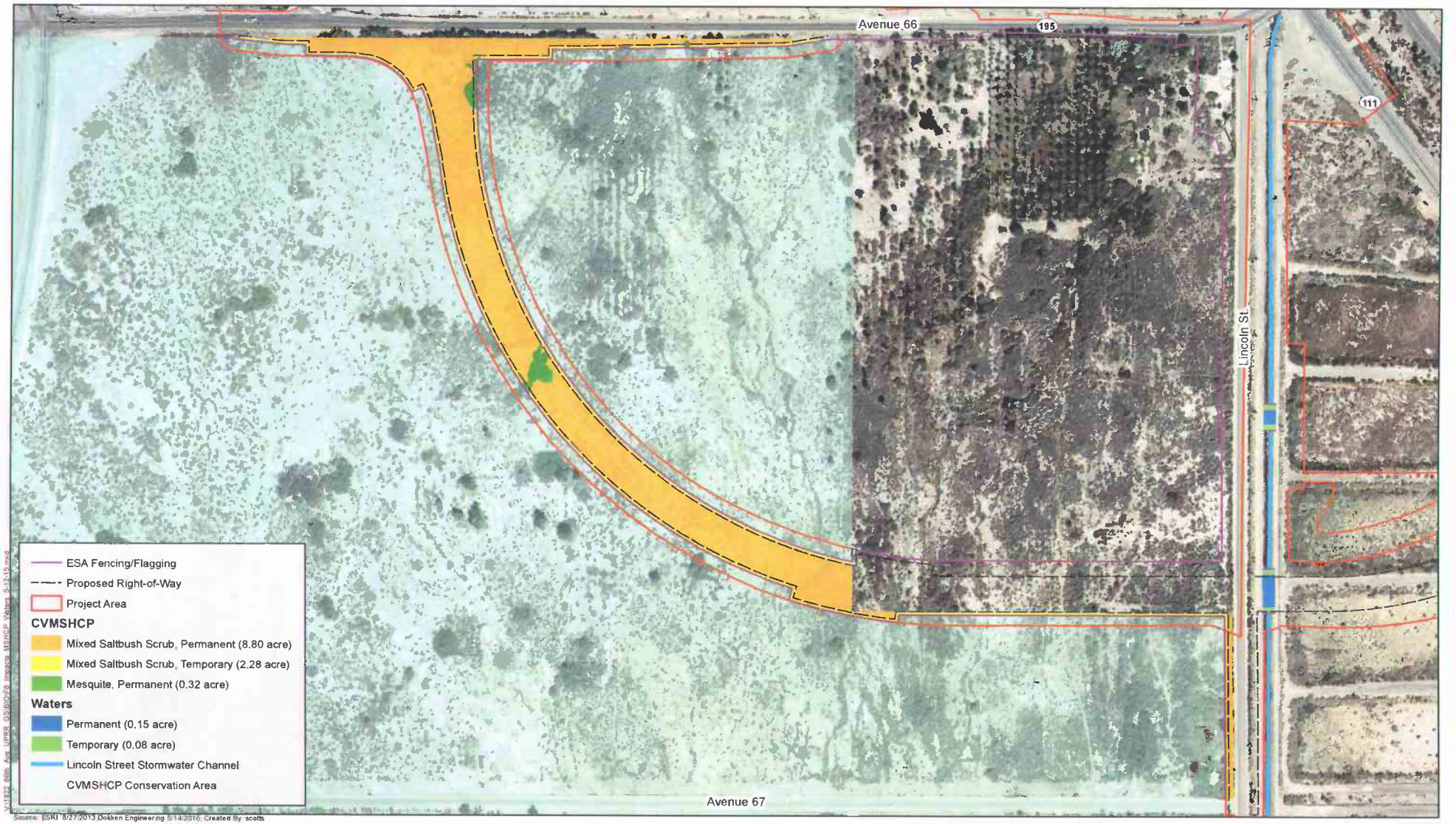



**FIGURE 7**
**Impacts to the CVMSCHP Conservation Area and Waters**
**Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)**
**Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project**
**Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California**

slab bridge. The pre-cast slab bridge design would avoid temporary and permanent impacts to the Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel. In the event that temporary and permanent impacts do occur, the project would obtain applicable permits for impacts to the channel. With implementation of measures **BIO-1, BIO-19 – BIO-20, BIO-26** and BMP's incorporated into the design, the project would have less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated on jurisdictional waters.

d) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.** As documented in the Natural Environment Study (2014), fish species are presumed absent in the BSA. Interference with the movement of migratory fish would not occur. Native birds, protected under the MBTA and similar provisions under CFG code, currently nest or have the potential to nest within the BSA and the project impact area. During the biological surveys, evidence of potentially suitable nesting habitat was observed within the shrubs and trees adjacent to the proposed project BSA. Measure **BIO-8** would avoid significant impacts on migratory nesting birds.

e, f) **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** With mitigation, the project would have less than significant impact on the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). A portion of the project would go into the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and Delta Conservation Area, a conservation area designated in the CVMSHCP. The roadway alignment had to partially go into the conservation area due to design standards. The project would temporarily impact 2.28 acres and permanently impact approximately 9.12 acres of this conservation area.

A portion of the project would take place within a CVMSHCP Conservation Area. This area has been designated by CVAG as Crissal thrasher Core Habitat, Other Conserved Habitat for Le Conte's thrasher and modeled migratory habitat for Least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, summer tanager, yellow-breasted chat and yellow warbler. (Although modeled habitat, no impacts to Least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, summer tanager, yellow-breasted chat or yellow warbler are anticipated based on review of the actual project footprint).

As a participant and co-permittee of the CVMSHCP, the County of Riverside will implement mitigation measures to be consistent with the CVMSHCP. The project is in the process of Project Review for consistency with the CVMSHCP. With the consistency review and implementation of measures BIO-18 and BIO-21-30, significant impacts would not result.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measures would be implemented.

**BIO-1:** The Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel will be designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and will either be staked with high visibility flagging or fenced with orange snow fencing to ensure the construction areas will not encroach further than the designated work limits. Prior to work within the channel, the project will obtain a CWA Section 404 authorization (Nationwide Permit 14) from the USACE, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the RWQCB, a Section 402 NPDES Permit regulated by the SWRCB, and a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the CDFW.

**BIO-2:** The Conservation Area shall be designated an ESA and fenced with high visibility snow fencing at the project limits. Where feasible, mesquite within the Conservation Area shall be designated an ESA and fenced with high visibility snow fencing at the tree's dripline. Remaining areas within Area #1 (see NES Figure 7. Project Impact Areas) must be provided ESA fencing or staking. Contractor is restricted from encroaching within any areas designated as ESA.

**BIO-3:** At construction completion, the County shall apply a seed mix comprised of native, locally adapted species to temporarily impacted native habitats (excluding agricultural and developed

areas) and within the Conservation Area boundaries. The seed mix shall be approved by a biologist.

**BIO-4:** The project biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys consistent with the 2015 CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation for burrowing owls within 1-2 weeks before construction activities begin. If no burrowing owls are detected, no further action for burrowing owl will be required.

If active burrowing owl burrows are found in or near the permanent or temporary construction impact area, the County will implement the following:

Occupied burrows must not be disturbed during the breeding season (February 1 to August 31) unless a qualified biologist approved by the CDFW verifies through non-invasive methods that either: 1) the birds have not begun egg-laying and incubation; or 2) that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and are capable of independent survival. If avoidance of active nests is preferred, the biologist must consult with the CDFW to determine appropriate buffer widths and acreage of foraging habitat to be permanently preserved contiguous with the occupied burrow site. The Contractor must not disturb identified burrowing owl burrows until the qualified biologist verifies it has been cleared.

Should destruction of occupied burrows be unavoidable during the non-breeding season (September 1 – January 31) and prior to construction, the approved biologist will consult with CDFW and either, unsuitable burrows must be enhanced (enlarged or cleared of debris) or new burrows created (by installing artificial burrows) at a ratio of 2:1 on protected lands approved by the CDFW. Newly created burrows will follow guidelines established by the CDFW.

**BIO-5:** If the construction contractor needs to remove vegetation (shrubs or trees) during the migratory bird breeding season (February 15th – September 1st), a pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted within 7 days prior to vegetation removal. Within 2 weeks of the nesting bird survey, all vegetation cleared by the project biologist shall be removed by the contractor.

A minimum 100 foot no-disturbance buffer shall be established around any active nest to limit the impacts of construction activities. The contractor shall immediately stop work in the nesting area until the appropriate buffer is established and is prohibited from conducting work that could disturb the birds (as determined by the project biologist and in coordination with wildlife agencies) in the buffer area until the project biologist determines the young have fledged.

**BIO-6:** To minimize direct mortality to any roosting bats, each date palm/palm tree requiring removal shall be trimmed using a two-step process conducted over two consecutive days. Contractor shall only trim the outermost fronds for each individual tree on the first day; innermost fronds shall not be trimmed. On the second day the remaining fronds on each tree shall be removed. All fronds shall only be manually trimmed using chainsaws- no dozers, backhoes, cranes, or other heavy equipment is permitted. Should bats emerge during the tree trimming, trimming activities shall temporarily cease at the individual tree until bats are no longer actively emerging from the tree. A survey within 2 weeks of tree removal will be conducted to detect if bats are using trees for roosting. If bats are using trees for roosting, trees must be removed during March 1 – April 15 or August 31 – October 15. Trees with bat presence will be removed following a two-step process; trees will be trimmed with chainsaws on day 1 and will be fully removed on day 2.

**BIO-7:** To allow subterranean wildlife enough time to escape initial clearing and grubbing activities, equipment used during initial clearing and grubbing shall be operated at speeds no greater than 3 miles per hour.

**BIO-8:** Prior to arrival at the project site and prior to leaving the project site, the construction contractor shall clean all construction equipment that may contain invasive plants and/or seeds to reduce the spreading of noxious weeds.

**BIO-9:** Contractor shall remove all tamarisk within the construction limits and shall remove the entire root ball using a large excavator to mechanically remove individual trees from the ground.

**BIO-10:** The contractor shall not apply rodenticides or herbicides in the project area during construction activities.

**BIO-11:** The contractor shall dispose of all food-related trash in closed containers, and shall remove it from the project area each day during the construction period. Construction personnel shall not feed or otherwise attract wildlife to the project area.

**BIO-12:** If any wildlife is encountered during the course of construction, said wildlife shall be allowed to leave the construction area unharmed. In the unlikely event a worker inadvertently injures or kills a special-status species or finds one dead, injured, or entrapped, the worker shall immediately report the incident to the project biologist.

**BIO-13:** Prior to construction, clearance surveys shall be conducted by an Acceptable Biologist during the Crissal thrasher and Le Conte's thrasher nesting season, January 15 – June 15, to determine if active nest sites for this species occur within 500 feet of the Conservation Area; survey restrictions are not required outside the boundary of the Conservation Area. If nesting Crissal thrashers or Le Conte's thrashers are found within the Conservation Area, a 500-foot buffer within the Conservation Area shall be established; the buffer is not required to extend into areas outside the Conservation Area. The buffer will be staked and flagged. No construction activities will be permitted within the buffer during the breeding season of January 15 – June 15 or until the young have fledged, as determined by the project biologist.

**BIO-14:** Prior to conducting pre-construction surveys for CVMSHCP covered species, the County must submit the names of biologists to the CVCC for inclusion in the CVMSHCP list of Acceptable Biologists.

**BIO-15:** Prior to construction, the County's CVMSHCP Acceptable Biologists must survey the Conservation Area to be affected by the project for applicable Covered Species during the appropriate seasons and in accordance with established accepted protocols, if they exist. For those species for which protocols do not exist at the time surveys are needed, the Acceptable Biologist will use a survey protocol generally accepted by biologists familiar with the species. Survey results must be documented in both mapped and text form and must be submitted to the CVCC for review.

**BIO-16:** Should landscaping be installed within and/or adjacent to the Conservation Area, the project shall not incorporate invasive, non-native plant species or plants listed in CVMSHCP Table 4-113. Any landscape treatments within or adjacent to the Conservation Area shall incorporate native plant materials to the maximum extent feasible; recommended native species are listed in CVMSHCP Table 4-112. This list may be amended from time to time through a Minor Amendment with Wildlife Agency Concurrence.

**BIO-17:** In areas adjacent to or within the Conservation Area, the project shall incorporate barriers into the project design to minimize unauthorized public access, illegal trespass, or dumping in the Conservation Area. Final design for barriers will occur following consultation with the CVCC.

| **V. CULTURAL RESOURCES**: Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

a, b) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**. An Historic Property Survey Report (HPSR) was prepared to document cultural resources within the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE)/Project Area Limit (PAL). Based on the results of the HPSR, the project would have less than significant impact on causing an adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. A record search (File #EIC-RIV-ST-1895) revealed one historic linear resource within the APE/PAL – a segment of the Sunset Route, operated by the Southern Pacific Railroad (SPRR) (now the UPRR) - and sixteen resources recorded within the 0.5 mile records search boundary. As a component of the HPSR, a Historic Resources Evaluation Report (HRER) was prepared for the project in May 2015.

The HRER formally evaluated the UPRR line within the APE/PAL for its eligibility under the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historic Places. The HRER documented that the segment of the UPRR line through Mecca and within the APE/PAL appears to contribute to the eligibility for listing in the National Register under Criterion A and received a Status Code of 3S; it also appears eligible for listing in the California Register under CRHR Criterion 1. The UPRR segment southeast of Mecca was assessed under National Register Criterion A for its potential significance as part of a historic trend that may have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. This railroad segment was completed in 1876 as part of the Yuma Main line which connected Los Angeles to Yuma, Arizona. Along with the Union Pacific and Santa Fe railroad lines, the Southern Pacific connected California and other western states to the Midwest and eastern parts of the United States after the Civil War. The UPRR segment contributes to the significance of the entire railroad line within the context of California's early railroad lines which connected the western United States with the rest of the country. This UPRR segment southeast of Mecca was also evaluated in accordance with Section 15064.5 (a)(2)-(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, using the criteria outlined in Section 5024.1 of the California Public Resources Code. The segment meets Criterion 1 of California Register, for the reasons described above under Criteria A of the NR evaluation, above. Therefore, the segment is considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

SHPO concurred with the HPSR on April 14, 2015 (see letter in Appendix A). The Finding of Effect (FOE), which includes the revised Build Alternative, will be provided to the SHPO for

finalization. It is anticipated that the project will result in a "Finding of No Adverse Effect" as the grade separation would not diminish the characteristics that make the railroad National Register-eligible and California Register-eligible. The current alignment of the track follows its original alignment and has not been moved or bypassed with another rail line through the project area since its initial construction. The segment will retain its original location with the Build Alternative. The design of the segment of the UPRR has remained generally intact, including the presence of ballast, steel rails on both tracks, and the remaining wood ties with metal tieplates and spikes at the southern end of the easterly track. The Build Alternative will not affect these elements of the UPRR segment.

The sixteen resources located within a 0.5 mile radius include the foundations of the SPRR Mecca station, two prehistoric isolates consisting of Salton Buff pottery shards, several historic homes and commercial buildings, and California Point of Historical Interest #43 – Date Industry Birthplace. Immediately adjacent the APE, located at the intersection of the Lincoln Street and 67th Street is P-33-005698, Dr. Johnson's Office/Randall Ranch. The Dr. Johnson's Office/Randall Ranch building exists just outside the APE and will not be impacted by the construction, either directly or indirectly.

A pedestrian survey of the APE/PAL was conducted by archaeologist Namat Hosseinion on November 1-2, 2012 and March 2, 2013, and on May 5, 2015 by archaeologist Brian Marks (HPSR 2015). No prehistoric resources were observed. Historic resources noted included 1) concrete foundations; 2) a segment of the Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel; 3) a segment of SR 195/Avenue 66 Avenue; 4) a segment of Lincoln Street; 5) segment of SR 111; and 5) segment of Hammond Road. The concrete foundations and segment of the LSSC qualify as Exempt Property Type 1, as outlined in Attachment 4 of the Caltrans Section 106 PA. The segments of Lincoln Street, SR 195/Avenue 66 Avenue, SR 111, and Hammond Road qualify as Exempt Property Type 3, as outlined in Attachment 4 of the Caltrans Section 106 PA (HPSR 2013).

Measures **CUL-1, CUL-2, CUL-6, and CUL-7** would reduce the potential for impacts as a result of discovery of archeological resources during construction.

c) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** The Coachella Valley is the northernmost portion of the Salton Trough and in some areas is filled with 3,700 meters of sediment. The project Study Area (PSA) is mapped at the surface entirely as Quaternary alluvium of the Holocene Epoch consisting of Lake Cahuilla beds with fluvial sand strata interbedded with lacustrine mudstone strata. The lake sediments were deposited during each high stand resulting from flooding of the Salton Trough by inflow from the Colorado River. The fluvial sediments were deposited during the intervening lake low stands, when the former lake bed was dry.

Paleontologist Kim Scott conducted a paleontological field reconnaissance of the study area for the originally proposed alignment on November 22, 2013 for the PIR/PER/PMP dated 2014. The technical study is considered adequate for analyzing the potential impact from the currently proposed alignment due to the great overlap between the two alignments. The survey consisted of inspection of accessible open ground surface. The maximum vertical area of disturbance (subsurface) is 20 feet at the proposed bridge footings. Grading for the roadway would reach about 2-3 feet below the existing surface.

The survey consisted of inspection of accessible open ground surface of the majority of the directly impacted area only. Hardscaped and farmed areas were not inspected. The surface sediments were light to medium brown, well-sorted, silt to fine grained sands. Fossil shells of the freshwater aquatic snails Physella (physa) and Tyronia (tyronia) were noted in native sediments. These clearly indicate presence of the Lake Cahuilla beds throughout the area. Sediments of the modern channel east of Lincoln Avenue revealed modern clams and snails of the aqueduct system along with Physella and Tyronia that have washed out of the side walls. Any rock unit which has previously produced significant vertebrate fossils is ranked as having moderate to high

sensitivity using the Caltrans sensitivity scale. The Lake Cahuilla beds are considered to have a high paleontological sensitivity. As discussed in the PIR/PER/PMP, recovery of potential fossil samples of the Lake Cahuilla Beds to be impacted is recommended as mitigation for construction impacts.

Sampling of the sediments of the bridge footings would take place during geotechnical studies. With the inclusion of sampling measure **CUL-3**, the project would have less than significant impact on paleontological resources.

d) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation.** Disturbance to human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries is not anticipated because the project site is already highly disturbed from existing roadways and development. Measures **CUL-4 and CUL-5** would further avoid effects on human remains.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measures would be implemented.

- CUL-1: Within State Right-of-Way, if buried cultural resources are encountered during Project Activities, it is Caltrans policy that work stop within 60 feet of the discovery until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find. The archaeological monitor must notify the Caltrans District Environmental Branch Chief (DEBC), Gabrielle Duff, if buried cultural resources are encountered.

- CUL-2: Outside of State Right-of-Way, if buried cultural resources are encountered during Project Activities, work will stop within 60 feet of the discovery until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find. The archaeological monitor must notify the Riverside County Transportation Department Project Manager, Scott Staley, at (951) 955-6800, if buried cultural resources are encountered.

- CUL-3: Sampling will be conducted on bores that result in intact stratigraphic samples from which fossils can be recovered. Samples may be collected during geotechnical studies during final design, or alternatively, collected from the sidewalls of trenches dug for geotechnical investigations or during construction.

- CUL-4: Within State Right-of-Way, in the event that human remains are found, the county coroner shall be notified and ALL construction activities within 60 feet of the discovery shall stop. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The person who discovered the remains will contact the District 8 Division of Environmental Planning; Gabrielle Duff, DEBC: (909)383-6933 and Gary Jones, DNAC: (909)383-7505. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

- CUL-5: Outside State Right-of-Way, in the event that human remains are found, the county coroner shall be notified and ALL construction activities within 60 feet of the discovery shall stop. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, if the remains are thought to be Native American, the coroner will notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) who will then notify the Most Likely Descendent (MLD). The person who discovered the remains will contact the Riverside County Transportation Department Project Manager, Scott Staley, at (951) 955-6800. Further provisions of PRC 5097.98 are to be followed as applicable.

- CUL-6: Within State Right-of-Way, all ground-disturbing activities must be monitored by an archaeological and Native American monitor (approved by the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians [TMDCI]). The archaeological and Native American monitor must attend the pre-construction meeting. Both monitors and the Caltrans DEBC, Gabrielle Duff, must be notified 5 days in advance of ground-disturbing activities. Additionally, the Caltrans DEBC must be notified within 24 hours of construction completion within State Right-of-Way. A monitoring report must be submitted to Caltrans Cultural Studies within 30 days of end of construction in State Right-of-Way.

- CUL-7: Outside State Right-of-Way, all ground-disturbing activities must be monitored by an archaeological and Native American monitor (approved by the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians [TMDCI]). The archaeological and Native American monitor must attend the pre-construction meeting. Both monitors must be notified 5 days in advance of ground-disturbing activities.

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

a (i-iv) **Less Than Significant Impact**.

i) The project site does not lie within or adjacent to an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone (Hart and Bryant, 2007). The nearest active Fault Zone is the San Andreas Fault Zone, approximately 4 miles away. The Coachella Valley segment of the San Andreas Fault "extends from the San Gorgonio Pass to the Salton Sea". This segment "has not produced large, surface rupturing earthquakes in historic times" (County of Riverside 2010). The potential for surface fault rupture adversely affecting the project is considered low.

ii-iv) The proposed project is designed in accordance with design and construction requirements of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Caltrans Design Specifications, Caltrans Seismic Design Criteria, and according to recommended seismic values as defined in the 2010 California Building Code (California Building Standards Commission 2013), and applicable seismic standards. Structures would be designed according to recommended seismic values as defined by the California Building Code 2007 (CBC). As a result, less than significant exposure to strong seismic ground shaking; strong seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; and landslides, is anticipated.

b) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.** The project would have less than significant impact on soil erosion or the loss of topsoil, with mitigation incorporated during construction. Construction would require clearing, grubbing, and grading activities which would cause some erosion, particularly since the Coachella Valley is a zone of high wind erosion susceptibility (County of Riverside 2013). The impact would be minimized through revegetation of exposed slopes as described in measure AES-1. With BMPs and erosion control measures implemented in accordance with the mitigation measure **GEO-1**, potential wind and water erosion would be further minimized.

c) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.** The project is in a flat area away from hillsides, so no impacts on on or off-site landslides would not result. The project is located in an area with documented subsidence (County of Riverside, 2000). As described in ii-iv, the project is designed in accordance with design and construction requirements of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Caltrans Design Specifications, Caltrans Seismic Design Criteria, and according to recommended seismic values as defined in the 2010 California Building Code (California Building Standards Commission 2013), and applicable seismic standards. Structures would be designed according to recommended seismic values as defined by the California Building Code 2007 (CBC). As a result, there is less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated on on or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse. With implementation of measure GEO-2 and GEO-3, the project would not have a significant potential to result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse.

d) **No Impact.** Expansive soils contain significant amounts of clay particles that have the ability to give up water (shrink) or take on water (swell). When these soils swell, the change in volume can exert significant pressures on loads that are placed on them, and can result in structural distress and/or damage. Soils at the proposed project site are of the "Gilman-Coachella-Indio Association" and are well drained (USBR 2006). These soils are non-expansive.

e) **No Impact.** The project does not include septic tanks or an alternative wastewater disposal system on the site.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measures will be implemented (GEO-1 and GEO-2 are also repeated under measures HYD-1 and HYD-2).

- GEO-1: BMPs will be implemented during construction to minimize erosion. BMPs include any facilities and methods used to remove, reduce, or prevent storm water runoff pollutants from entering receiving waters. Erosion control methods, temporary and permanent BMPs, and improvement of drainage facilities along the roadway would minimize impacts from storm water runoff.
- GEO-2: The project will be designed in accordance with County design and construction requirements as well as the *Caltrans Highway Design Manual*, Caltrans Design Specifications, and applicable seismic standards.

- GEO-3: The project will be designed in accordance with recommendations provided in the final Geotechnical Design Report.

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

a & b) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** Climate change refers to long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind patterns, and other elements of the earth's climate system. An ever-increasing body of scientific research attributes these climatological changes to greenhouse gases (GHGs), particularly those generated from the production and use of fossil fuels.

While climate change has been a concern for several decades, the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) by the United Nations and World Meteorological Organization's in 1988, has led to increased efforts devoted to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction and climate change research and policy. These efforts are primarily concerned with the emissions of GHGs related to human activity that include carbon dioxide ($CO_2$), methane, nitrous oxide, tetrafluoromethane, hexafluoroethane, sulfur hexafluoride, HFC-23 (fluoroform), HFC-134a (s, s, s, 2 –tetrafluoroethane), and HFC-152a (difluoroethane).

There are typically two terms used when discussing the impacts of climate change. "Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Mitigation" is a term for reducing GHG emissions in order to reduce or "mitigate" the impacts of climate change. "Adaptation," refers to the effort of planning for and adapting to impacts due to climate change (such as adjusting transportation design standards to withstand more intense storms and higher sea levels)[1].

Transportation sources (passenger cars, light duty trucks, other trucks, buses and motorcycles) in the state of California make up the largest source (second to electricity generation) of greenhouse gas emitting sources. Conversely, the main source of GHG emissions in the United States (U.S.) is electricity generation followed by transportation. The dominant GHG emitted is $CO_2$, mostly from fossil fuel combustion.

There are four primary strategies for reducing GHG emissions from transportation sources: 1) improve system and operation efficiencies, 2) reduce growth of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) 3) transition to lower GHG fuels and 4) improve vehicle technologies. To be most effective all four should be pursued collectively. The following regulatory setting section outlines state and federal efforts to comprehensively reduce GHG emissions from transportation sources.

[1] http://climatechange.transportation.org/ghg_mitigation/

## Regulatory Setting

*State*

With the passage of several pieces of legislation including State Senate and Assembly Bills and Executive Orders, California launched an innovative and pro-active approach to dealing with greenhouse gas emissions and climate change at the state level.

Assembly Bill 1493 (AB 1493), Pavley. Vehicular Emissions: Greenhouse Gases (AB 1493), 2002: requires the California Air Resources Board (ARB) to develop and implement regulations to reduce automobile and light truck greenhouse gas emissions. These stricter emissions standards were designed to apply to automobiles and light trucks beginning with the 2009-model year. In June 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Administrator granted a Clean Air Act waiver of preemption to California. This waiver allowed California to implement its own GHG emission standards for motor vehicles beginning with model year 2009. California agencies will be working with Federal agencies to conduct joint rulemaking to reduce GHG emissions for passenger cars model years 2017-2025.

Executive Order S-3-05: (signed on June 1, 2005, by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger) the goal of this Executive Order is to reduce California's GHG emissions to: 1) 2000 levels by 2010, 2) 1990 levels by the 2020 and 3) 80 percent below the 1990 levels by the year 2050. In 2006, this goal was further reinforced with the passage of Assembly Bill 32.

AB32 (AB 32), the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: AB 32 sets the same overall GHG emissions reduction goals as outlined in Executive Order S-3-05, while further mandating that CARB create a plan, which includes market mechanisms, and implement rules to achieve "real, quantifiable, cost-effective reductions of greenhouse gases." Executive Order S-20-06 further directs state agencies to begin implementing AB 32, including the recommendations made by the State's Climate Action Team.

Executive Order S-01-07: Governor Schwarzenegger set forth the low carbon fuel standard for California. Under this Executive Order, the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuels is to be reduced by at least ten percent by 2020.

Senate Bill 97 (Chapter 185, 2007): required the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to develop recommended amendments to the State CEQA Guidelines for addressing greenhouse gas emissions. The Amendments became effective on March 18, 2010.

## Project Analysis

An individual project does not generate enough GHG emissions to significantly influence global climate change. Rather, global climate change is a cumulative impact. This means that a project may participate in a potential impact through its incremental contribution combined with the contributions of all other sources of GHG.2 In assessing cumulative impacts, it must be determined if a project's incremental effect is "cumulatively considerable." See California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines sections 15064(h)(1) and 15130. To make this determination the incremental impacts of the project must be compared with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects. To gather sufficient information on a global scale of all past, current, and future projects in order to make this determination is a difficult if not impossible task.

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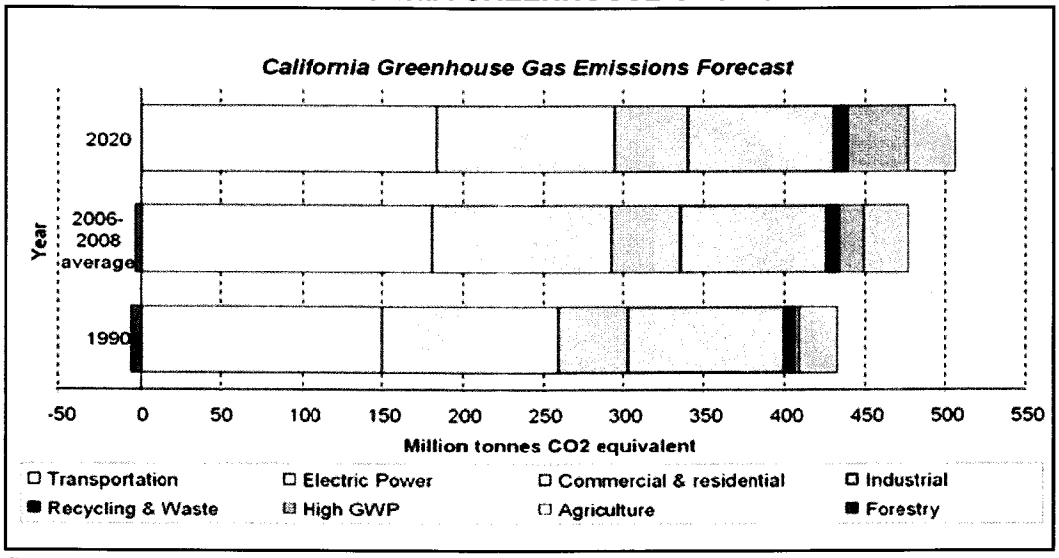
[2] This approach is supported by the AEP: *Recommendations by the Association of Environmental Professionals on How to Analyze GHG Emissions and Global Climate Change in CEQA Documents* (March 5, 2007), as well as the SCAQMD ( Chapter 6: : The CEQA Guide, April 2011) and the US Forest Service (Climate Change Considerations in Project Level NEPA Analysis, July 13, 2009).

The AB 32 Scoping Plan contains the main strategies California will use to reduce GHG. As part of its supporting documentation for the Draft Scoping Plan, ARB released the GHG inventory for California (Forecast last updated: 28 October 2010). The forecast is an estimate of the emissions expected to occur in the year 2020 if none of the foreseeable measures included in the Scoping Plan were implemented. The base year used for forecasting emissions is the average of statewide emissions in the GHG inventory for 2006, 2007, and 2008 (Figure 8).

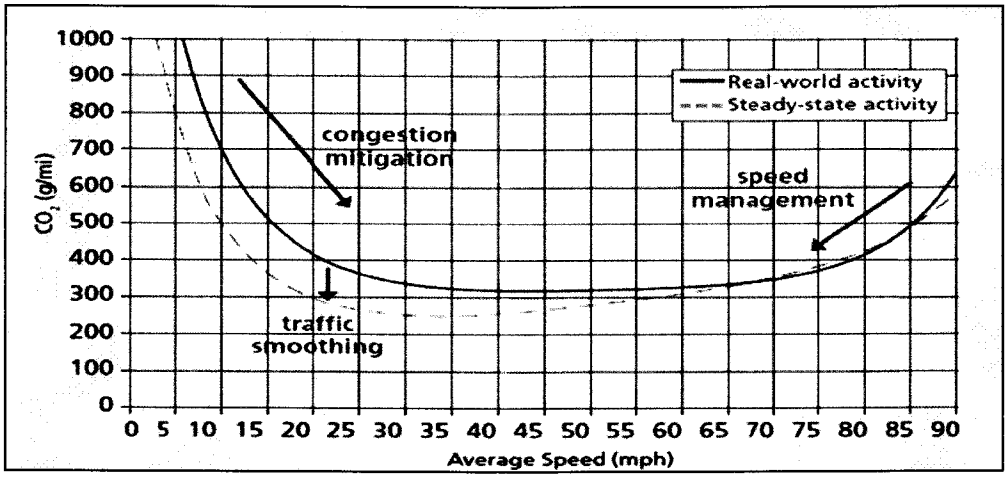
**FIGURE 8. CALIFORNIA GREENHOUSE GAS FORECAST**




*Source: http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/data/forecast.htm*

One of the main strategies to reduce GHG emissions is to make California's transportation system more efficient. The highest levels of carbon dioxide from mobile sources, such as automobiles, occur at stop-and-go speeds (0-25 miles per hour) and speeds over 55 mph; the most severe emissions occur from 0-25 miles per hour (see Figure 9). To the extent that a project relieves congestion by enhancing operations and improving travel times in high congestion travel corridors GHG emissions, particularly $CO_2$, may be reduced.

**FIGURE 9. POSSIBLE EFFECT OF TRAFFIC OPERATION STRATEGIES IN REDUCING ON-ROAD CO2 EMISSIONS**



For reference, a discussion of Greenhouse Gases was included in the 2008 RTP's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (SCAG 2008). The 2008 RTP EIR concluded that implementation of the RTP would result in "significant and unavoidable global warming impact" because future greenhouse gas emissions would not be below the existing condition (for purposes of the 2008 RTP EIR only, any increases in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 2008 was considered significant). Implementation of the 2008 RTP, however, was found to result in lower $CO_2$ emissions compared to not implementing the RTP. This is due to decreased regional vehicle miles traveled by implementing RTP projects.

The project is included in the SCAG 2008 RTP, which also consider and include transit, multi-modal transportation, and alternative transportation in their plans.

## Quantitative Analysis

The project Build Alternative is estimated to generate less $CO_2$ than the No-Build Alternative due to general improvement in LOS through the study intersections. Based on emissions estimates using the CT-EMFAC model and information from the Traffic Study (2014), traffic at the study intersections currently generate approximately 2.25 tons of CO2 during the AM and PM peak period. In the projected opening year, the No-Build would result in 3.6 tons of $CO_2$ during the AM and PM peak period. In comparison, the Build Alternative would reduce $CO_2$ emissions to 3.39 tons. In the future, the No-Build would result in 5.56 tons of $CO_2$ during the AM and PM peak period. In comparison, the Build Alternative would reduce this to 5.06 tons. Table 3 summarizes the estimated reduction in $CO_2$ emissions with Build Alternative.

**Table 3. $CO_2$ Operational Emissions**

| Time span | Existing (Year 2014) | Opening (Year 2020) | | Future (Year 2040) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No-Build | Build | No-Build | Build |
| Daily | 2.25 tons | 3.60 tons | 3.39 tons | 5.56 tons | 5.06 tons |

*Based on CT-EMFAC Version 5.0 (2013) and Avenue 66 Grade Separation *Traffic Operations Report* (2014).

The numbers are not necessarily an accurate reflection of what the true $CO_2$ emissions will be because $CO_2$ emissions are dependent on other factors that are not part of the model such as the fuel mix (EMFAC model emission rates are only for direct engine-out $CO_2$ emissions, not full fuel cycle; fuel cycle emission rates can vary dramatically depending on the amount of additives like ethanol and the source of the fuel components), rate of acceleration, and the aerodynamics and efficiency of the vehicles.

*Construction Emissions*

Greenhouse gas emissions for transportation projects can be divided into those produced during construction and those produced during operations. Construction GHG emissions include emissions produced as a result of material processing, emissions produced by on-site construction equipment, and emissions arising from traffic delays due to construction. These emissions will be produced at different levels throughout the construction phase; their frequency and occurrence can be reduced through innovations in plans and specifications and by implementing better traffic management during construction phases.

$CO_2$ emissions from construction were estimated using the Roadway Construction Emissions Model (Version 7.1.5.1, December 2013). While SCAQMD does not have a CEQA threshold for construction projects, it is estimated that construction of all projects in Riverside County contributes approximately 110,000 metric tons of GHG every year (SCAG 2012). The project's

construction is anticipated to emit 775 metric tons/year (1,136 metric tons of $CO_2$ for the anticipated 18-month long construction). The project therefore would be less than 1% of the annual GHG emissions from construction activities within Riverside County. This is not considered a significant impact. Further, construction and operational impacts of implementation of SCAG's 2012-2035 RTP was considered in its associated 2012 RTP Environmental Impact Report (RTP EIR). The proposed Avenue 66 Grade Separation is included in the 2012-2035 RTP and therefore these emissions are not a new impact in addition to what was considered in the RTP EIR.

In addition, with innovations such as longer pavement lives, improved traffic management plans, and changes in materials, the GHG emissions produced during construction can be mitigated to some degree by longer intervals between maintenance and rehabilitation events. Per measure CC-2 and Caltrans standards, construction activities will be in compliance with the SCAQMD.

CEQA Conclusion

The project would not have significant impact on Greenhouse Gases. $CO_2$ emissions with the project would be less than emissions without the project. Further, mitigation measures **CC-1** and **CC-2** would be implemented to reduce impacts.

The following measures would be included in the project to reduce the GHG emissions and potential climate change impacts from the project:

CC-1: The project would incorporate the use of energy-efficient lighting, such as LED traffic signals. LED bulbs cost $60 to $70 each, but last five to six years, compared to the one-year average lifespan of the incandescent bulbs previously used. The LED bulbs themselves consume 10 percent of the electricity of traditional lights, which will also help reduce the project's $CO_2$ emissions.

CC-2: According to the Department's Standard Specifications, the contractor must comply with all local Air Quality Management District rules, ordinances, and regulations for air quality restrictions.

## Avoidance and Minimization Measures

The following measures will be implemented:

- CC-1: The project would incorporate the use of energy-efficient lighting, such as light-emitting diode (LED) traffic signals. LED bulbs cost $60 to $70 each, but last five to six years, compared to the one-year average lifespan of the incandescent bulbs previously used. The LED bulbs themselves consume 10 percent of the electricity of traditional lights, which will also help reduce the project's $CO_2$ emissions.

- CC-2: According to the Department's Standard Specifications, the contractor must comply with all local Air Quality Management District rules, ordinances, and regulations for air quality restrictions.

| **VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**: Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| 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 for people residing or working in the project area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

a) **Less than Significant Impact.** The proposed project is designed to accommodate current and future traffic in the area. No additional transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials is anticipated as a result of the project.

b) **Less than Significant Impact with Mitigation.** Upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment would not be significant based on background research of hazardous materials in the project vicinity and implementation of precautionary measures. Based on the Hazardous Waste Initial Site Assessment (ISA) (February 2014) and ISA Memorandum (May 2015) for the proposed project, hazardous waste handlers and fuel spill incidents within 1-mile of the project are not anticipated to have an effect on the project,

or would be affected by the project. The ISA evaluated the potential for hazardous materials or petroleum hydrocarbons to exist within the study area, and was based on a governmental records search, select agency interviews, aerial photograph and topographic map review and visual site survey.

A 1-mile radius search on federal, state, and local listings of known hazardous sites and hazardous waste handlers was conducted. The radius search identified a total of 8 sites within 1 mile of the study area. Four of the properties within 1 mile include agriculture, recycling and underground fuel storage tanks with no reported violations. The four additional properties have had underground fuel storage tank leaks reported. The site names, contamination type, and the status of the cases are listed below;

- Former Coachella Valley Minimex – Gasoline Leak - Preliminary Site Assessment -
- Former Mecca Chevron – Gasoline Leak - Open, Site Assessment
- Chevron Station #9 5315 – Gasoline Leak - Active Site
- Riverside County Fire Department – Diesel Fuel Leak - Open, Site Assessment

Based on preliminary plans, right-of-way acquisition is not expected at these locations. Should final plans indicate that a portion of this parcel will be acquired for new right-of-way, a preliminary environmental screening (limited subsurface sampling and laboratory analysis) should be performed for potentially elevated levels of petroleum hydrocarbons and MTBE contamination within the limits of proposed construction, and/or right-of way acquisition. If site screening encounters elevated levels of petroleum hydrocarbons and/or MTBE, the extent and concentration of the contamination within the planned construction activities should be determined. After determining the extent of contamination, a Health and Safety Plan for worker safety and a Work Plan for handling and disposing contaminated soil during construction should be produced prior to beginning construction.

Due to the limited amount of excavation near existing SR-111 and SR-195 that will be part of the proposed project and the low historic traffic volumes of SR-111 and SR-195, an ADL study is not recommended to be performed.

A review of the Geotracker Database (State Water Resources Control Board 2009) indicated that there are no sites on, or near the project study area listed on the Geotracker Database that were not reported in the 1-mile radius search.

A visual survey of the project area was conducted on May 5, 2015. The site survey confirmed the current land uses and indicated that past spills have been remediated or are in-progress of remediation.

Since the Initial Site Assessment findings are largely based on visible screening and records searches, the findings are limited because no environmental testing was performed to verify potential Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs).

The Initial Site Assessment indicates that potential RECs within the project boundaries include the following shown in Table 4.

With implementation of measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-6, significant impacts are not anticipated.

**Table 4. Summary Table from Initial Site Assessment**

| Location | Description of REC Evidence Found | Description of Associated Activity and Use Limitations (AUL) |
|---|---|---|
| Existing roadways within project boundaries including SR-111 and SR-195 and associated local roads within the project boundaries. | Potential lead and heavy metals associated with pavement striping. Implementation of improvements may require the removal and disposal of yellow traffic stripe and pavement marking materials (paint, thermoplastic, permanent tape, and temporary tape). Yellow paints made prior to 1995 may exceed hazardous waste criteria under Title 22, California Code of Regulations, and require disposal in a Class I disposal site. | None Found |
| Various pole- and pad-mounted electrical transformers within or immediately adjacent to the project boundaries. | Potential PCB's in pole- or pad-mounted electrical transformers. As of the date of this ISA, the existence and/or levels of PCB's associated with the pole- or pad-mounted electrical transformers, which may be encountered within the planned construction area, had not been determined. | None Found |
| Leon's Other Place (located on Lincoln Street), Eddie's Place (located at the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Hammond Road and 3rd Street) | Underground fuel storage tank leaks reported for these former gas stations. These cases status is listed as closed | None Found |
| Former Coachella Valley Minimex (located at the southwest quadrant of the intersection of Hammond Road and Avenue 66), Former Mecca Chevron (located at the northeast quadrant of the intersection of Hammond Road and Avenue 66) and Riverside County Fire Department Station # 40 (located at the northeast quadrant of the intersection of SR-111 and 4th Street), | Underground fuel storage tank leaks reported from former gas stations and fire station that store fuel within or near to the project boundaries. The cases associated with these sites are currently have site assessment status | None Found |
| Chevron Station #9 (located on SR-195 east of the SR86 intersection) | Underground fuel storage tank leaks reported for this former gas station The cases status is listed as an active cleanup site. | None Found |
| Apple Market One (Located at the northwest quadrant of the SR-111 and SR-195 Intersection) | Potential for pesticides and herbicides that may have likely been applied over many years. It is possible that residuals of these chemicals can build up in the surface soil. If soils are to be exported off-site, the upper 24 inches of soil in these agricultural areas should be screened for residuals and handled in accordance with Riverside County | None Found |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Environmental Health Division Guidelines. | |
| ARCO Travel Center (located on SR-195 east of the SR86 intersection) | Potential gas station/filling station/service station site. At the time of this ISA, there was no documented evidence of soil or groundwater contamination associated with the existing gas stations adjacent to, or near the project study area. | None Found |

c) **No Impact.** The project would not result in emitting new hazardous emissions or handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. While one school, the Saul Martinez Elementary School, is ¼ mile northeast of the Home Avenue/Avenue 66 intersection, this intersection already exists and the project does not change the land uses of that portion of the project area.

d) **No Impact.** The proposed project is not on a site included in the list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, which is also known as the Cortese List. No sites in the Cortese List are in this area of Riverside County (EnviroStar 2013). While four cases within 1 mile of the project are in the historic Cortese database, they are all outside of the project footprint.

e) **No Impact.** The project is not within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. The nearest airport is Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport, approximately 6 miles northwest of the project site.

f) **No Impact.** The project is not within the vicinity of a privately-owned airport or airstrip. The nearest privately-owned airport or airstrip is Desert Air Sky Ranch Airport, approximately thirteen miles southeast of the project (AirNav, LLC. 2013).

g) **Less Than Significant Impact.** During construction, there would be no temporary substantial effects to public services such as fire, police, or emergency medical response. Planned lane closures, an emergency detour plan, and an emergency notification plan would be used to manage transportation movements at the construction area.

h) **No Impact.** The project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. No wildlands are near the project.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- HAZ-1: Based on preliminary plans, right-of-way acquisition is not expected at the Former Coachella Valley Minimex, Former Mecca Chevron or the Riverside County Fire Department Station # 40 Station. These sites are adjacent to the project. Should final plans indicate that a portion of this parcel will be acquired for new right-of-way, a preliminary environmental screening (limited subsurface sampling and laboratory analysis) should be performed for potentially elevated levels of petroleum hydrocarbons and MTBE contamination within the limits of proposed construction, and/or right-of way acquisition.

- HAZ-2: If site screening encounters elevated levels of petroleum hydrocarbons and/or MTBE, a limited Phase II ISA should be performed. The Phase II ISA should consist of subsurface sampling and laboratory analysis and be of sufficient quantity to define the extent and concentration of contamination within the areal extent and depths of planned construction activities adjacent to these sites. The Phase II ISA should also provide both a Health and Safety Plan for worker safety and a Work Plan for handling and disposing contaminated soil during construction.

- HAZ-3: Test for potential pesticide and herbicide residuals in soils at the agricultural properties on Parcels 727-272-021, 727-272-027, 727-272-031, 727-272-032, and 727-272-033.

- HAZ-4: To avoid impacts from pavement striping during construction it is recommended that testing and removal requirements for yellow striping and pavement marking materials be performed in accordance with Caltrans Standard Special Provision 15-300 REMOVE TRAFFIC STRIPE AND PAVEMENT MARKINGS.

- HAZ-5: Any leaking transformers observed during the course of the project should be considered a potential PCB hazard. A detailed inspection of individual electrical transformers was not conducted for this ISA. However, should leaks from electrical transformers (that will either remain within the construction limits or will require removal and/or relocation) be encountered during construction, the transformer fluid should be sampled and analyzed by qualified personnel for detectable levels of PCB's. Should PCBs be detected, the transformer should be removed and disposed of in accordance with Title 22, Division 4.5 of the California Code of Regulations and any other appropriate regulatory agency. Any stained soil encountered below electrical transformers with detectable levels of PCB's should also be handled and disposed of in accordance with Title 22, Division 4.5 of the California Code of Regulations and any other appropriate regulatory agency.

- HAZ-6: As is the case for any project that proposes excavation, the potential exists for unknown hazardous contamination to be revealed during project construction. For any previously unknown hazardous waste/ material encountered during construction, the procedures outline in Appendix E (Caltrans Unknown Hazard Procedures) shall be followed.

| **IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**: Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

a,c,d,f) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** The Water Quality Assessment (2014) and Water Quality Assessment Memorandum (2015) for the project analyzed potential long-term and short-term impacts on water features in the study area. Potential impacts would result from increased stormwater runoff rates from the new facility, the two proposed crossings of the Lincoln Street Stormwater Channel, and construction. The proposed project would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or

off-site or flooding on-or off-site. Permanent treatment BMPs are traditionally used to address pollutants in post-construction stormwater runoff. Permanent treatment BMPs are required to be considered when a project that is defined as a new facility or major reconstruction results in a net increase of one acre or more of new impervious surface. The project is anticipated to include permanent treatment BMPs. The project storm water drainage would be designed consistent with County requirements and the Caltrans Project Planning and Design Guide and Storm Water Management Plan.

To address the potential water quality impacts associated with construction, the project will acquire a Section 402 NPDES Construction General Permit. Temporary Best Management Practices (BMPs) aimed at soil stabilization and sediment control will be implemented consistent with the Caltrans Construction Site BMP Manual. BMPs may include general construction site management, water pollution control, temporary concrete washouts, temporary check dams, temporary fiber rolls, temporary drainage inlet protection, and temporary construction entrances. The Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, which will be prepared as part of the Section 402 NPDES Construction General Permit, will include measures also found in **WQ-1**.

Since water quality impacts from the proposed project are limited to storm water flows and storm water runoff would be fully accommodated for with proposed features, no adverse impacts to groundwater or surface water is anticipated. The proposed project would have less than significant impact on water quality with the inclusion of measures **WQ-2 through WQ-6.**

b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** While dewatering is likely to be needed during construction of the bridge foundations, the project does not propose activities resulting in permanent increases in groundwater use.

e) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** The project would result in an increase to the paved surface area, which would increase the volume of storm water runoff from the roadways surface that could enter the drainage system and eventually the river itself. Roadways may contain oil, grease, petroleum products, zinc, copper, lead, cadmium, iron, or other trace metals, which could harm aquatic life. Concentrations of these pollutants in storm water runoff would be greatest during the "first flush" storm event, generally the first major rains of the season. However, with the inclusion of permanent treatment BMPs and project measures **WQ-1 – WQ-4**, project impacts to water quality would not be substantial.

g - j) **No Impact.** The project is not within the 100-year flood hazard area, the Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Map (Map Number 06065C2950G), shows that the project is located within Zone X and Zone D. These zones are outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area, which is subject to 100 year floods.

The project does not include changes to levees or dams and the project does not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam.

The site is approximately 3.5 mi north of the nearest lake (Salton Sea), and is approximately 80 mi northeast of the ocean. As a result, the project site is not subject to seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measures would be implemented:

WQ-1: Best management practices:

- The area of construction and disturbance would be limited to as small an area as feasible to reduce erosion and sedimentation.

- Measures would be implemented during land-disturbing activities to reduce erosion and sedimentation. These measures may include mulches, soil binders and erosion control blankets, silt fencing, fiber rolls, temporary berms, sediment desilting basins, sediment traps, and check dams.
- Existing vegetation would be protected where feasible to reduce erosion and sedimentation. Vegetation would be preserved by installing temporary fencing, or other protection devices, around areas to be protected.
- Exposed soils would be covered by loose bulk materials or other materials to reduce erosion and runoff during rainfall events.
- Exposed soils would be stabilized, through watering or other measures, to prevent the movement of dust at the project site caused by wind and construction activities such as traffic and grading activities.
- All construction roadway areas would be properly protected to prevent excess erosion, sedimentation, and water pollution.
- All vehicle and equipment maintenance procedures would be conducted off-site. In the event of an emergency, maintenance would occur away from the stormwater channel.
- All concrete curing activities would be conducted to minimize spray drift and prevent curing compounds from entering the waterway directly or indirectly.
- All construction materials, vehicles, stockpiles, and staging areas would be situated outside of the stream channel as feasible. All stockpiles would be covered, as feasible.
- Energy dissipaters and erosion control pads would be provided at the bottom of slope drains. Other flow conveyance control mechanisms may include earth dikes, swales, or ditches. Stream bank stabilization measures would also be implemented.
- All erosion control measures and storm water control measures would be properly maintained until the site has returned to a pre-construction state.
- All disturbed areas would be restored to pre-construction contours and revegetated, either through hydroseeding or other means, with native or approved non-invasive exotic species.
- All construction materials would be hauled off-site after completion of construction.

WQ-2: Any requirements for additional avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures will be in contained in the permits obtained from all required regulatory agencies.

WQ-3: The proposed project would require a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit for Discharges of storm water associated with construction activities (Construction General Permit 09-2009-DWQ). A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would also be developed and implemented as part of the Construction General Permit.

WQ-4: The construction contractor shall adhere to the SWRCB Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ NPDES Permit pursuant to Section 402 of the CWA. This permit authorizes storm water and authorized non-storm water discharges from Caltrans construction properties, facilities and activities and would be required prior to construction of this project. As part of this Permit requirement, a SWPPP shall be prepared prior to construction consistent with the requirements of the RWQCB. This SWPPP will incorporate all applicable BMPs to ensure that adequate measures are taken during construction to minimize impacts to water quality.

WQ-5: The project shall incorporate plans and design to ensure that the quantity and quality of runoff discharged to the adjacent Conservation Area is not altered in an adverse way when compared with existing conditions.

WQ-6: Stormwater systems shall be designed to prevent the release of toxins, chemicals, petroleum products, exotic plant materials or other elements that might degrade or harm biological resources or ecosystem processes within the Conservation Area.

| **X. LAND USE AND PLANNING**: Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Physically divide an established community? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b)Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

a) **No Impact.** The project would not physically divide an established community. The alignment is away from existing neighborhoods and located at largely undeveloped parcels. The Community of Mecca would be better connected as a result of the grade separated crossing of UPRR.

b) **Less than Significant Impact.** The project would have less than significant impact on land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Land Use and Zoning

As shown in Figure 10, the alignment would be placed in areas currently zoned for A-1 (Light Agriculture), W-2 (Controlled Development Areas), and CP-S (Scenic Highway Commercial) per the County General Plan. As shown in Figure 11, the alignment would be placed in areas designated for AG (Agriculture), VHDR (Very High Density Residential), MDR (Medium Density Residential), RR (Rural Residential), and Community Development Overlay. With respect to land use and zoning, there would be no conflict with the goals of the County and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), as the project is included in the County General Plan Circulation Element, SCAG Regional Transportation Plan, and SCAG Federal Transportation Improvement Program. While the project would result in new public right-of-way for transportation purposes, surrounding zoning and land uses described would not change as a result of the project. With the exception of the new right-of-way and roadway alignment, these zoning and land use designations would change, and the project does not preclude these designations and future plans from taking place. Land uses and zoning were considered during the development of the project, and the alignment east of Hammond Road is located southerly to allow for Community Development Overlay, as planned by the County.

Please also see Section II. Agriculture and Forest Resources regarding Williamson Act Lands.

c) **Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation.** With mitigation, the project would have less than significant impact on the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP). As shown in Figure 7, a portion of the project would go into the Coachella Valley Stormwater Channel and Delta Conservation Area, a conservation area designated in the CVMSHCP. The roadway alignment had to partially go into the conservation area due to design standards. The project would temporarily impact 2.28 acres and permanently impact approximately 9.12 acres of this conservation area.

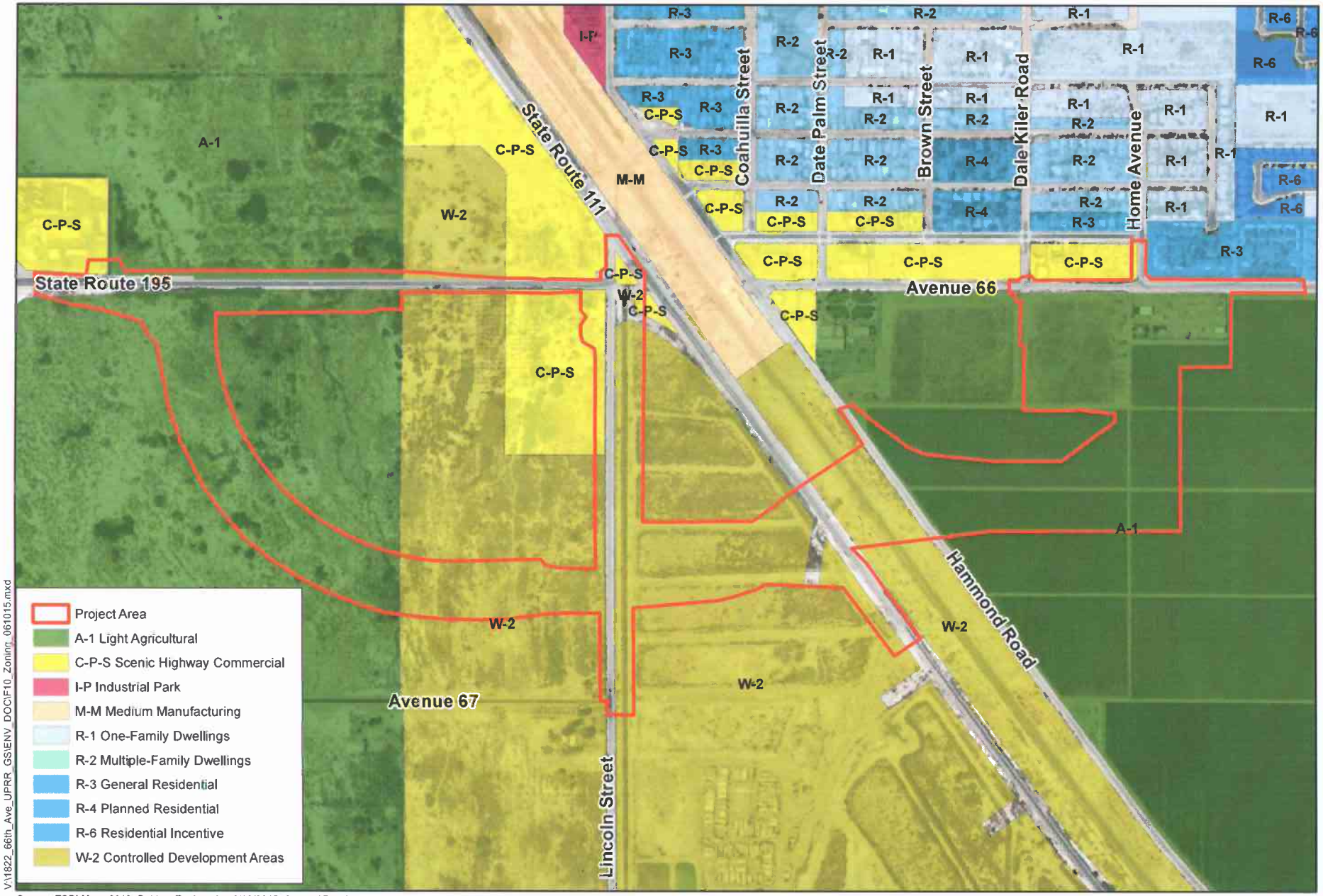



**FIGURE 10**
**EXISTING ZONING**
Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)
Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project
Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California

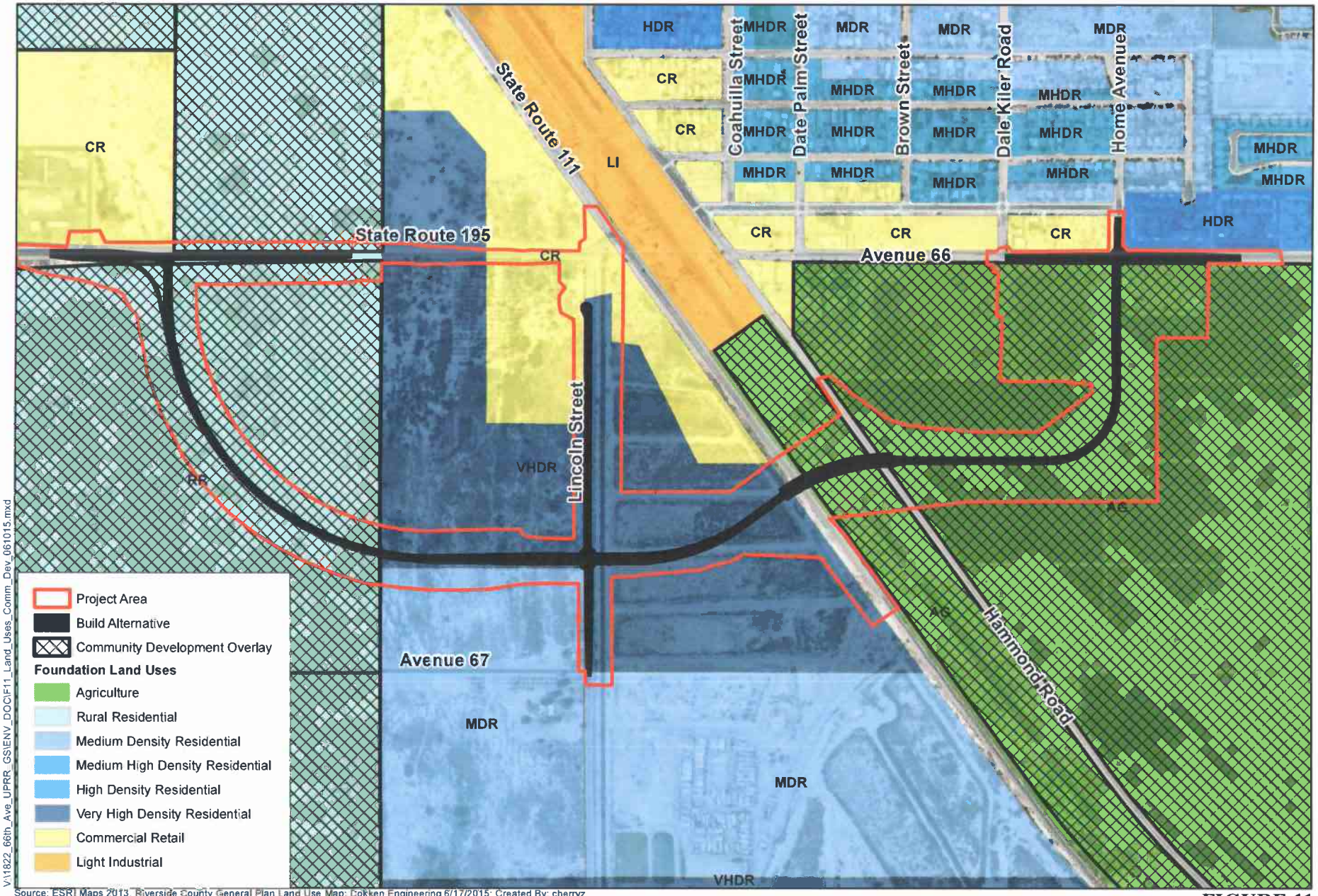



**FIGURE 11**

**LAND USES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OVERLAY**

Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)
Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project
Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California

As a participant and co-permittee of the CVMSHCP, the County of Riverside will implement mitigation measures to be consistent with the CVMSHCP. The project is in the process of Project Review for consistency with the CVMSHCP. With the consistency review and implementation of measures LUP-1, AES-4, BIO-17, WQ-5, WQ-6, and, NOI-3, significant impacts would not result.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measures would be implemented:

LUP-1: The project will be submitted to the CVMHCP to undergo the Project Review process and will comply with all pertinent CVMSHCP measures.

| **XI. MINERAL RESOURCES**: Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

a & b) **No Impact.** No known mineral resources are at the project site. The project area is designated as either MRZ-4 (which does not have enough information to determine mineral presence) or is an unstudied area (County of Riverside 2013).

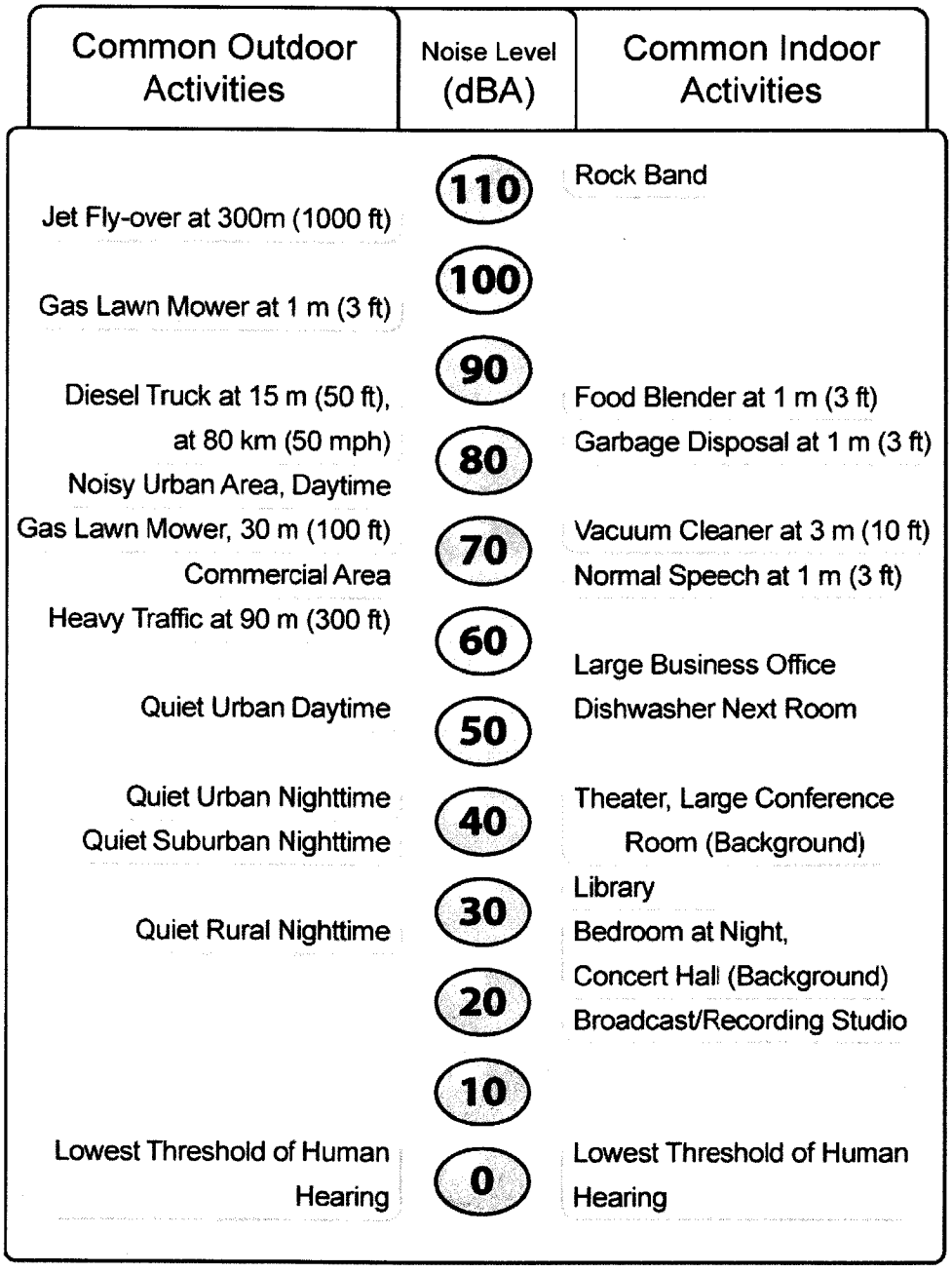
## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No avoidance, minimization, and/or avoidance measures are proposed.

| **XII. NOISE**: Would the project result in: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

a, c) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** The project would have less than significant impact on exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies. Measures NOI-1, NOI-2, and NOI-3 would be implemented. Anticipated noise levels were compared to Caltrans standards in the *Noise Study Report (*2015) and County of Riverside standards as further discussed in this section. For reference, Noise Levels of Common Activities are shown on Figure 12: Noise Levels of Common Activities.

**Figure 12. Noise Levels of Common Activities**



County of Riverside CEQA Noise Analysis

The County's *General Plan* Noise Element was reviewed for policies and guidelines for evaluating and addressing noise impacts. The Noise Element in its entirety is also is included in Appendix C of this Initial Study. The following policies N 1.3, N 1.5, N 8.2, N 8.5, and N 8.6 were found pertinent to this project:

**N 1.3** Consider the following uses noise-sensitive and discourage these uses in areas in excess of 65 CNEL:

- Schools;
- Hospitals;
- Rest Homes;
- Long Term Care Facilities;
- Mental Care Facilities;
- Residential Uses;
- Libraries;
- Passive Recreation Uses; and
- Places of worship

**N 1.5** Prevent and mitigate the adverse impacts of excessive noise exposure on the residents, employees, visitors, and noise-sensitive uses of Riverside County.

**N 8.2** Ensure the inclusion of noise mitigation measures in the design of new roadway projects in the County.

**N 8.5** Employ noise mitigation practices when designing all future streets and highways, and when improvements occur along existing highway segments. These mitigation measures will emphasize the establishment of natural buffers or setbacks between the arterial roadways and adjoining noise-sensitive areas.

**N 8.6** Require that all future exterior noise forecasts use Level of Service C, and be based on designed road capacity or 20-year projection of development (whichever is less) for future noise forecasts.

It is the County's policy to discourage excessive noise levels and to employ mitigation measure for areas where excessive noise may occur. For this project, the *Avenue 66 Grade Separation – CNEL Noise Level—Memorandum* (Entech Consulting Group, 2014) was prepared to evaluate existing conditions and future scenarios (please see Appendix C). For a summary of the thresholds used by the County, please see Figure 13 and Table 5. Figure 13 shows the County of Riverside's Community Noise Equivalent Levels (CNEL) for different land use categories and Table 5 shows the estimated CNEL for the noise receivers in the vicinity of the project.

*Residential Areas*

Following the County's CNEL thresholds shown in Figure 13, Residential-Low Density (Single Family, Duplex, and Mobile Homes) are Normally Acceptable for 60 dBA CNEL and below, and Conditionally Acceptable levels are from 55 to 70 dBA CNEL. For Residential-Multiple Family land uses, the Normally Acceptable levels are 65 CNEL dBA and below, and Conditionally Acceptable levels are from 60 to 70 CNEL dBA.

Following the County's CNEL thresholds shown in Figure 13, the Build Alternative would not result in exceedance of the County's CNEL thresholds on single-family or multi-family residential receivers R1, R12, and R-14/ST3.

The Build Alternative would have conditionally acceptable noise impacts at single-family residential areas represented by receivers R3 and R16. These receivers have a Build Noise Level of 63 and 65 dBA CNEL respectively. For these receivers, the Build Alternative would result in a difference of 12 and 7 dBA CNEL, respectively, compared to the existing noise levels. When comparing the future noise levels of the Build Alternative versus the No-Build, the difference would be 7 and 5 db CNEL, respectively, at these locations. Receiver R3 and R16 would have a discernable increase in noise levels (a difference of at least 3 dB is discernable) compared to the No-Build.

While discernable increases would result on R3, and R16, the levels are under 70 dBA CNEL and are conditionally acceptable for such single-family residential areas as shown in Figure 13, which show the thresholds considered in the County of Riverside General Plan. To meet conditionally acceptable requirements, alternative noise abatement is to be considered. R3, and R16 and the receptors they represent are being considered for alternative noise abatement with rubberized asphalt, per measure NOI-1.

Further analysis under Caltrans standards are discussed later in this section.

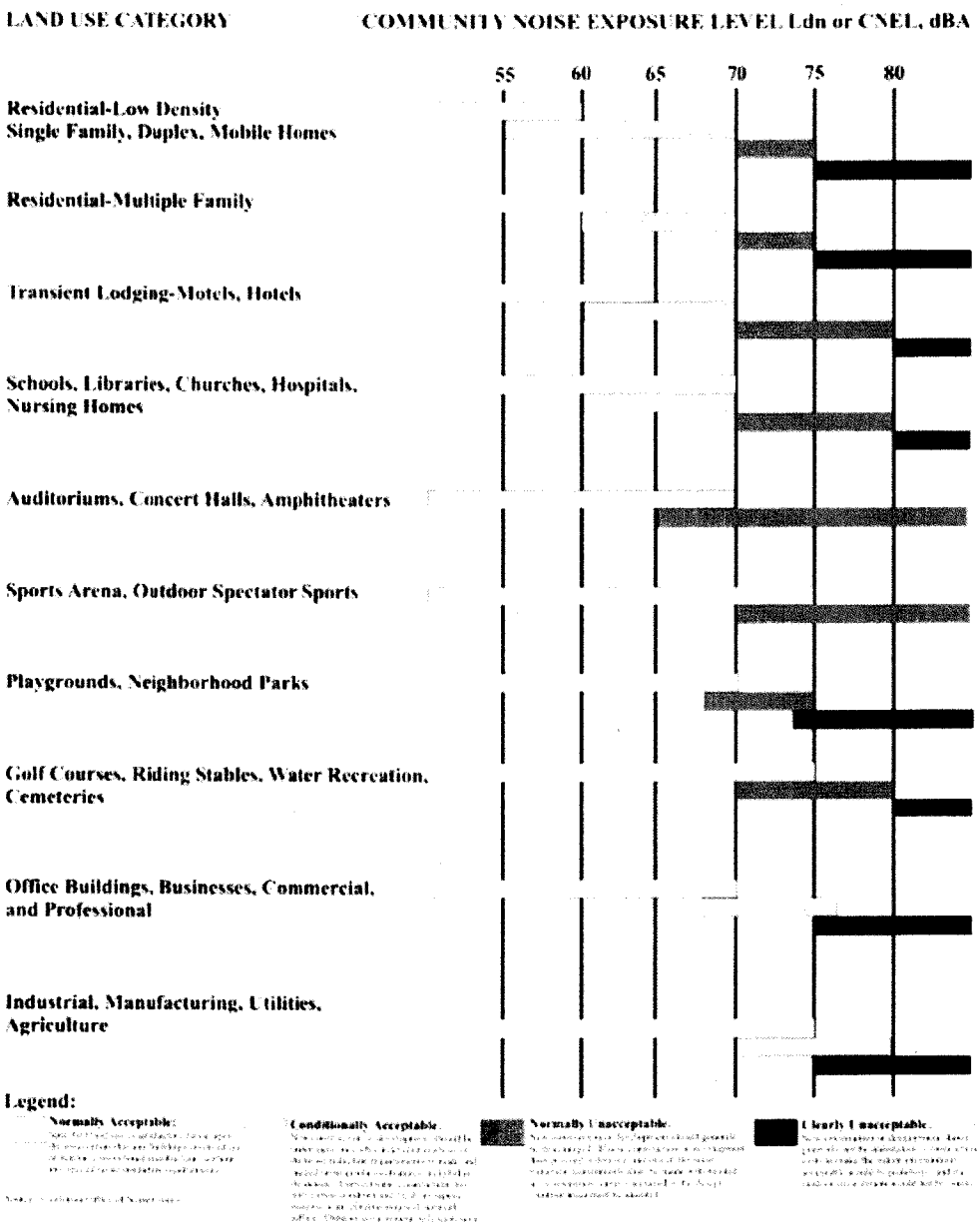
*Undeveloped Areas*

Receivers R2/ST1, R5, R5-1, R6, R7/ST6, R8, R9/ST2, R9-1, R10, R11, R13/ST5, R15/ST4, and R19 are in undeveloped areas, active sports areas, or parks. The receivers located on undeveloped areas would be below 75 dB CNEL and noise levels would be acceptable with the Build Alternative. No dwellings are located at these receptor sites. The future noise level at R9/ST2, the active sports area, would be 56 dB CNEL, and the future noise level at R9-1, a park, would be 61 dB CNEL. These levels are acceptable following the "sports arena, outdoor spectator sports" or "playground, neighborhood parks" normally acceptable levels. The normally acceptable noise level for "sports arenas, outdoor spectator sports areas" is 75 dBA CNEL and the normally acceptable noise level for "playground, neighborhood parks" is 70 dBA CNEL, as shown in Figure 13.

*Commercial Areas*

Receivers R17 and R18 are in commercial areas. The future noise levels would be 63 dBA CNEL at R17 and 61 dBA CNEL at R18. These noise levels would be below 70 dBA CNEL and are within the normally acceptable range for commercial areas.

## Figure 13. Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Exposure



**LEGEND**

| | |
|---|---|
| | Normally Acceptable: Specified land use is satisfactory based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements. |
| | Conditionally Acceptable: New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air condition will normally suffice. Outdoor environmental will seem noisy. |
| | Normally Unacceptable: New Construction or development should be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made with needed noise insulation features included in the design. Outdoor areas must be shielded. |
| | Clearly unacceptable: New construction or development should generally not be undertaken. Construction costs to make the indoor environment acceptable would be prohibitive and the outdoor environment would not be usable. |

**Table 5. Estimated CNEL of the Build and No-Build Alternatives**

| Receiver ID | Number of Dwelling Units | Land Use | Address | Existing Noise Level, CNEL | No Build Noise Level CNEL | Build Noise Level, CNEL | No Build minus Existing, dB | Build minus Existing, dB | Build minus No-Build, dB | Normally Acceptable CNEL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R1 | 1 | SFR | 66975 Lincoln Street | 47 | 54 | **59** | 7 | 12 | 5 | 60 |
| R2/ST1 | 0 | UND | Adjacent to 66975 Lincoln Street | 61 | 68 | 73 | 7 | 12 | 5 | 75 |
| R3** | 1 | SFR | 67th Avenue | 51 | 58 | **63** | 7 | 12 | 5 | 60 |
| R4 | 3 | SFR | 68th Avenue | 45 | 51 | 54 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 60 |
| R5 | 0 | UND | South of 66th Avenue & East of Lincoln Street | 50 | 57 | 65 | 7 | 15 | 8 | 75 |
| R5-1 | 0 | UND | South of 66th Avenue & West of Lincoln Street | 49 | 56 | 66 | 7 | 17 | 10 | 75 |
| R6 | 0 | UND | South of 66th Avenue & West of Lincoln Street | 59 | 65 | 66 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 75 |
| R7/ST6 | 0 | UND | 91665 66th Avenue | 66 | 72 | 72 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 75 |
| R8 | 0 | UND | South of 66th Avenue & East of Hammond Road | 48 | 55 | 60 | 7 | 12 | 5 | 75 |
| R9/ST2 | 1 | ASA | 91391 66th Avenue | 49 | 55 | 56 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 75 |
| R9-1 | 3 | Park | 91350 66th Avenue | 58 | 63 | 61 | 5 | 3 | -2 | 70 |
| R10 | 0 | UND | South of 66th Avenue & East of Hammond Road | 46 | 52 | 68 | 6 | 22 | 16 | 75 |
| R11 | 0 | UND | North of 66th Avenue & East of Hammond Road | 60 | 64 | 61 | 4 | 1 | -3 | 75 |
| R12 | 1 | SFR | 65954 66th Avenue | 54 | 60 | **59** | 6 | 5 | -1 | 60 |
| R13/ST5 | 0 | UND | North of 66th Avenue & East of receiver R12 | 56 | 62 | 61 | 6 | 5 | -1 | 75 |
| R14/ST3 | 6 | MFR | 91720 66th Avenue | 56 | 62 | **65** | 6 | 9 | 3 | 65 |
| R15/ST4 | 0 | UND | 91600 3rd Street | 53 | 58 | 60 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 75 |
| R16** | 3 | SFR | 91636 3rd Street | 58 | 63 | **65** | 5 | 7 | 2 | 60 |
| R17 | 2 | COM | 90496 66th Ave | 55 | 61 | 63 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 70 |
| R18 | 2 | COM | 90480 66th Ave | 54 | 60 | 61 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 70 |
| R19 | 0 | UND | 90977-91061 66th Ave | 51 | 57 | 60 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 75 |

*Build Noise Level estimated for Design Year 2040.
**R3 and R16 to be considered for rubberized asphalt. Conditionally acceptable levels are 70 CNEL for single-family residential.

Caltrans/FHWA Regulations

The project was evaluated for impacts under Caltrans/FHWA regulations due to the project's overcrossing over State Route 111 and improvements to State Route 195. A *Noise Study Report* (2015) for the project documents the findings and is summarized in this section.

Sensitive receivers were identified in those areas where outdoor frequent human use would occur, such as single and multi-family residences and active sports areas. These sensitive receivers fall into FHWA and Caltrans Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) Activity Categories B and C. In addition, parcels of undeveloped land were identified (Activity Category G) within the project limits. Undeveloped land uses do not have existing noise criteria. These parcels were included in the study to provide information to the local community. The FHWA and Caltrans NAC for both Activity Categories B and C is 67 dBA equivalent sound levels over one hour ($L_{eq}$ [h]). Activity Category G does not have a NAC standard (Table 6).

**Table 6. Caltrans and FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria**

| Activity Category | Activity $L_{eq}$ [h][1] | Evaluation Location | Description of Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 57 | Exterior | Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose. |
| B[2] | 67 | Exterior | Residential. |
| C[2] | 67 | Exterior | Active sport areas, amphitheaters, auditoriums, campgrounds, cemeteries, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, parks, picnic areas, places of worship, playgrounds, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, recording studios, recreation areas, Section 4(f) sites, schools, television studios, trails, and trail crossings. |
| D | 52 | Interior | Auditoriums, day care centers, hospitals, libraries, medical facilities, places of worship, public meeting rooms, public or nonprofit institutional structures, radio studios, schools, and television studios. |
| E | 72 | Exterior | Hotels, motels, offices, restaurant/bars, and other developed lands, properties, or activities not included in A-D or F. |
| F | | | Agriculture, airports, bus yards, emergency services, industrial, logging, maintenance facilities, manufacturing, mining, rail yards, retail facilities, shipyards, retail facilities, shipyards, utilities (water resources, water treatment, electrical), and warehousing. |
| G | | | Undeveloped lands that are not permitted. |

[1] The $L_{eq}$ (h) activity criteria values are for impact determination only and are not design standards for noise abatement measures. All values are A-weighted decibels (dBA).

[2] Includes undeveloped lands permitted for this activity category.

The project was evaluated for noise impacts at twenty-one representative receivers (see Figure 14) following procedures of the FHWA and Caltrans *Noise Analysis Protocol*. None of the receivers would approach or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria of 67 dB for a residential area or 72 dBA for a commercial area (see Table 7). There is no Noise Abatement Criteria for undeveloped lands that are not permitted. As a result no abatement was needed.

## Table 7. Predicted Future Noise and Sound Wall Analysis - Avenue 66 Grade Separation

| Receiver I.D. | Barrier I.D. | Number of Dwelling Units | Land Use | Address | Existing Noise Level $L_{eq}(h)$, dBA[1] | Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project Future Worst Hour Noise Levels - $L_{eq}(h)$, dBA | | | | | | | Barrier Feasible (5 dB I.L.) | Barrier meets Caltrans Acoustical Design Goal (7 dB I.L.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Design Year Noise Level without Project | Design Year Noise Level with Project | Design Year Noise Level without Project minus Existing Conditions | Design Year Noise Level with Project minus Existing Conditions | Design Year Noise Level with Project minus No Project Conditions | Activity Category (NAC) | Impact Type[2] | | |
| | | | | | | Noise Prediction with Barrier, Barrier Insertion Loss (I.L.), and Number of Benefited Receivers (NBR) | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 6 feet: $L_{eq}(h)$ / I.L.[3] / NBR | 8 feet: $L_{eq}(h)$ / I.L.[3] / NBR | 10 feet: $L_{eq}(h)$ / I.L.[3] / NBR | 12 feet: $L_{eq}(h)$ / I.L.[3] / NBR | 14 feet: $L_{eq}(h)$ / I.L.[3] / NBR | 16 feet: $L_{eq}(h)$ / I.L.[3] / NBR | | | |
| R1 | No Barrier | 1 | SFR | 66975 Lincoln Street | 45 | 52 | 57 | 7 | 12 | 5 | B (67) | None | -- | -- |
| R2/ST1 | No Barrier | 0 | UND | Adjacent to 66975 Lincoln Street | 59 | 66 | 71 | 8 | 12 | 5 | G (N/A) | NA | -- | -- |
| R3 | No Barrier | 1 | SFR | 67th Avenue | 49 | 56 | 61 | 7 | 12 | 5 | B (67) | None | -- | -- |
| R4 | No Barrier | 3 | SFR | 68th Avenue | 43 | 49 | 52 | 7 | 10 | 3 | B (67) | None | -- | -- |
| R5 | No Barrier | 0 | UND | South of 66th Avenue & East of Lincoln Street | 48 | 55 | 63 | 7 | 15 | 8 | G (N/A) | NA | -- | -- |
| R5-1 | No Barrier | 0 | UND | South of 66th Avenue & West of Lincoln Street | 47 | 54 | 64 | 7 | 17 | 10 | G (N/A) | NA | -- | -- |
| R6 | No Barrier | 0 | UND | South of 66th Avenue & West of Lincoln Street | 57 | 63 | 64 | 6 | 7 | 1 | G (N/A) | NA | -- | -- |
| R7/ST6 | No Barrier | 0 | UND | 91665 66th Avenue | 64 | 70 | 70 | 6 | 6 | 0 | G (N/A) | NA | -- | -- |
| R8 | No Barrier | 0 | UND | South of 66th Avenue & East of Hammond Road | 46 | 53 | 58 | 7 | 12 | 5 | G (N/A) | NA | -- | -- |
| R9/ST2 | No Barrier | 1 | ASA | 91391 66th Avenue | 47 | 53 | 54 | 7 | 7 | 1 | C (67) | None | -- | -- |
| R9-1 | No Barrier | 3 | Park | 91350 66th Avenue | 56 | 61 | 59 | 6 | 3 | -2 | C (67) | None | -- | -- |
| R10 | No Barrier | 0 | UND | South of 66th Avenue & East of Hammond Road | 44 | 50 | 66 | 6 | 22 | 17 | G (N/A) | NA | -- | -- |
| R11 | No Barrier | 0 | UND | North of 66th Avenue & East of Hammond Road | 58 | 62 | 59 | 5 | 1 | -3 | G (N/A) | NA | -- | -- |
| R12 | No Barrier | 1 | SFR | 65954 66th Avenue | 52 | 58 | 57 | 6 | 5 | -1 | B (67) | None | -- | -- |
| R13/ST5 | No Barrier | 0 | UND | North of 66th Avenue & East of receiver R12 | 54 | 60 | 59 | 5 | 5 | -1 | G (N/A) | NA | -- | -- |
| R14/ST3 | No Barrier | 6 | MFR | 91720 66th Avenue | 54 | 60 | 63 | 5 | 9 | 4 | B (67) | None | -- | -- |
| R15/ST4 | No Barrier | 0 | UND | 91600 3rd Street | 51 | 56 | 58 | 5 | 7 | 2 | G (N/A) | NA | -- | -- |
| R16 | No Barrier | 3 | SFR | 91636 3rd Street | 56 | 61 | 63 | 5 | 7 | 2 | B (67) | None | -- | -- |
| R17 | No Barrier | 2 | COM | 90496 66th Ave | 53 | 59 | 61 | 6 | 8 | 2 | E (72) | None | -- | -- |
| R18 | No Barrier | 2 | COM | 90480 66th Ave | 52 | 58 | 59 | 5 | 7 | 1 | E (72) | None | -- | -- |
| R19 | No Barrier | 0 | UND | 90977-91061 66th Ave | 49 | 55 | 58 | 6 | 9 | 3 | G (N/A) | NA | -- | -- |

Notes:
1. Noise levels were adjusted to existing peak hour.
2. Impact types: A/E - Future noise conditions approach (within 1 dBA) or exceed the Noise Abatement Criteria, S = substantial noise increase, when the project's predicted worst-hour design-year noise level exceeds the existing worst hour noise level by 12 dBA or more
3. I.L. = Insertion Loss
4. SFR = single-family residence, UND = Undeveloped, ASA = active sports area, MFR = multi-family residence
5. N/A - Not Applicable


**Figure 14**
**Receiver and Noise Barrier Locations**
Federal Project # PNRSCML 5956 (221)
Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project
Community of Mecca, Riverside County, California

b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Exposure of groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels would be less than significant. Groundborne vibration or groundborne noise may result from the placement of bridge piles at the overcrossing, which is at a location approximately 0.2 miles from commercial areas. Construction noises in general would be temporary and intermittent.

d) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would result in less than significant temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels during construction. Noise from construction activities may intermittently dominate the noise environment in the immediate area of construction. Construction equipment is expected to generate noise levels ranging from 70 to 90 dB at a distance of 50 feet. Construction noise would be short-term, intermittent, and less than significant. To minimize the construction-generated noise, measure **NOI-2** would be followed.

e) **No Impact.** The project is not within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport. The nearest airport is Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport, approximately 6 miles northwest of the project site.

f) **No Impact.** The project is not within the vicinity of a privately-owned airport or airstrip. The nearest privately-owned airport or airstrip is Desert Air Sky Ranch Airport, approximately thirteen miles southeast of the project (AirNav, LLC. 2013).

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

NOI-1: Rubberized asphalt will be considered for conditionally acceptable noise levels at receivers R3 and R16.

NOI-2: Standard Specification 14-8.02, "Noise Control", and SSP S5-310, Section 14-8.02 states:

- Do not exceed 86 dBA at 50 feet from the job site activities from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- Equip an internal combustion engine with the manufacturer recommended muffler.
- Do not operate an internal combustion engine on the job site without the appropriate muffler.

NOI-3: In areas adjacent to or within the Conservation Area, the project shall be designed to maintain noise levels at or below 75 dBA Leq hourly. Noise in excess of 75 dBA Leq hourly shall require setbacks, berms, or walls, as appropriate, to minimize the effects of noise on the adjacent Conservation Area.

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

a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would have less than significant impact on population growth in the area. The project is not a new housing or commercial business development. Indirect impacts would be non-significant, as the project is designed to accommodate existing and planned future traffic volumes, as discussed in Section XVI. These traffic volumes would result with or without the project.

b & c) **No Impact.** The proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of existing housing, nor would it displace substantial numbers of people. No housing is within the project footprint. While there would be partial acquisitions, this would not displace housing, or people.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No measures are proposed.

| **XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES**: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

a (i, ii) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.** The project would have less than significant impacts on fire and police protection. In the long-term, the grade separation will enhance and improve access to and from the Community of Mecca by providing an alternate route across the railroad. During short-term construction, the project would have little effect on fire and police protection as the alignment is largely new. Portions that take place on existing streets, such as the intersections at Avenue 66 and along Lincoln Street would continue to allow traffic access through construction staging and traffic management. With inclusion of measure **PS-1** the project would have less than significant impact on public services.

a (iii-v) **No Impact.** There are no schools, parks, or other public facilities within the project area. No mitigation measures would be required.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The following measure will be implemented to minimize potential impacts during construction:

- PS-1: Impacts to traffic flow as a result of construction activities would be reduced by implementing the traffic management plan and a construction phasing plan for the proposed project. The traffic management plan includes requirements to provide the public with information through brochures and mailers, media releases, public meetings, and notification to impacted groups. Under the traffic management plan, travelers would be informed with changeable message signs, traveler information systems (internet), and bicycle community information, if necessary.

| XV. RECREATION: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

a) **No Impact.** No community, regional, or other recreational facilities are within the proposed project area. The nearest recreational facility is the Boys and Girls Club of Coachella Valley – Mecca Clubhouse, which is on the existing Avenue 66 approximately 0.1 mi west of the intersection at Home Avenue. The project would generally route traffic away from the Boys and Girls Club so accelerated usage of the facility is not expected.

b) **No Impact.** The proposed project does not include recreational facilities, nor does it require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. The proposed project would accommodate existing and projected future traffic, and would not lead to induced growth or needed recreational facilities.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

| **XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC**: Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Result in inadequate emergency access? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

a, b, f) **Less Than Significant Impact.** The project would not conflict with applicable plans, ordinances, or policies establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the transportation circulation system. The project would also not conflict with an applicable congestion management programs. The project is included in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and is included in the 2012 County of Riverside General Plan, Eastern Coachella Valley Area Plan (County of Riverside 2013).The County of Riverside has established the following Level of Service target in the County General Plan Circulation Element:

C 2.1 Maintain the following Maintain the following countywide target Levels of Service:

LOS "C" along all County maintained roads and conventional state highways. As an exception, LOS "D" may be allowed in Community Development areas, only at intersections of any combination of Secondary Highways, Major Highways, Arterials, Urban Arterials, Expressways, conventional state highways or freeway ramp intersections.

LOS "E" may be allowed in designated community centers to the extent that it would support transit-oriented development and walkable communities.

A Traffic Operations Report (December, 2013) and Traffic Memorandum (May, 2015) were prepared to analyze potential traffic impacts of the proposed Build and No-Build Alternatives.

As shown in Tables 8 and 9, the Build Alternative produces considerable time savings over the No-Build Alternative. Under Opening Year 2020 conditions, the Build Alternative would improve operations at all study intersections by reducing delay and improving two intersections from "LOS D or worse" to "LOS C or better" in at least one peak hour. Under Design Year 2040 conditions, the Build Alternative would improve operations at all study intersections by reducing delay and improving two intersections from "LOS D or worse" with the No-Build, to "LOS C or better" with the Build Alternative.

**Table 8. Intersection Level of Service, Opening Year (2020)**

| Intersection Level of Service | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Opening Year (2020) | | | | | | | | |
| Intersection | No Build Alternative | | | | Build Alternative | | | |
| | AM | | PM | | AM | | PM | |
| | Delay | LOS | Delay | LOS | Delay | LOS | Delay | LOS |
| Avenue 66 at Home Avenue | 12.3 | B | 12.3 | B | 12.4 | B | 13.9 | B |
| 4th Street at Hammond Road | 8.1 | A | 8.7 | A | 7.7 | A | 8.3 | A |
| 4th Street at Grapefruit Boulevard | 38.7 | D | >80.0 | F | 27.3 | C | >80.0 | F |
| Avenue 66 at Grapefruit Boulevard | 37.1 | E | >50.0 | F | 16.5 | C | >50.0 | F |
| Avenue 66 at Lincoln Street | 16.1 | C | 25.8 | D | | | | |
| Proposed Overpass at Avenue 66 (SR-195) | | | | | 9.2 | A | 28.9 | C |
| Proposed Overpass at Lincoln Street | | | | | 10.1 | B | 27.3 | C |

**Table 9. Intersection Level of Service, Design Year (2040)**

| Intersection Level of Service | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Design Year (2040) | | | | | | | | |
| Intersection | No Build Alternative | | | | Build Alternative | | | |
| | AM | | PM | | AM | | PM | |
| | Delay | LOS | Delay | LOS | Delay | LOS | Delay | LOS |
| Avenue 66 at Home Avenue | >50.0 | F | >50.0 | F | 16.3 | B | 18.9 | B |
| 4th Street at Hammond Road | >50.0 | F | >50.0 | F | 39.5 | E | >50.0 | F |
| 4th Street at Grapefruit Boulevard | >80.0 | F | >80.0 | F | >80.0 | F | >80.0 | F |
| Avenue 66 at Grapefruit Boulevard | >50.0 | F | >50.0 | F | >50.0 | F | >50.0 | F |
| Avenue 66 at Lincoln Street | >50.0 | F | >50.0 | F | | | | |
| Proposed Overpass at Avenue 66 (SR-195) | | | | | 7.7 | A | 10.2 | B |
| Proposed Overpass at Lincoln Street | | | | | 21.1 | C | 32.3 | C |
| Proposed Overpass at Home Avenue | | | | | 8.8 | A | 12.7 | B |

c) **No Impact.** The new grade separated crossing of UPRR and SR-111 would not affect air traffic patterns. The nearest airport is the Jacqueline Cochran Regional Airport, which is 5 mi northwest of the project site. No safety risks would result.

d) **No Impact.** Design features would comply with Caltrans and City standards or would be approved as non-standard features as appropriate. Caltrans review process for the encroachment permit would ensure non-standard design features would comply with the Caltrans Design Manual and approved Design Exception Fact Sheets.

e) **Less Than Significant Impact.** In the long-term, emergency vehicles would not be impeded since LOS would be improved through the intersection. During construction, an emergency detour plan would be used to manage transportation movements at the construction area.

f) **Less Than Significant Impact.** There are no existing designated bicycle facilities provided in the study area. The pedestrian network in the study area consists of sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, and appropriate pedestrian crossing controls. No pedestrian facilities are provided west of Hammond Road. Along the study corridor, pedestrian facilities are provided along Hammond Road south of 3rd Street and along Avenue 66 east of Hammond Road. The Build Alternative includes bicycle facilities and pedestrian sidewalks and crosswalks throughout.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required; however, the following standard avoidance and/or minimization measures will be implemented to minimize potential impacts.

- PS-1: Impacts to traffic flow as a result of construction activities would be reduced by implementing the traffic management plan and a construction phasing plan for the proposed project. The traffic management plan includes requirements to provide the public with information through brochures and mailers, media releases, public meetings, and notification to impacted groups. Under the traffic management plan, travelers would be informed with changeable message signs, traveler information systems (internet), and bicycle community information, if necessary.

| **XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS**: Would the project: | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

a) **Less Than Significant Impact.** While wastewater in the form of run-off from the construction site may result, BMPs would be implemented in compliance with the NPDES General Construction permit to minimize impacts. Permanent BMPs would also be incorporated into the project as feasible, consistent with the Caltrans Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit and Whitewater Regional Water Quality Control Board MS4 permit. Exceedance of waste water treatment requirements would not result.

b) **Less Than Significant Impact.** Anticipated permanent treatment BMPs are anticipated to be drainage swales or natural bottomed drainage ditches along the roadway. Construction of these swales would be a less than significant impact. See further information in answer "b."

c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** While the project would include new storm water drainage to accommodate runoff from the roadway, the impact would not be significant. Storm water

drainage, such as swales, are anticipated along the roadway. The project will add a net impervious surface of 18.24 acres to the area, and curb and gutter would direct runoff appropriately potential swales or basins as determined by drainage studies. The proposed project will include storm water drainage improvements to channel runoff more efficiently, reduce erosion, and convey runoff to a controlled location.

d) **No Impact.** Existing water supplies are sufficient for the project. As a transportation facility, no increased long-term usage is needed.

e) **No Impact.** Waste water treatment is not needed for this project. As a transportation facility, only storm water would be affected.

f) **Less Than Significant Impact.** As a transportation project, the project would not generate substantial solid waste during operation. During construction, solid waste may be generated from modification of currently paved portions, however, the amount is not expected to exceed landfill capacities.

g) **No Impact.** The proposed project would comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is proposed.

| XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 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? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

a) **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated:** As discussed in Section IV Biological Resources, less than significant impacts are anticipated with inclusion of appropriate mitigation measures, **BIO-1** to **BIO-30**. Inclusion of these measures would ensure that the project would not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animals. Based on results of the Historic Property Survey Report (2014) and Supplementary Historic Property Survey Report (2015), the project would not eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

b) **Less Than Significant Impact:** The proposed project would not have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable. A discussion of key affected resource areas follow:

**Aesthetics:** Cumulatively considerable impacts would not result. The project would implement aesthetics to harmonize with the surroundings. While foreseeable changes in the future viewshed may result from planned development of the area, the grade separation would not be an incongruent feature in such a developed area.

**Agriculture and Forest Resources:** Cumulatively considerable impacts would not result on agriculture and forest resources. While the project would convert approximately 8 acres of Prime Farmland, the area is planned for community development overlay and has been considered in the County's General Plan EIR. The project's affect is not a new cumulatively considerable impact.

**Air Quality:** There would be no adverse cumulatively considerable impacts to air quality. As documented in the Air Quality Report, the project satisfies the analysis for regional and project-level transportation conformity. Considering the past and present worsening of level of service at the 4th Street at-grade separation, without the project future conditions at the 4th Street at-grade crossing in Mecca would worsen due to increased train and automobile traffic.

**Biological Resources:** Cumulatively considerable impacts would not result. The project will be reviewed for consistency with the Coachella Valley MSHCP, which addresses biological resources at a regional scale. As discussed in the NES for the project, the project includes avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures to reduce impacts to the biological environment.

**Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Cumulatively considerable impacts are not anticipated. As a transportation project, the project does not consist of increased hazardous materials-related land uses. As discussed in the Hazardous Waste ISA, sampling and testing at the project footprint is recommended for proper handling during construction. No long-term impacts are anticipated.

**Hydrology and Water Quality:** Cumulatively considerable impacts to water quality would not result. Only minor impacts to the Lincoln Storm Water Channel would result from two crossings.

**Land Use and Planning and Population and Housing:** Some land use change has taken place near the project footprint in the last 10-12 years. Aerial photography from 2002 shows agriculture east of Hammond Road, active fish ponds west of SR-111, and similar open space/undeveloped land west of Lincoln Street. By 2005, the fish ponds appeared to be non-active. The 2005 aerial photograph also shows new buildings (not in the 2002 photo) east of Hammond Road and south of Avenue 66, near the location of the new Boys & Girls Club. In the more densely populated area of Mecca, the 2002 photograph shows undeveloped land just southwest of the Avenue 65 and Johnson Street intersection. Between 2002 and 2005, a residential development was constructed near that location, southeast of the Dale Kiler Road/Avenue 65 intersection. By 2012, further residential development consisting of single-family homes were constructed between Home Avenue and Johnson Street.

As discussed in the Land Uses section of the document, the grade separation is a component of the planned future circulation system and this is demonstrated through its inclusion in the key planning documents of the area, which are the SCAG FTIP, SCAG RTP, and County of Riverside General Plan. SCAG and the County of Riverside have previously addressed the impacts on the transportation system through the FTIP, RTP, and General Plan's respective EIR's.

While the project brings a new roadway to a new area and potentially could influence growth, this would not be an unplanned affect. As discussed in the Land Uses section of this document, planned future land uses in the project alignment are community development overlay (over agriculture foundation land uses), residential, and rural residential (General Plan, 2012). The project would accommodate such future planned land uses and cumulatively considerable effects on growth or land use would not result.

**Noise:** Cumulatively considerable impacts are not anticipated. The noise analysis considered traffic noise to the Design Year 2040. The noise analysis used projected traffic volumes based on projected future growth in the area.

**Transportation/Traffic:** Cumulatively considerable impacts are not anticipated. As discussed in the Land Uses section of the document, the grade separation is a component of the planned future circulation system and this is demonstrated through its inclusion in the key planning documents of the area, which are the SCAG FTIP, SCAG RTP, and County of Riverside General Plan. Without the grade separation and the other projects in these planning documents, cumulatively considerable impacts on traffic are anticipated to occur. No un-planned traffic or

growth inducing effects are expected. Viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects, none of this project's impacts would be considered cumulatively significant impacts to the environment.

c) **Less Than Significant Impact.** No substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly, are anticipated. Construction noise would be minimized through timing restrictions, and a traffic control plan would be implemented to manage traffic movements and allow for emergency detour routes.

## Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Please see individual sections for related measures.

# List of Preparers

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

## County of Riverside

Marcia Frances Rose, M.S., PMP, Environmental Project Manager, Riverside County Transportation Department, M.S., Tufts University, Medford, M.A., and B.A. Administration & Legal Processes, Mills College, Oakland, CA; over 15 years of experience in environmental policy and project management positions in U.S. and state government. Contribution: Oversight of the Environmental Document Preparation.

Scott Staley, P.E., Project Manager

## Dokken Engineering

Elizabeth Diamond, P.E., Project Manager. B.S. in Civil Engineering and B.S. in Material Science; 28 years experience of municipal and regional public works experience. Contribution: Project Management.

Juann Ramos, PE., Project Engineer. M.S. and B.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering; 20 years of experience in civil engineering. Contribution: Design Management.

Namat Hosseinion, Senior Environmental Planner. M.A. and B.A in Anthropology; 15 years environmental planning experience. Contribution: Environmental Manager.

Cherry Zamora, Associate Environmental Planner. M.A. and B.A. in Geography; 10 years environmental planning experience. Contribution: Environmental document preparation.

Amy Dunay, Environmental Planner/Archaeologist, Registered Professional Archaeologist; M.A. in Archaeology, B.A. in Classics; 9 years of experience in California prehistoric and historical archaeology. Contribution: Historic Property Survey Report.

Angela Scudiere, Environmental Planner/Biologist. B.S. in Biological Sciences with a Plant Biology emphasis; 4 years of experience in biological studies for CEQA/NEPA compliance. Contribution: Natural Environment Study.

## Entech Consulting

Michelle Jones, Principal Engineer. B.S. in Civil Engineering; 20 years of experience in noise impact analysis. Contribution: Noise Study Report.

## Orsee Design

Tim S. Hiraoka, Registered Landscape Architect. M.B.A., B.S. in Landscape Architecture, A.S. in Landscape Horticulture; 30 years experience in landscape architecture. Contribution: Visual Impact Assessment oversight.

## Galvin Preservation Associates

Andrea Galvin, Architectural Historian. M.S. in Historic Preservation, B.S. in Environmental Design; 19 years experience in cultural resources and architectural history. Contribution: Historic Resources Evaluation Report.

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