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W13b

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STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALENDAR

Application Number: 5-25-0013

Applicant: California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Project Location: Highway 1, between North Studebaker Road and 1st Street, spanning Long Beach (Los Angeles County) and Seal Beach (Orange County).

Project Description: Widen the existing four-lane San Gabriel River Highway 1 Bridge by a maximum of 25 feet, upgrade the bridge railings, and improve with eight-foot Class II bicycle lane/shoulders and eight-foot pedestrian sidewalks. Additional work includes extensions of the shoulders and sidewalks off the bridge and other associated improvements to the connecting road prisms and replacement of guardrails.

Staff Recommendation: Approval with Conditions

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to widen the Highway 1 Bridge over the San Gabriel River channel to make multimodal improvements and to upgrade the existing bridge railing, along with other related improvements. The project limits span both the cities of Long Beach (Los Angeles County) and Seal Beach (Orange County). The existing bridge was originally constructed in 1931, widened in 1962, and seismically retrofitted in 1995. Caltrans aims to upgrade the bridge to meet current safety standards for bridge railings and width, as well as to perform additional seismic retrofit work and ensure its continued operation. The bridge is a critical transportation link that connects the City of Long Beach to the City of Seal Beach, connecting their respective counties. Under Section 30601.3,

Caltrans requested, and both cities and the Executive Director agreed, that the Commission process a consolidated CDP.

The existing bridge is 428 feet long and 72 feet wide and would be widened between 23.75 and 25 feet, with a new maximum width of 97 feet. The updated bridge would require the installation of 22 new cast-in-place steel shell piles to support the additional width. No changes to the existing bridge piles are proposed. Along with the 1930s era bridge rails, the existing bridge has narrow lanes and essentially no separated bike lane. Sidewalks exist, but they are very narrow and out-of-date. The updated bridge crossing would consist of four 12-foot-wide vehicular travel lanes, eight-foot-wide bicycle lanes, and eight-foot-wide separated pedestrian path/sidewalks, all of which will enhance multimodal access. The project includes reconstruction of the access road entrances that connect to the widened bridge, new retaining walls on southbound Highway 1 for the roadway transition, and a new 187-foot-long sidewalk at the southwest end for pedestrian continuity, and curb ramps and sidewalks upgrades compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

To further improve access, staff recommends **Special Condition 2**, which requires a new sidewalk at the bridge's southeastern end along the northbound lane, improving pedestrian connections to nearby trails and developments and expands access to Seal Beach and the future Los Cerritos Wetlands Visitor Center. The condition also mandates public access improvements at San Gabriel River Trailheads on Highway 1, including bike ramp reconstruction, replacing chain-link fencing with welded wire-mesh, and other amenities to offset the 18-month trailhead closures during construction.

In addition to public access, the primary issues raised by the project are visual resources, protection of water quality, biological resources and coastal waters. The bridge is in a scenic area under Long Beach's certified Local Coastal Program (LCP). The updated bridge would be wider with new railings, but Caltrans would maintaining a simple design that preserves views the updated bridge would feature see-through railings that maintain river views and reflect historic arches.

The San Gabriel River under the existing bridge is an artificially channelized estuarine stream bordered by riprap and concrete in a densely developed urban area. The river has a natural bottom, but there are no essential fish habitat or environmentally sensitive habitat areas within the project limits and no natural vegetation. No special status species would be affected. Nonetheless, because there is some fill of coastal waters (estuarine river in this case), which would result in displacement of soft bottom benthic habitat, Caltrans has agreed to provide funding to the Los Cerritos Wetlands Trust for marsh restoration work in the area adjacent to the site.

In short, the project is a needed travel safety enhancement that, as conditioned, should simultaneously improve public access and public views while protecting affected coastal resources. Staff therefore recommends the Commission find the project, as proposed and further conditioned, consistent with Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and, thus, recommends approval of CDP Application No. 5-25-0013, as conditioned. The motion to implement this recommendation can be found on **page 4** below.

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- Exhibit 1 – Project Location
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- Exhibit 3 – Select Project Layouts
- Exhibit 4 – Zedler Marsh Restoration Project Location
- Exhibit 5 – Letter from Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust
- Exhibit 6 – Visual Simulation of Proposed Bridge Rail

I. MOTION AND RESOLUTION

Motion:

I move that the Commission **approve** Coastal Development Permit Number 5-25-0013 pursuant to the staff recommendation.

Staff recommends a **YES** vote. Passage of this motion will result in approval of the permit as conditioned and adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

Resolution:

The Commission hereby approves a coastal development permit for the proposed development and adopts the findings set forth below on grounds that the development as conditioned will be in conformity with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3. Approval of the permit complies with the California Environmental Quality Act because either 1) feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives have been incorporated to substantially lessen any significant adverse effects of the development on the environment, or 2) there are no further feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.

II. STANDARD CONDITIONS

This permit is granted subject to the following standard conditions:

- 1. Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment.** The permit is not valid, and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the Permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.
- 2. Expiration.** If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date on which the Commission voted on the application. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.
- 3. Interpretation.** Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.
- 4. Assignment.** The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.
- 5. Terms and Conditions Run with the Land.** These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the Permittee to bind all

future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

III. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

This permit is granted subject to the following special conditions:

1. **Final Revised Plans.** NOT LESS THAN 30 DAYS PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Director, revised final plans in a full-sized electronic set. The Revised Final Plans shall be in substantial conformance with the project plans submitted in the CDP application of January 10, 2025, except as otherwise modified by this CDP's terms and conditions. The Revised Final Plans, shall, at a minimum, include and provide for the following:
 - A. **Railing/Guardrail Design.** All bridge rails and guardrails shall be sited, designed, colored, and camouflaged in a manner that integrates seamlessly into the character of the area and that minimizes visual impacts to the maximum extent feasible.
 - B. **Signage Plan.** All signs shall be identified (including in terms of text, size, and location), including new public access signage at the San Gabriel River Bike trailhead on Highway 1 identifying and informing visitors of public access opportunities in the vicinity, including the San Gabriel River Bike Trail at both trailheads located near the southeast and southwest corners of the bridge. All signs shall be sited and designed in a manner that integrates seamlessly into the character of the area and that minimizes visual impacts to the maximum extent feasible.
 - C. **Final Drainage and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans.** Revised final plan shall include final drainage plans and stormwater pollution prevention plans. The final drainage plans shall demonstrate that the drainage infrastructure will filter and treat runoff prior to its potential discharge into San Gabriel River.

All requirements above and all requirements of the Executive Director-approved Revised Final Plans shall be enforceable components of this CDP. The Permittee shall undertake development in conformance with this condition and the approved Revised Final Plans.

2. **Public Access Improvement Projects.** WITHIN TWO YEARS OF ISSUANCE OF THIS CDP, or the opening of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Visitor Center, whichever comes first, the Permittee shall submit written documentation that demonstrates that the following public access improvement projects are being implemented, including:
 - A. Evidence that the Permittee has developed and completed public access improvements in coordination with the City of Long Beach to the San Gabriel River Trailheads on Highway 1 (Pacific Coast Highway). These improvements shall include but are not limited to: reconstruction of the San Gabriel River Trail bike ramps and replacement of existing chain-link ramp fencing with welded wire-

mesh fencing and other site improvements such as solar lighting, hardscape, boulder seating improvements, and additional safety fencing.

- B. Evidence that the Permittee has developed and completed pedestrian access along Highway 1 adjacent to the northbound lane, between 1st street in the City of Seal Beach and the San Gabriel River in the City of Long Beach. The pedestrian access improvements shall include a sidewalk and any necessary Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant ramps and curb ramps.
- C. In lieu of the above projects, the Permittee may submit evidence that it has provided funding to the City of Long Beach and/or City of Seal Beach to complete the improvement projects.
- D. Implementation of these improvements shall require an amendment to this permit or a new Coastal Development Permit unless the Executive Director determines that that no amendment or new permit is legally required.
- E. If the Permittee is unable to complete any of the above improvements, the Permittee shall submit evidence demonstrating the reasons why such improvements are infeasible and shall submit an amendment application to this CDP with a new access improvement package that provides greater benefits than the pedestrian access here would provide (e.g., longer, more substantial, able to support greater number of users) in the area of the cities of Seal Beach or Long Beach.

3. Fill Mitigation Project.

- A. WITHIN 1 YEAR OF APPROVAL OF THIS CDP, and with prior document review and approval by the Executive Director, the Permittee shall submit written documentation that demonstrates representatives of Caltrans and the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust have entered into an Interagency Cooperative Agreement (“Cooperative Agreement”) consistent with the requirements of this CDP and its Special Conditions, including subsections (b) and (c) below.
- B. WITHIN TWO YEARS OF APPROVAL OF THIS CDP, the Permittee shall submit to the Executive Director evidence that Caltrans has provided funding to the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust in the amount of \$65,250 to be used toward the Zedler Marsh Restoration Project consistent with the Cooperative Agreement described herein.
- C. The Cooperative Agreement between Caltrans and the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust shall include the following minimum provisions:
 - 1. The Cooperative Agreement shall indicate that the Zedler Marsh Restoration Project will be designed, permitted, constructed, and maintained by the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust or another non-profit agency approved by the Executive Director.
 - 2. The Cooperative Agreement shall include provisions to address any failure by

Caltrans or the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust to implement the Cooperative Agreement in a manner consistent with this permit, including but not limited to any subcontracting of the project (or portions of it) to an alternate entity able to implement the Agreement, or if approved by an amendment to this CDP, to design, plan and/or construct alternative fill mitigation if the Zedler Marsh Restoration Project for which the \$65,250 in mitigation funds are utilized cannot feasibly be completed within 10 years of issuance of this CDP.

3. Unless resolved by the Executive Director of the Commission, any dispute concerning compliance with, or interpretation of, any provision of the Cooperative Agreement affecting the implementation of the Cooperative Agreement consistent with the requirements of this CDP shall be resolved by the Coastal Commission.
 4. The Cooperative Agreement shall provide for annual written reports by the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust to the Executive Director of the Coastal Commission on the progress made toward the completion of the Zedler Marsh Restoration Project.
4. **Construction Plan.** NOT LESS THAN 30 DAYS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit two copies of a Construction Plan to the Executive Director for review and written approval. The Construction Plan shall, at a minimum, include the following:
- A. **Construction Areas.** The Plan shall identify the specific location of all construction areas, all staging areas (including temporary trestles), and all construction access corridors in site plan view. All such areas within which construction activities and/or staging are to take place shall minimize impacts on coastal resources to the maximum extent feasible.
 - B. **Construction Methods.** The Plan shall specify the construction methods to be used, including all methods to be used to keep construction areas separated from public use areas and to ensure uninterrupted public use, and including verification that equipment operation and equipment and material storage will not significantly degrade public views during construction, all to the maximum extent feasible.
 - C. **Construction Traffic Controls.** The Plan shall include identification of all measures to be taken to limit lane closures to the maximum extent feasible and be in substantial conformance with such limitations proposed in the application. All one-way traffic lane closures shall provide for full and continuous access for pedestrians and cyclists through the work corridor, except during identified limited complete closures. The Plans shall also provide for emergency services to cross through construction work areas, including during any one-way traffic lane or full road closures. Updated versions of construction duration traffic controls shall be provided after any substantial changes. Other than guardrails approved by this CDP or temporary fencing or K-rail fencing/barriers, no new fencing or permanent K-rail fencing/barriers shall be allowed under this CDP.

1. The Plan shall reflect coordination with the responsible parties overseeing potentially concurrent construction activities in the vicinity, including but not limited to, the Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration project and the Marketplace Mixed-Use Project located at 6615 E. Pacific Coast Highway, Long Beach, CA.

D. **Construction Timing.** The following timing restrictions apply:

1. **Summer Work.** The Plan shall include a complete construction schedule, where no work shall occur during weekends and holidays in the peak summer months (i.e., from the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, inclusive), unless the Permittee can demonstrate that no significant impacts to public access will occur.
2. **Surface Water Work.** All work that has the potential to directly impact surface waters (including grading, cutting, and filling on the banks of San Gabriel River and pile driving and related activities) shall take place between April 15th and October 15th.

E. **Construction BMPs.** The Plan shall identify the type and location of all construction best management practices that will be implemented during construction to protect coastal resources, including at a minimum all of the following:

1. **Runoff Protection.** Silt fences, straw wattles, and equivalent apparatuses shall be installed at the perimeter of the construction site to prevent construction-related runoff and/or sediment from discharging from the construction area, and/or entering into storm drains or otherwise off-site and/or towards adjacent habitat areas. Special attention shall be given to appropriate filtering and treating of all runoff, and all drainage points, including storm drains, shall be equipped with appropriate construction-related containment and treatment equipment. Tarps or similar such devices shall be used to capture debris, dust, oil, grease, rust, dirt, fine particles, and spills. Excess construction debris and materials, excess fill, vegetation spoils, and waste material shall be disposed of at an authorized disposal site(s) capable of receiving such materials.
2. **Erosion and Sediment Controls.** All erosion and sediment controls shall be in place prior to the commencement of construction as well as at the end of each workday.
3. **Equipment.** Equipment washing, refueling, and/or servicing shall take place at an appropriate off-site and inland location away from riparian habitat on an existing hard surface area (e.g., a road) or an area where collection of materials is facilitated. All construction equipment shall also be inspected and maintained at a similarly sited inland location to prevent leaks and spills of hazardous materials at the project site.
4. **Good Housekeeping.** The construction site shall maintain good construction

housekeeping controls and procedures at all times (e.g., clean up all leaks, drips, and other spills immediately; keep materials covered and out of the rain, including covering exposed piles of soil and wastes; dispose of all wastes properly, place trash receptacles on site for that purpose, and cover open trash receptacles during wet weather; remove all construction debris from the project site; etc.).

5. **Construction Material Storage.** All construction materials and equipment shall be stored in non-habitat areas, except for necessary erosion and sediment controls and/or construction area boundary fencing area allowed where such controls and/or fencing are placed as close to the work area, and are minimized in their extent, both to the maximum extent feasible.
- F. **Construction Lighting Element.** The Plan shall include a Construction Lighting Element in order to protect biological resources in San Gabriel River. Night work and night lighting shall be minimized during construction to the maximum extent feasible. The Construction Lighting Element shall include a final lighting design that includes applicable technologies designed to reduce night glow and light trespass, use the minimum number of lights, and use the minimum level of illumination necessary to light the construction area for operations and safety. When night lighting is necessary, bright upward shining lights shall not be allowed, and no lights shall be directed onto the river. Light temperatures for construction lighting shall be maintained at roughly 2,700 Kelvin (and in no case shall exceed 3,000 Kelvin) and a foot-candle (fc) value of no higher than 0.01 fc (lm/ft²) incident along the project footprint.
- G. **Biological Monitoring/Protection.** The Permittee shall enlist one or more qualified biologists, subject to the Executive Director's approval, to monitor construction activities. The biologist(s) shall possess the authority to halt work to prevent any breach in CDP compliance from occurring, or if any unforeseen sensitive species habitat issues arise and until they are satisfied that the issue has been resolved; and shall immediately notify the Executive Director if development activities outside the scope of this CDP occur and document any incidents requiring the stoppage of work. The biologist(s) shall also conduct sensitive species pre-construction surveys and shall monitor the project site during all construction activities per the following:
 1. **Sensitive Species.** For the purpose of this special condition, "sensitive species" shall be taken to mean any special-status wildlife or plant species. Special-status species are species listed as: Endangered, Threatened, or Rare under the federal or state Endangered Species Acts; Candidate Species, California Native Plant Society 1B and 2 Listed Species, California Fully Protected Species, and, all other species considered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to be those of greatest conservation concern (e.g. S1-S3 and G1-G3 Listed Species).
 2. **Nesting Birds and Roosting Bats.** If work is conducted during avian nesting season (February 1 to August 31) or at a time when bat maternity roosts may

be present, nesting bird and roosting bat surveys shall be conducted no more than 14 days prior to construction activities. The minimum survey area shall include areas within 300 feet of the construction segment footprint and, where there is the potential for nesting raptors, within 500 feet of the construction area footprint, unless those areas are beyond the range of observation from the Caltrans right-of-way or other publicly accessible areas. If any nesting bird or roosting bat habitat is detected (i.e., detection of an active nest of migratory passerine species, raptor of any kind, or bat activity indicative of roosting), a construction-free buffer zone shall be established around the nest at a minimum of 500 feet for nesting raptors and a minimum of 300 feet for other special-status bird or bat species. A smaller buffer may be established when the biologist submits a statement for the review and approval of the Executive Director demonstrating the appropriate buffer is infeasible and documenting why no significant adverse impacts to the nesting birds or bats will occur with the revised buffer, including impacts from construction sounds and line-of-sight. Noise levels at active nest/roost sites must not exceed 65 dB unless a noise study has determined that ambient noise in the immediate area exceeds that level. If this is the case, noise levels at the nest site must not exceed the ambient noise level measured. Noise-reducing BMPs may include using alternative equipment, equipment noise buffering, sound blankets, etc. Buffers shall be maintained until the young have fledged and no second nesting/roosting attempts have been observed.

3. **Marine Wildlife Monitoring and Avoidance Plan.** NOT LESS THAN 30 DAYS PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Director, a Marine Wildlife Monitoring and Avoidance Plan. The Plan, shall, at a minimum, include and provide for the following:
 - a. The permittee shall provide employee training on the protection of green sea turtles, pinnipeds, dolphins, and porpoises and other marine wildlife.
 - b. The permittee shall establish and implement procedures for monitoring green sea turtles, pinnipeds, dolphins, and porpoises in the project area, including specifications for Marine Wildlife Observers.
 - c. The permittee shall develop methods for communicating with contractors to halt construction activities if there is a risk that green sea turtles, pinnipeds, dolphins, and porpoises may approach or move closer to the construction site.
 - d. In-water construction activities shall be limited to daylight hours to allow for effective visual monitoring of green sea turtles, pinnipeds, dolphins, and porpoises.
4. **Fish Protection Measures.** The Permittee shall undertake development in compliance with the following proposed fish protection measures:
 - a. **Seining.** PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF ANY IN-WATER WORK, a

qualified fisheries biologist shall, in consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, seine fish outside of the work area consistent with agency consultations completed for the project;

5. **Plastic Netting and Ties Prohibition.** To minimize wildlife entanglement and plastic debris pollution, the use of rolled erosion and sediment control products with plastic ties and netting (such as polypropylene, nylon, polyethylene, polyester, or other synthetic fibers used in fiber rolls, erosion control blankets, and mulch control netting) is prohibited. Any erosion-control associated netting shall be made of natural fibers and constructed in a loose-weave design that allows flexibility where the horizontal and vertical threads intersect.
 6. **AMMMs.** All biological monitoring, and avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures proposed by the permittee shall be implemented.
- H. **Construction Site Documents.** The Plan shall provide that copies of the signed CDP and the approved Construction Plan be maintained in a conspicuous location at the construction job site at all times, and that such copies are available for public review on request. All persons involved with the construction shall be briefed on the content and meaning of the CDP and the approved Construction Plan, and the public review requirements applicable to them, prior to commencement of construction.
- I. **Construction Coordinator.** The Plan shall provide that a construction coordinator be designated to be contacted during construction should questions arise regarding the construction (in case of both regular inquiries and emergencies), and that their contact information (i.e., address, phone numbers, email address, etc.) including, at a minimum, a telephone number (with message capabilities) and an email that shall be made available 24 hours a day for the duration of construction, is conspicuously posted at the job site where such contact information is readily visible from public viewing areas while still protecting public views as much as possible, along with indication that the construction coordinator should be contacted in the case of questions regarding the construction (in case of both regular inquiries and emergencies). The construction coordinator shall record the contact information (address, email, phone number, etc.) and nature of all complaints received regarding the construction, and shall investigate complaints and take remedial action, if necessary, within 24 hours of receipt of the complaint or inquiry. All complaints and all actions taken in response shall be summarized and provided to the Executive Director on at least a weekly basis during construction.
- J. **Notification.** The Permittee shall notify planning staff of the Coastal Commission's South Coast District Office at least three working days in advance of commencement of construction, and immediately upon completion of construction.

All requirements above and all requirements of the Executive Director-approved

Construction Plan shall be enforceable components of this CDP. The Permittee shall undertake construction in conformance with this condition and the approved Final Construction Plan.

5. **Pile Driving Limitations and Hydroacoustic Monitoring.** The Permittee shall undertake development in compliance with the proposed avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to minimize the potential for exceedance of threshold sound levels and impacts to coastal resources during pile driving, as supplemented or modified herein:
 - A. **Pile Driving Timing:** Pile driving activities shall be conducted between June 1st and October 31st to avoid the primary salmonid migration season, unless an exception is requested of and approved by the Executive Director and the federal resource agencies.
 - B. **In-Water Pile Driving:** If in-water pile driving is necessary, a sound attenuation device shall be installed while driving piles to minimize the extent to which the interim peak and cumulative sound exposure level thresholds are exceeded for piles driven in water.
 - C. **Hydroacoustic Monitoring Plan:** NOT LESS THAN 30 DAYS PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit, for the review and written approval of the Executive Director, a Hydroacoustic Monitoring Plan prepared by qualified personnel, that addresses the monitoring methodology, frequency of monitoring, positions that hydrophones would be deployed, techniques for gathering and analyzing acoustic data, quality control measures, and reporting protocols. Prior to submitting the plan to the Executive Director, the Permittee shall submit copies of the plan to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service for their review and consideration. The Permittee shall implement the Hydroacoustic Monitoring Plan during all construction activities that have the potential to produce impulsive sound waves, including pile driving, hoe-ramming, and jackhammering. All requirements above and all requirements of the Executive Director-approved Hydroacoustic Monitoring Plan shall be enforceable components of this CDP. The Permittee shall undertake construction in conformance with this condition and the approved Hydroacoustic Monitoring Plan.
6. **Protection of Archaeological and Tribal Cultural Resources.** The permittee shall undertake development in compliance with the following mitigation measures to protect archaeological, including tribal cultural resources:
 - A. **Notification and Monitoring.** AT LEAST ONE MONTH PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF ANY GROUND-DISTURBING CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES, the permittee shall (i) notify in writing, email, and/or phone calls, as necessary, the representatives of Gabrieleño-affiliated Native American Tribes listed on an updated Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) contact list for the area; (ii) invite all affiliated Tribal representatives on that list to be present and to monitor ground-disturbing activities; and (iii) arrange for any invited Tribal

representative that requests to monitor and a qualified archaeological monitor to be present to observe project activities with the potential to impact archaeological and/or tribal cultural resources. If non-Gabrieleño-affiliated tribal representatives request to monitor project activities, they shall be allowed to; however, deference shall be given to Gabrieleño-affiliated Tribes regarding the preparation and implementation of the Plan, including monitoring protocols and treatment of any resources. A qualified archaeologist means an individual who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Standards for an Archaeological Principal Investigator and/or is listed as Registered Professional Archaeologist. The monitor(s) shall have experience monitoring for archaeological resources of the local area during excavation projects, be competent to identify significant resource types, and be aware of recommended Tribal procedures for the inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources and human remains. Evidence of written notification shall be made available to the Executive Director upon request.

- B. **Discovery Protocol.** If an area of archaeological resources is discovered during ground-disturbing activities, all construction shall cease and shall not recommence except as provided in subsection (D) hereof, and the permittee shall retain a qualified archaeologist and a tribal cultural resource specialist qualified to analyze the significance of the find in consultation with the Gabrieleño-affiliated Native American Tribes listed on the NAHC list. Significance testing may be carried out only if acceptable to the affected Native American Tribe(s), in accordance with a Significance Testing Plan. The specialist(s) shall immediately notify the affiliated Tribes on the NAHC list. An "exclusion zone" where unauthorized equipment and personnel are not permitted shall be established (e.g., taped off) around the discovery area that includes a reasonable buffer zone recommended by the monitor(s). Project activities may continue outside of the exclusion zone.
- C. **Human Remains.** Should human remains be discovered on-site during the course of the project, immediately after such discovery, the on-site archaeologist and Native American monitor(s) shall notify the County Coroner within 24 hours of such discovery, and all construction activities shall be temporarily halted until the remains can be identified. An "exclusion zone" may be established around the discovery area. If the county coroner determines that the human remains are those of a Native American, the coroner shall contact the NAHC within 24 hours, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5. The NAHC shall deem the Native American most likely descendant (MLD) to be invited to participate in the identification process pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The permittee shall comply with the requirements of Section 5097.98 and work with the MLD person(s) to preserve the remains in place, move the remains elsewhere onsite, relinquish the remains to the descendants for treatment, or determine other culturally appropriate treatment. Within five (5) calendar days of notification to NAHC, the permittee shall notify the Coastal Commission's Executive Director of the discovery of human remains and identify any changes to the proposed development or mitigation measures that may be needed related to the inadvertent discovery. The Executive Director shall maintain confidentiality

regarding the presence of human remains on the project site. The Executive Director shall determine whether the identified changes are de minimis in nature and scope.

D. Recommencement of Construction After Archaeological Discovery. A permittee seeking to recommence construction within an exclusion zone (excluding the discovery of human remains, which shall follow Section 5097.98 as noted in (C) above), following discovery of the archaeological resources shall submit a Supplementary Archaeological Plan (SAP) prepared by the project archaeologist in consultation with the Gabrieleño-affiliated Native American Tribes listed on the NAHC list for the review and written approval of the Executive Director. If the Executive Director determines that the SAP's recommended changes to the proposed development or mitigation measures are de minimis in nature and scope, construction may recommence after this determination is made by the Executive Director in writing. If the Executive Director determines that the changes therein are not de minimis, construction may not recommence until after an amendment to this permit is approved by the Commission.

7. **Authority to Implement CDP.** PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF CDP No. 5-25-0013, the Permittee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Director evidence that clearly demonstrates the legal right, interest, and/or entitlement to carry out the development authorized by CDP No. 5-25-0013 subject to all of its terms and conditions, including but not limited to evidence that the Permittee has acquired all necessary right-of-way and/or temporary construction easement(s) for properties on which the CDP-approved development would be located.
8. **Other Agency Approvals.** PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION, the Permittee shall submit to the Executive Director written evidence that all necessary permits, permissions, approvals, or authorizations for the approved project have been granted by all other applicable agencies, including at a minimum the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Water Resources Control Board, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles County Flood Control District, California State Lands Commission and U.S. Coast Guard, or evidence that no such authorizations are required from each of these entities. The Permittee shall inform the Executive Director of any changes to the project required by any other authorizations. Any such changes shall not be incorporated into the project until the Permittee obtains an amendment to this CDP, unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is legally required.
9. **Assumption of Risk, Waiver of Liability and Indemnity.** By acceptance of this permit, the Permittee acknowledges and agrees, on behalf of itself and all successors and assigns, to all of the following: (a) that the site may be subject to coastal hazards, including but not limited to episodic and long-term erosion, tsunami, scour, coastal flooding, fluvial flooding, landslides, geologic instability, liquefaction, and the interaction of same, many of which may worsen with future sea level rise; (b) to assume the risks to the Permittee and the property that is the subject of this permit of injury and damage from such hazards in connection with this permitted

development; (c) to unconditionally waive any claim of damage or liability against the Commission, its officers, agents, and employees for injury or damage from such hazards; and (d) to indemnify and hold harmless the Commission, its officers, agents, and employees with respect to the Commission's approval of the project against any and all liability, claims, demands, damages, costs (including costs and fees incurred in defense of such claims), expenses, and amounts paid in settlement arising from any injury or damage due to such hazards.

10. Minor Changes and Deadline Extensions. The Permittee shall undertake development in conformance with the terms and conditions of this CDP, including with respect to all Executive Director-approved plans and other materials, which shall also be enforceable components of this CDP. Any proposed project changes, including in terms of changes to identified requirements in each condition, including deadline extensions or modification of work windows, shall either (a) require a CDP amendment, or (b) if the Executive Director determines that no amendment is legally required, then such changes may be allowed by the Executive Director if such changes: (1) are deemed reasonable and necessary; and (2) do not adversely impact coastal resources.

11. Future Permitting. Any and all future proposed development related to this project, this project area, and/or this CDP shall be subject to the Coastal Commission's continuing CDP jurisdiction. This CDP authorizes limited future repair, maintenance, and/or improvement development that is determined by the Executive Director to: 1) fall within the overall scope and intent of this CDP; and 2) not have any significant adverse impacts to coastal resources. Any development that the Executive Director determines does not meet such criteria shall require a separate CDP or a CDP amendment, as directed by the Executive Director.

IV. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS

A. Project Location and Description

Caltrans proposes to widen the four-lane San Gabriel River Highway 1 Bridge¹ and upgrade the existing bridge railing to a concrete barrier of type 85SW, along with other related improvements.² The project is located along Highway 1 between North Studebaker Road and 1st Street, spanning both the cities of Long Beach (Los Angeles County) and Seal Beach (Orange County) (see **Exhibit 1** and **2**). Here, Highway 1 connects the City of Long Beach and City of Seal Beach across the San Gabriel River (SGR) Channel with two lanes in each direction.

The existing bridge was constructed in 1931 and is a 428.3-foot-long, 72-foot-wide reinforced concrete T-girder structure supported by solid concrete piers on untreated timber piles. The bridge also features 1930s era bridge railings that fail to meet current design safety standards for modern vehicles. Caltrans aims to upgrade the bridge to meet current safety standards for bridge railings and width, as well as to perform additional seismic retrofit work. The current bridge has a five-foot shoulder that doubles

¹ Bridge No. 53-0060 (Los Angeles County, Highway 1, postmile 0.07)

² Caltrans' reference EA 32090.

as a bike lane, but it's shared with vehicle traffic and not wide enough for safe cycling. The existing bridge does have sidewalks.

The proposed bridge widening would range from approximately 23.75 feet to 25 feet, with the majority of the widening aimed at improving facilities for multimodal users. The updated bridge would be approximately 428.3-foot-long with a maximum width of 97 feet and 22 new cast-in-place steel shell piles; existing piles are to remain. The updated bridge crossing would consist of four 12-foot-wide vehicular travel lanes, a 12-foot-wide median, eight-foot-wide shoulders/bicycle lanes (shared use), and eight-foot-wide separated pedestrian path/sidewalks on both sides. The existing roadway approaches would be realigned and widened to accommodate the widened bridge, including the resurfacing of the bridge deck and approaches, new gutter, and a new retaining wall on southbound Highway 1 for the roadway transition. Pavement delineation would be added to align with the expanded bridge. A total of approximately 577 cubic yards of grading (cut and fill) is proposed.

The project would also include the construction of sidewalks, curbs, and curb ramps (Complete Streets project components) detailed in **Section 4.D** (Public Access and Recreation) of this report, the replacement of existing guardrails with Midwest guardrail system, and the installation of a sidewalk culvert. Caltrans also proposes to restore the southeast SGR Trail ramp and new fencing. See **Exhibits 1** and **2** for larger map and aerial details regarding the project location and see **Exhibit 3** for sample project layouts.

Work within the SGR Channel at the bridge would be conducted in compliance with all necessary permits from resource protection agencies. No dewatering is proposed. Construction would use a temporary work platform(s) (i.e., temporary trestle(s)) with an estimated temporary pile impact footprint of approximately 217 square feet. Caltrans would work with the contractor to minimize impacts on the channel. The temporary trestles would be removed after construction.

Four light poles on the south side and three on the north side of the bridge would need to be relocated. Additionally, three utilities under the bridge overhead would also be relocated due to conflicts with proposed improvements: an eight-inch Southern Border Gas Pipeline gas line, an eight-inch Chevron oil line, and an eight-inch Crimson Pipeline oil line. All other utilities would remain in place, with no change in clearance on the southbound side and a slight increase (4.2 inches) on the northbound side. These relocations would occur within existing or proposed right-of-way, coordinated with utility providers to prevent service disruptions.

Caltrans is also proposing avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures to mitigate for impacts to marine resources and coastal waters, which are described in greater detail in **Section 4.E** (Biological and Marine Resources) of this report below.

Construction is tentatively set to begin in the summer of 2026 and conclude in the fall of 2028.

C. Standard of Review

The proposed project is within the Commission's retained coastal development permit (CDP) jurisdiction over the San Gabriel River, as well as areas in both the City of Seal Beach, which does not have a certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) and the City of Long Beach, which does have a certified LCP. Under Coastal Act section 30601.3, Caltrans requested, and both cities and the Executive Director agreed, that the Commission would process a consolidated CDP. Therefore, the standard of review is the Coastal Act, with the City of Long Beach LCP providing non-binding guidance for portions within the City's jurisdiction.

D. Public Access and Recreation

The Coastal Act specifically requires that public access be not only protected but maximized. In particular:

Section 30210 states: In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

Section 30211 states: Development shall not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rocky coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation.

Section 30212(a) states: Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development projects except where: (1) it is inconsistent with public safety, military security needs, or the protection of fragile coastal resources, (2) adequate access exists nearby, or, (3) agriculture would be adversely affected. ...

Section 30213 states: Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred...

Section 30240(b) states: Development in areas adjacent to ... parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those ... areas.

Likewise, the City of Long Beach LCP contains several policies that also protect public access and recreation in similar ways that may be considered as guidance.³

³ See, for example, City of Long Beach LCP's Southeast Area Specific Plan, available online at <https://www.longbeach.gov/globalassets/lbcd/media-library/documents/planning/environmental/seasp/specific-plan-districts/res-21-0078-reduced>, and Mobility Element Policies: Strategy No. 1; MOP Policies 1-1, 1-3, 2-11, 2-12, 2-13, 2-16, 2-17, 2-18, 2-19, 3-2, 3-4, 4-3, 5-2; and MOP IM-2, IM-10, IM-11, IM-17, IM-32, and IM-33, available online at https://www.longbeach.gov/globalassets/lbcd/media-library/documents/orphans/mobility-element/320615_lbd_mobility_element_web

The San Gabriel River Highway 1 Bridge connects the City of Long Beach to the City of Seal Beach, linking their respective counties. Here Highway 1 serves as the main east-west Regional Corridor through the cities and provides essential access to a wide variety of coastal areas in Los Angeles and Orange County, as well as to nearby recreational areas. This includes the San Gabriel River (SGR) Trail, which runs across the bridge's south end and extends to the southwest and southeast, as well as trails through the Los Cerritos Wetlands to the southeast. The SGR Trail, a 35.4-mile multi-use recreational trail managed by the County of Los Angeles, runs through the proposed project area and is a popular bicycle route. Furthermore, Highway 1 is a key alternative to freeway travel in Southern California, connecting coastal areas and providing access to important transportation hubs, including the Alamitos Bay Marina, Long Beach Airport, Greyhound Station, and Metro A Line.

The existing 1930s era bridge has structural deficiencies that could compromise safety and disrupt traffic during a collision or seismic event. Failure or temporary closures of the bridge would greatly impact coastal access in the region. The proposed project would enhance the safety and reliability of the SGR Highway 1 Bridge, addressing critical deficiencies and preserving this vital coastal access. Additionally, coastal recreational access provides a valuable, low-cost benefit to regional environmental justice communities. Ensuring safe and reliable access along this stretch of coast supports the Commission's Environmental Justice policy. Moreover, as discussed below, the project includes other public access improvements for all types of users, not just those in cars.

Permanent Public Access Improvements

The project includes public access improvements that would enhance safety and access for cyclists and pedestrians. This section of Highway 1 is designated as part of the Pacific Coast Bike Route and the City of Long Beach's bicycle system, which is commonly used by cyclists. However, the highway shoulders, which are currently labeled as Class II bicycle lanes but are in fact very narrow five-foot shoulders, do not meet provide adequate safe space for cyclists, and the bridge lacks dedicated bike lanes. The current five-foot-wide shared shoulder is too narrow to safely accommodate both cycling and a buffer. As a result, the current infrastructure poses safety challenges for cyclists. Additionally, the existing bridge does have sidewalks on both sides, however the five-foot-wide sidewalks are narrow with no connecting sidewalks on the south side of the bridge.

The proposed improvements to the travel and pedestrian zones of the public right-of-way align with the City of Long Beach's Southeast Area Specific Plan (SEASP) and Mobility Element (ME), which are both part of the certified LCP and, therefore, may be used as guidance. SEASP Chapter 7 (Mobility) and the City of Long Beach's Mobility Element of the LCP prioritizes enhancing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and safety, while integrating motor vehicles and public transit to support Complete Streets⁴ development. In particular, MOP Policy 3-4 of the ME requires that "...all interchange

⁴ Complete Streets, as defined by Caltrans, are: "transportation facilities that are planned, designed, operated, and maintained to provide safe mobility for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists appropriate to the function and context of the facility."

reconfiguration projects, grade separation improvements, and bridge widening projects are designed and implemented in a manner that provides positive benefit to the pedestrian and bicycle circulation.” Other policies of the ME, including MOP Policies 1-1, 1-3, 2-11, 2-12, 2-13, 2-16, 2-17, 2-18, 2-19, 3-2, 4-3, and 5-2, aim to enhance Long Beach’s transportation network through a comprehensive, multi-modal approach. Specific focus is given to enhancing auto-oriented streets like Pacific Coast Highway for safer, more comfortable pedestrian access. The policies prioritize public health and safety by managing streets to reduce vehicle miles traveled, promote alternative transportation, and integrate pedestrian and bicycle access into major infrastructure projects.

The existing bridge also has narrow five-foot sidewalks, which are too narrow for comfortable pedestrian use. Caltrans proposes widening the bridge shoulders/Class II bike lanes to eight feet and expanding the sidewalks to eight feet on both sides. The proposed project also provides a 12-foot-wide median. Class IV bike lanes do not currently exist in this corridor and are not included at this time on the bridge due to the need for a physical barrier, which would prevent the bike lane from also doubling as a shoulder. However, the 12-foot-wide median in the center of the bridge and eight-foot-wide shoulders (Class II bike lanes) on both sides of the highway bridge would provide adequate room to accommodate a future Class IV bike lane in lieu of non-standard shoulders when the City is ready to implement Class IV bike lanes as part of broader Highway 1 corridor, in alignment with SEASP’s vision for the larger corridor. The expanded shoulders/bike lanes and sidewalks would improve safety by reducing accidents while maintaining the existing four-vehicular-lane roadway and providing safer access for cyclists and pedestrians.

As part of the project, Caltrans proposes to reconstruct a 16-linear-foot segment (approximately 158 square feet) of the southwest SGR Trail bike ramp, which is part of an approximately 180-foot-long, 11-foot-wide facility. At the southeast corner, Caltrans also plans to reconstruct approximately 64 linear feet (or 654 square feet) of the 150-foot-long, 11-foot-wide bike ramp, including the in-kind replacement of the existing chain-link fencing.

However, the entire southeast ramp is already in poor condition and in need of full reconstruction, rather than partial repairs, to restore and enhance safe, functional, and equitable coastal access throughout and following the construction period. In addition, both ramps would be closed during construction for approximately 18 months, resulting in a prolonged and significant disruption to the SGR Trail. There are essentially no safe detours around the ramp closures, so use of the SGR trail would be significantly impacted, a major loss to public access to the coast. The SGR Trail is a heavily used corridor, and the closure of these key access points would present a substantial barrier to coastal access for both recreational and commuting users. To mitigate these public access impacts, **Special Condition 2** requires, and this CDP authorizes, Caltrans to complete the design, construction, and maintenance of specified public access improvements, including reconstruction of the San Gabriel River Trail bike ramps and replacement of existing chain-link ramp fencing with welded wire-mesh fencing, and installation of benches, non-invasive drought-tolerant landscaping, lighting, and hydration stations. Caltrans must demonstrate that the improvements are implemented

within two years. Caltrans may also submit evidence it has provided funding to a local entity (e.g. the City of Long Beach) to complete the improvements and that the local entity has completed or is in the process of completing the improvements.

Additionally, the southwest sidewalk terminates immediately south of the bridge creating a gap in the pedestrian network for the larger area, forcing pedestrians to use the highway shoulders. Therefore, Caltrans is proposing a 187-foot sidewalk at the southwest end to ensure pedestrian continuity and ADA-compliant sidewalk curb ramps at the bridge's start and end points: two at the south end for the San Gabriel River Bike Trail and two at the north end for the maintenance access road. The sidewalk on the northeast side, extending to the N. Studebaker Road/Highway 1 intersection, would also be replaced. In keeping with the intent of the SEASP Vision, these improvements ensure safety for pedestrians, which is a critical factor in the operation and functionality of Highway 1 (Pacific Coast Highway).

However, as proposed, the project does not include needed sidewalk improvements on the southeast corner of the bridge. On this southeast end, the bridge sidewalk would not extend to the 1st Street/Highway 1 intersection in Seal Beach due to an intervening slope and a change in Caltrans district jurisdiction (District 12 Orange County). Extending the sidewalk would require filling sections of the highway that have a steep drop-off and additional collaboration among multiple jurisdictions. Caltrans expressed concerns about the right-of-way (ROW) adjacent to the Los Cerritos Wetlands due to its designation as an environmentally sensitive area. However, the vegetation in the ROW has been confirmed not to be an environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA). The State Lands Commission (SLC) owns the section of the wetlands by Highway 1, which mainly contains non-native vegetation, except for tar plant found deeper into the property. This area will be the main staging site for Phase I of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration Project, tentatively starting in September 2025 and lasting 12-18 months. As part of Phase I, the SLC-owned portion of the wetland will be restored and will include amenities such as parking, interpretive signage, bike racks, picnic tables, trails, shading and an amphitheater.

In 2023, the City of Long Beach approved a local CDP (upheld by the Coastal Commission on appeal in December 2023) for the Marketplace Mixed-Use Project at 6615 E. Pacific Coast Highway. The project includes a six-story development with 390 residential units (17 affordable), 5,351 square feet of commercial space, a 576-space above-grade parking structure, 196 bicycle spaces, and 45,141 square feet of open space. Construction for the Marketplace Mixed-Use Project is anticipated to begin in 2026. Located near the SGR Hwy 1 Bridge, this mixed-use project, along with the Los Cerritos Wetlands Restoration and future amenities, is expected to increase pedestrian and bicycle activity in the area and across the bridge.

Critical streets that should be providing for the mobility of pedestrians that fall into the incomplete sidewalk category include this portion of Highway 1. Therefore, **Special Condition 3** requires Caltrans Districts 7 and 12 to coordinate and develop and complete pedestrian access along Highway 1 between 1st Street in Seal Beach and the San Gabriel River in Long Beach within two years of the issuance of this CDP or the opening of the Los Cerritos Wetlands Visitor Center, whichever occurs first. The

improvements must include a sidewalk and necessary ADA-compliant ramps. If the improvements cannot be completed, Caltrans must submit evidence explaining why, along with an amendment CDP application proposing a more beneficial pedestrian mitigation package in Seal Beach or Long Beach. Commission staff has already initiated coordination with Caltrans Districts 7 and 12 Offices of Complete Streets toward this goal. Due to its proximity to the wetlands, constructing the sidewalk along the northbound lane of Highway 1 has the potential to impact coastal resources and would, therefore, require either an amendment to this permit or a new Coastal Development Permit.

Overall, however, the proposed replacement bridge would enhance public access and safety for all highway travelers. Widening the bridge and its facilities would improve multimodal coastal access, encouraging cycling and pedestrian travel between communities. Special conditions ensure these upgrades minimize environmental impacts, and maintain equitable access, including for underserved and environmental justice communities.

Temporary and Long-term Temporary Traffic Impacts

As the widening would take place on the northeastern length of the bridge, Caltrans proposes to implement one-way alternating traffic control to ensure safety during construction, including for bicyclists and pedestrians, by shifting traffic from the southbound to the northbound lane of Highway 1 on the existing bridge until both lanes of the updated bridge are open. As previously mentioned, public access to the San Gabriel River Trail and the river would be restricted during construction for approximately 18 months, with cyclists detoured to 1st Avenue. However, areas along the riverbanks outside the project limits would remain open. While the project may cause disruption, it is necessary for the widening of the existing bridge and aims to minimize lane closures as much as possible.

Staging is proposed along the ROW based on lane closures and would be established for storing construction equipment and materials, with proper management for sediment and material control in compliance with environmental quality standards, as further discussed in the following section.

To minimize public access impacts during construction, Caltrans proposes a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) with detour routes, one-way traffic controls, flag workers, and phasing to reduce congestion and ensure local access. The TMP would also accommodate emergency services. No permanent adverse public access impacts are anticipated. **Special Condition 1** requires final plans for review, **Special Condition 2** requires Caltrans to offset the impacts to long-term temporary public coastal access described above, and **Special Condition 5** requires maintaining pedestrian and cycling access across the bridge during construction.

Conclusion

While there may be temporary impacts to public recreational access, the project would ultimately improve public access and safety. It ensures Highway 1 remains open and safe for residents and visitors, with continued access to multiple points. The project also

enhances cycling safety through widening where feasible without harming coastal resources. As conditioned, the proposed project is consistent with the public recreational access provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and furthers the goals of the City of Long Beach's LCP.

E. Biological and Marine Resources

The Coastal Act provides protection for natural resources and habitats, including environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHAs), and coastal waters and related habitats.

Section 30107.5 states: "Environmentally sensitive area" means any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments.

Section 30240 states: (a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on such resources shall be allowed within such areas. (b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade such areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of such habitat areas.

Section 30231 states: The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

Section 30232 states: Protection against the spillage of crude oil, gas, petroleum products, or hazardous substances shall be provided in relation to any development or transportation of such materials. Effective containment and cleanup facilities and procedures shall be provided for accidental spills that do occur.

Section 30233 states: (a) The diking, filling, or dredging of open coastal waters, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes shall be permitted in accordance with other applicable provisions of this division, where there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative, and where feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects, and shall be limited to the following: ... (4) Incidental public service purposes, including, but not limited to, burying cables and pipes or inspection of piers and maintenance of existing intake and outfall lines....(c) In addition to the other provisions of this

section, diking, filling, or dredging in existing estuaries and wetlands shall maintain or enhance the functional capacity of the wetland or estuary...

Additionally, although not the standard of review, the City of Long Beach's certified LCP policies regarding ESHA may be considered as guidance.⁵

Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas

Section 30240 of the Coastal Act limits development within ESHA to uses that depend on the resource. ESHA includes native plants ranked as state or federally threatened or endangered, CRPR 1B and 2B, and G1 to G3 and/or S1 to S3 by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on their special vascular plants, bryophytes, and lichens list. ESHA also includes native wildlife ranked as state or federally threatened or endangered, G1 to G3 and/or S1 to S3, and as fully protected or species of special concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on their special animal list. The Coastal Commission and some LCPs also recognize ESHA categorically (e.g., dunes, bluffs, riparian) or based on its role as "especially valuable habitat," such as habitat corridors, tree stands supporting monarch roosts or rookeries, or grasslands with at least 10% cover of native grasses and forbs.

Caltrans completed multiple documents and surveys to evaluate the Project's potential to affect habitats and natural resources, which are described in the Caltrans' [Mitigated Negative Declaration](#).⁶ While Southern Coastal Bluff Scrub, a sensitive habitat, was identified in the Los Alamitos quadrangle (CNDDDB, 2018), it was determined that no habitats or natural communities of special concern, including this scrub, are located at the bridge site or within the project limits. Additionally, there is no vegetation beneath the bridge, and the river flows underneath toward the Pacific Ocean. The river is essentially channelized, lined on both sides with riprap and concrete, and surrounded by urban development. The river has a natural bottom, but there are no essential fish or critical habitats within the project limits, as the channel consists of open water, riprap banks, and a denuded soft bottom. The project area lacks eelgrass or riparian vegetation, so habitat mitigation should not be required.

Section 30240 of the Coastal Act also protects ESHA, parks and recreation areas by requiring that projects adjacent to such areas be sited and designed to prevent significant adverse impacts to these areas. Although the project footprint is located near the Los Cerritos Wetlands, the vegetation within the right-of-way (ROW) adjacent to the wetlands does not qualify as ESHA. Additionally, project activities would avoid and not affect the Los Cerritos Wetlands located adjacent to the project. No special status species are anticipated to be affected, and compensatory mitigation for ESHA is not required as no habitats of concern would be impacted.

⁵ See, for example, City of Long Beach LCP's Southeast Area Specific Plan Policies 5.11 through 5.20, which set forth the requirements for wetland protection and buffers, available online at <https://www.longbeach.gov/globalassets/lbcd/media-library/documents/planning/environmental/seasp/specific-plan-districts/res-21-0078-reduced>

⁶ Caltrans' Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project is available at <https://files.ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/282176-2/attachment/yW2tHSWrB1-PogUclEsRaeTJ6JkS5YLqZUkhIviWGuj3fHZCn6xDGfDt4upZ9tNkDtKDNBMWceTrzbfco>

Moreover, Caltrans has incorporated several project avoidance and/or minimization measures (AMMMs)⁷ and described in greater detail below. The AMMMs would protect nearby and adjacent ESHA and require biological monitoring for green sea turtles, and other marine wildlife and California least terns during construction to prevent unanticipated impacts to these species, which may occur at the project site. **Special Condition 5** requires that Caltrans adhere to these AMMMs, unless modified by this CDP.

Green sea turtles, a federally listed threatened species, frequently forage in the San Gabriel River Channel. However, Caltrans' proposed AMMMs does not include a more comprehensive Green Sea Turtle Monitoring and Avoidance Plan. Therefore, **Special Condition 5** also requires that Caltrans submit a detailed plan for monitoring and avoidance of green sea turtles, pinnipeds, dolphins, and porpoises or review and written approval of the Executive Director.

Fill of Coastal Waters – Soft Bottom Habitat

The subject bridge spans the San Gabriel River, a soft bottom tidally influenced river and flood control channel, which drains 689 square miles of eastern Los Angeles County. The river flows through a concrete-lined channel before becoming a soft-bottom channel near Long Beach. Surrounding the bridge are commercial, residential, and wetlands and riparian zones. The project could impact water quality in nearby wetlands, riparian zones, and coastal waters, including the Los Cerritos Wetlands, Haynes Generating Station Intake Canal⁸, Alamitos Bay, and San Pedro Bay.

The Coastal Act prioritizes preserving open coastal waters, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes, restricting fill to specific allowable uses under Section 30233(a). Projects involving fill to these resources must be the least environmentally damaging alternative and include mitigation measures to minimize adverse environmental effects. Furthermore, Sections 30230, 30231, and 30233 require the maintenance and enhancement of marine resources, biological productivity, coastal waters, and wetland function.

The unnamed freshwater pond⁹ and Los Cerritos Wetlands, adjacent to the San Gabriel River, are wetlands. The project has been assessed for consistency with the City of Long Beach's Southeast Area Specific Plan (SEASP) of the certified LCP and California Coastal Commission policies related to wetlands. While these wetlands are near the project, they are outside the footprint and would not be impacted. No work is proposed within the Los Cerritos Wetlands or directly adjacent to the freshwater pond south of the SGR. Caltrans is proposing measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate any indirect

⁷ <https://files.ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/282176-2/attachment/yW2tHSWrb1-PogUclEsRaeTJ6JkS5YLgZUkhIviWGuj3fHZCn6xDGfDt4upZ9tNkDtKDNBMWceTrzbfc0>

⁸ Haynes Generating Station Intake Canal is owned and operated by Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

⁹ The unnamed freshwater pond, located at coordinates 33.752391°, -118.104453°, is mapped in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory and appears to be ephemeral. This area is not anticipated to be affected by construction activities.

impacts to these wetlands, which are described in greater detail below.

The project, however, is anticipated to result in approximately 236 square feet of permanent fill of open coastal waters (in this case, displacement of soft bottom habitat) due to the installation of twelve new permanent 60-inch-diameter bridge piers/piles, which would be placed directly into the riverbed to support the proposed bridge widening. This estimate does not include the six new 24-inch-diameter bridge piles and four new 60-inch-diameter bridge piles, which are proposed to be installed above the waterline into the concrete riverbanks to also support the widening of the bridge. No changes to the existing bridge piles are proposed.

Additionally, if existing rock slope protection (RSP) is damaged during pile driving, Caltrans would need to repair or replace any damaged RSP; therefore, Caltrans is conservatively estimating approximately 285 square feet of permanent open coastal water fill for RSP replacement/repair within the SGR channel.

The project also requires river channel access for construction. Caltrans proposes using work platforms (trestles) supported by approximately 69 24-inch diameter steel piles to limit environmental impacts and heavy equipment use above the high-water mark. The trestle piles are anticipated to result in seasonal disturbance to, and losses of, open water and benthic habitat, with an estimated long-term temporary fill impact footprint of approximately 217 square feet; after construction, the trestles would be removed.

Based on the above, the project is anticipated to result in a total of approximately 521 square feet of permanent fill of open coastal waters and a total of approximately 217 square feet of long-term temporary fill of open coastal waters. Therefore, this activity, to be approved, must be found consistent with Coastal Act Section 30233.

Allowable Uses

Open coastal water fill is permitted only for one of the seven uses under Section 30233(a). Specifically, Section 30233(a)(4) allows wetland fill for "incidental public service purposes," such as burying cables, inspecting piers, or maintaining existing infrastructure. To qualify, the fill must: (a) provide a public service benefiting the general public or those served by a public entity, and (b) be "incidental," meaning it is secondary and supportive to an existing public service purpose as defined by the Coastal Act.

The project aims to maintain safe public access along Highway 1 without adding vehicular lanes or increasing vehicular capacity. The Coastal Commission has previously determined that dredging and filling for safety improvements to bridges, which do not increase capacity, qualifies as an "incidental public service" under Coastal Act Section 30233(a)(4).¹⁰ Since this project is to be conducted by a public agency for public safety, and it does not add lanes or increase vehicular capacity, it meets the criteria for incidental public service, making the proposed open coastal water filling an allowable use under the Act.

¹⁰ See, for example, CDP Nos. 2-24-0786 (Lagunitas), 2-20-0282 (Gleason), 4-21-0182 (San Jose Creek Bridge Replacement), and 3-19-1199 (Toro Creek Bridge Replacement).

Alternative Analysis

For projects involving dredging and filling of open coastal waters, the Commission must also ensure that the approved project has no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative, consistent with Coastal Act Section 30233 and CEQA. Section 30108 of the Coastal Act defines “feasible” as “capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social and technological factors.” In this case, alternatives include the “no project” option and two bridge widening methods/designs.

The “No Build” Alternative:

The “No Build” Alternative would leave the existing bridge and roadway unchanged, failing to address seismic hazards and deficiencies in safety and access for cyclists and pedestrians. While it avoids immediate impacts, the existing bridge would continue to not meet current safety standards, and a potential collapse during a seismic event could cause greater damage to the river, as well as have significant impacts to coastal public access in the region. Therefore, this alternative is not feasible and does not accomplish the project goals.

Build Alternative 2 – Symmetric Widen:

In addition to the No-Build Alternative, Caltrans also evaluated a symmetric bridge widening (Build Alternative 2), which would expand the bridge equally on both sides. Caltrans indicates that the deciding factor choosing Build Alternative 3 was the higher cost of Build Alternative 2, which is primarily attributed to increased Right-of-Way expenses for utility relocation on the southbound side of the bridge. Build Alternative 2 did not have less adverse impact to coastal waters, wetlands, or other natural resources than Build Alternative 3 (proposed). Moreover, Build Alternative 3 involves a shorter construction timeline, since the second stage does not require additional bridge widening, unlike Build Alternative 2.

Build Alternative 3 – Single Span Widen (Proposed):

Finally, Caltrans also evaluated a single-span bridge widening (Build Alternative 3) which involves widening only the northeastern side of the bridge (see **Exhibit 1** and **2**). With the shorter construction timeline than Build Alternative 2, there would be less public inconvenience and reduced construction-based environmental impacts. This is the proposed alternative. As detailed above, the proposed project minimizes impacts to open coastal waters and meets the project’s purpose and need, while still being feasible.

Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed single span bridge widening reduces open coastal waters disturbance and is the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative, in accordance with section 30233(a).

General Impact Minimization and Mitigation Measures

Section 30233 further mandates feasible mitigation to minimize the environmental impacts of filling open coastal waters, which could otherwise harm the habitat's quality and wildlife. Caltrans has adopted and incorporated several CEQA avoidance,

minimization and/or mitigation measures (AMMMs)¹¹ to minimize impacts to open coastal waters and other nearby natural resources, and to protect water quality. **Special Condition 5** requires adherence to these AMMMs, which includes flagging of biologically sensitive areas; measures to reduce the spread of invasive species; exclusion fencing to protect habitat from construction impacts and accidental worker trespass; visual monitoring for marine mammals; proper disposal of trash and debris; pre-construction surveys conducted by a qualified biologist for wildlife and biological monitoring by qualified personnel; noise mitigation measures; buffers and protective measures during the bird nesting/breeding season, and if roosting bats are encountered; and protective protocols if steelhead is found within the channel. Special Condition 5 also requires the submittal of a final construction plan and that multiple construction BMPs be implemented.

Regarding green sea turtles, pinnipeds, dolphins, and porpoises which may occur at the project site, **Special Condition 5** also requires that Caltrans submit a detailed protection plan for review and written approval of the Executive Director.

Despite protective measures, some fish injury may occur. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) requires full mitigation for incidental take of state-listed species under the California Endangered Species Act should steelhead be found in the channel. Caltrans has not yet received CDFW approval. **Special Condition 5** also mandates protection measures for aquatic species during construction.

Mitigation for Permanent Fill Impacts

Caltrans intends to compensate for permanent fill of open coastal waters. Caltrans has agreed to a condition to contribute an in-lieu-fee (ILF) transfer of funds in the amount of \$65,250 towards the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust's ongoing restoration of Zedler Marsh, a tidal wetland, to mitigate for the placement of fill in coastal waters described in greater detail above. Zedler Marsh is located on the "isthmus" of Los Cerritos Wetlands between 2nd Street/Westminster Avenue and Highway 1 in Long Beach (see **Exhibits 5 and 6**). Caltrans funding of \$65,250 toward this effort would bring a valuable contribution.

Here, the anticipated permanent fill of coastal waters (estuarine river in this case) is anticipated to be 521 square feet or 0.012 acres, and the anticipated long-term temporary fill of coastal waters is 217 square feet or 0.005 acres. Caltrans' is proposing to mitigate permanent fill impacts at a 3:1 ratio, which is found to be appropriate and would exceed the Commission's general requirement to mitigate for permanent fill impacts of open coastal waters. Caltrans has also agreed to mitigate at 1.5:1 ratio for long-term temporary fill impacts, which would meet Commission's typical mitigation requirements for long-term temporary fill impacts. Here, that would equate to a total of 0.044 acres or 1917 square feet for both permanent and long-term temporary fill impacts combined. Staff has discussed the mitigation with the Los Cerritos Wetlands

¹¹ Caltrans' AMMMs for the project are available online as Appendix E in Caltrans' Mitigated Negative Declaration at <https://files.ceganet.opr.ca.gov/282176-2/attachment/yW2tHSWrB1-PogUclEsRaeTJ6JkS5YLgZUkhIviWGuj3fHZCn6xDGfDt4upZ9tNkDtKDNBMWceTrzbfc0>

Land Trust, and it is clear that the ILF funds would enable the trust to substantially restore or create at least 0.044 acres of wetlands in the project vicinity. Though the wetland or marsh restoration is somewhat out-of-kind to the coastal water fill impacts in the San Gabriel River, the Zedler Marsh and the Los Cerritos Wetlands are directly adjacent to the San Gabriel River, and restoration there would contribute to the overall health of the coastal waters in and adjacent to the San Gabriel River. Therefore, the ILF payment provides appropriate mitigation for the impacts here. **Special Condition 4** requires Caltrans to contribute these funds to the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust to implement marsh habitat restoration.

In sum, this project has limited potential impacts to open coastal waters; however, the project is an allowable incidental public use under Section 30233(a)(4). The proposed project is the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative and, as conditioned, has appropriate minimization and mitigation measures, including those to protect the biological productivity and the quality of open coastal waters. Therefore, as conditioned, the project can be found consistent with Coastal Act Section 30233 regarding protection of open coastal waters.

Marine Resources and Water Quality

The proposed project involves work within, over, and adjacent to a tidally influenced river, thus construction-phase activities and post construction stormwater management have the potential to impact marine resources and the biological productivity and quality of coastal waters. Therefore, the Commission must find that the project is consistent with the provisions of Sections 30230, 30231, and 30232.

Avoidance of Construction-related Impacts to Water Quality

Construction may cause water quality impacts, including turbidity from excavation and accidental spills, with the greatest risk posed by in-water pile installations in the San Gabriel River. To mitigate this, Caltrans proposes top-down pile installation above the river surface, avoiding dewatering. Most work would be conducted from the trestles and scaffolding above the high-water mark. Heavy equipment near the river also presents spill risks, which Caltrans would mitigate with measures like leak checks, fueling away from the river, erosion control BMPs, and containment measures to prevent construction materials or debris from entering waterways. With construction outside the rainy season, turbidity and sedimentation are expected to be minimal. Caltrans plans to prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) prior to commencement of construction to ensure compliance with water quality BMPs. **Special Condition 5** requires Caltrans to submit, for review and approval by the Executive Director, a final construction plan detailing the BMPs to protect coastal resources and adherence to the other proposed AMMMs.

Temporary erosion and sediment control products with plastic netting and plastic ties on erosion control wattles can persist in waterways, posing risks to wildlife. Therefore, **Special Condition 5** prohibits the use of such products, including those made from polypropylene, nylon, polyethylene, polyester, and other synthetic fibers.

Post-Construction Stormwater Management

Untreated stormwater runoff from the highway may carry pollutants such as sediments, heavy metals, pathogens, and petroleum hydrocarbons, into the San Gabriel River, negatively impacting water quality and aquatic life. The project would result in a net increase of approximately 0.5 acre of impervious surface, potentially generating additional runoff that could significantly affect the surrounding watershed. Therefore, **Special Condition 1** requires the submittal of final drainage plans that include runoff filtration and treatment before discharge.

Hydroacoustic Impacts to Sensitive Aquatic Species

The project may temporarily impact sensitive aquatic species in the San Gabriel River due to turbidity, which results in sedimentation of the river bottom, and noise from pile driving, which could harm fish. Approximately 12 CISS piles and 69 temporary steel piles would be installed in the water and into the river bottom, potentially exceeding injury thresholds for fish and other aquatic life such as green sea turtles, pinnipeds, dolphins, and porpoises.

Quieter methods like auger or vibratory driving are preferred over impact driving. However, Cast-In-Steel-Shell (CISS) piles must be used to provide the necessary shear strength and stiffness due to loose, liquefiable soils. Vibratory driving lacks the required stiffness and has limited depth capability. CISS piles are also standard where water cannot be diverted, as Cast-In-Drilled-Hole (CIDH) piles are unsuitable for wet conditions.

To mitigate these impacts, Caltrans proposes to develop an acoustic monitoring plan that would outline the methods for avoiding adverse impacts to aquatic life and keep the noise at ambient. **Special Condition 6** requires Caltrans to submit this Hydroacoustic Monitoring Plan, including protective measures for aquatic life and monitoring reports, for review and approval by the Executive Director.

Conclusion

The project's avoidance and minimization measures and special conditions imposed would prevent significant adverse impacts on coastal waters, wetlands, and other protected biological resources. The Commission finds that, as conditioned, the project will protect marine resources, water quality, biological productivity, and human health, as required by Sections 30230, 30231, 30232, and 30233 of the Coastal Act.

H. Coastal Hazards

The Coastal Act generally requires that coastal hazards be minimized and protects against potential impacts associated with coastal hazard response. The Act also requires the Commission to consider the effects of sea level rise in development review.

Section 30253 states, in relevant part: New development shall do all of the following: (a) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard. (b) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that

would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs. ...

Section 30270 states: The commission shall take into account the effects of sea level rise in coastal resources planning and management policies and activities in order to identify, assess, and, to the extent feasible, avoid and mitigate the adverse effects of sea level rise.

Section 30001.5 states, in relevant part: The Legislature further finds and declares that the basic goals of the state for the coastal zone are to: ... (f) Anticipate, assess, plan for, and, to the extent feasible, avoid, minimize, and mitigate the adverse environmental and economic effects of sea level rise.

The proposed project involves developing transportation infrastructure along the shoreline in an area at risk of geologic, flood, and coastal hazards due to sea level rise (SLR). The Coastal Act requires minimizing risks in flood-prone areas. Development near the sea is vulnerable to wave energy, erosion, and storm flooding, all exacerbated by SLR. Coastal Act Sections 30253 and 30270 mandate minimizing risks to life and property, ensuring stability, and avoiding harm to natural landforms, taking into account the adverse effects of seismic, flooding, erosion, and SLR hazards.

Seismic Hazards

Southern California is located in a seismically active area. The existing bridge is located about 0.5 miles from the Newport-Inglewood-Rose Canyon Fault Zone, but it is not within the fault zone. Here the project overall is intended to improve the seismic safety of the bridge. Modern seismic design standards focus on ensuring that structures can withstand significant earthquakes. Therefore, the proposed improvements and retrofitting would help the bridge be much stronger and well-equipped to handle seismic activity.

SLR and Erosion/Flooding

The San Gabriel River Highway 1 Bridge is in a backwater area influenced by coastal tide levels, which are expected to be impacted by climate change and SLR.

Caltrans analyzed potential flood elevations under various coastal flooding scenarios, considering 100-year flow conditions and SLR ranging from 0.6 to 9.9 feet. Because the bridge is a critical transportation asset, Caltrans assumed a bridge design life date of 2100, which is a typical design life for a bridge. The other project components are estimated to have a shorter design life. They determined that the current bridge soffit elevation (which Caltrans plans to maintain) is sufficient to withstand the projected SLR over its design life (6.3 feet by 2100, based on the High Scenario from the Commission's 2024 SLR Policy Guidance) during 100-year flow conditions. However, Caltrans acknowledged that floodwaters could surpass the soffit elevation during a combined 100-year coastal storm and 100-year flow conditions, with approximately 5.3 feet of SLR, which is projected to be in the 2090s under the High Scenario in the Commission's 2024 SLR Guidance, or 2110 under the Intermediate-High Scenario. As a result, Caltrans' SLR analysis report identified several adaptation options, including monitoring future SLR and considering structural modifications if more extreme SLR occurs. Raising the bridge further to meet extreme threats at the end of the bridge's

lifespan would require significant alternations to approaching roadways and strong bridge foundations, resulting in increased impacts to visual, access, and habitat resources. Caltrans recognized that any large-scale adaptation efforts for this bridge would need to be coordinated with broader adaptation plans for surrounding low-lying communities and infrastructure, which are already vulnerable to lower levels of SLR that could pose structural challenges to the SGR Highway 1 Bridge. Here, Caltrans has generally designed the bridge to be safe to SLR projections for the expected design life. It is possible that under extreme scenarios at the end of the bridge's design life at the end of this century or the beginning of the next, there could be some SLR impacts to the bridge, but these can be managed through temporary measures and Caltrans can develop a larger adaptation strategy in coordination with local governments as SLR threats become more clear at the end of the century.

Section 30253 raises concerns about the need for shoreline protection due to coastal hazards and SLR. Most measures, like rock slope protection (RSP), conflict with Coastal Act policies by harming resources and limiting natural shoreline adaptation, a problem worsened by future SLR. No additional RSP is proposed in this case; however, if existing RSP is damaged during pile driving it would be replaced; Caltrans conservatively estimates that approximately 285 square feet of existing RSP would need to be repaired/replaced.

The project may cause soil disturbance and erosion during construction. To prevent destabilization, proper grading, soil removal, and best management practices (BMPs) are recommended. Caltrans will implement a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and construction BMPs to minimize erosion and topsoil loss. **Special Conditions 1 and 5** require submission of a final construction plan with BMP and stormwater details before construction to protect water quality and prevent erosion.

Development on such sites (e.g., near the sea or in seismically active areas) carries inherent risks. The Coastal Act acknowledges that projects like the proposed one may involve some risk. While the development would face similar coastal conditions as the original structure, the Commission requires the applicant to assume these risks due to uncertainties about future surges and erosion. As a result, **Special Condition 10** is imposed, requiring the applicant to assume liability risks and waive any claim against the Commission, while Caltrans must indemnify the Commission in case of third-party actions related to the development.

Conclusion

For all the above reasons, the Commission finds that the proposed project, as conditioned, takes into account and minimizes risks from geologic and flood hazards and is consistent with Coastal Act Section 30253. It also finds that Caltrans has properly addressed sea level rise impacts, and the project avoids, minimizes, and mitigates these impacts as much as feasible, in line with Coastal Act Section 30270.

I. Public Views

The public scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas are protected by the Coastal Act.

Section 30251 states: The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be

considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

Notable scenic views occur when Highway 1 crosses the San Gabriel River, where the river is visible on both sides. The highway is designated as a regional corridor and Scenic Route (south of 2nd) in the General Plan of the Long Beach LCP. Key views include the river and the San Gabriel River Bike Trail at the project limits. Sparse vegetation is found at the northwest and southwest ends of the bridge, situated in a coastal urban setting with undeveloped land at the Los Cerritos Wetlands and low-rise commercial and residential buildings. The Hayes Generating Station Intake Canal is also visible from the northbound lane approaching the bridge.

The proposed bridge widening would range from approximately 23.75 feet to 25 feet, with the majority of the widening aimed at improving facilities for multimodal users. The bridge shoulders, currently five feet wide, would be expanded to accommodate eight-foot-wide bicycle lanes on both sides, while the pedestrian sidewalks would also be widened from five feet to eight feet. Overall, the new bridge would be wider, which some may perceive as a visual impact. However, this increased width would provide greater visual access for more users, including pedestrians and cyclists, who would enjoy a safer crossing while taking in the scenery. The Commission has also regularly approved slightly wider bridges, such as this one, when the widening provides multimodal and coastal benefits.

Additionally, Caltrans is proposing bridge rail Type 85SW but modified to resemble the existing historic railing arches. (see **Exhibit 7**). The updated bridge rails, though different from the original, are consistent with those previously approved by the Commission in CDP No. 5-24-0218 (Santa Monica Pier Bridge).

Caltrans also proposes to replace existing metal beam guardrails along both travel lanes of Highway 1 with Midwest guardrail systems and is proposing a new approximately 169-foot-long Midwest guardrail, as the new standard requires guardrails for slopes steeper than 4:1, and there is such a slope in this area. **Special Condition 1** requires the siting and design of guardrails to blend with the setting, minimize reflective surfaces, and ensure that final plans demonstrate all rails and guardrails are visually compatible and not solid concrete structures.

Overall, the proposed project would preserve scenic views and enhance the bridge's visual quality through context-appropriate railings and bicycle access, allowing the public to enjoy the landscape. The Commission finds the development, as conditioned, aligns with Section 30251 by protecting coastal views, minimizing landform alterations, and being compatible with the surrounding environment. It also supports Section 30254 by

maintaining State Highway Route 1 as a scenic four-lane road.

J. Archaeological and Tribal Cultural Resources

Coastal Act Section 30244 states: Where development would adversely impact archaeological or paleontological resources as identified by the State Historic Preservation Officer, reasonable mitigation measures shall be required.

The project is near culturally sensitive sites, and the Coastal Commission's 2018 Tribal Consultation Policy acknowledges the California coastal zone as historically indigenous land, emphasizing the protection of Tribal Cultural Resources and promoting communication with tribes. The policy outlines a consultation process aligned with the Commission's mission, recognizing that Tribal Cultural Resources, including sacred sites and objects, may be protected under the Coastal Act.

Caltrans conducted a Tribal Consultation process, including record searches, a pedestrian survey, and a Sacred Lands File request to the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). While no Tribal Cultural Resources were found within the Project limits, nearby Native American cultural sites were identified. Caltrans contacted tribal representatives in January, February, and October 2021, receiving responses from three groups.¹² The proposed development involves a total of approximately 577 cubic yards that have the potential to damage, disturb, and/or unearth archaeological, including tribal cultural resource deposits. In the Project area, sandy loam and Bolsa Silty Loam are the primary soil types. However, to minimize potential impacts to potential archaeological and tribal cultural resource deposits precautionary measures addressing tribal concerns have been incorporated into the project and are described below.

In accordance with the Commission's Tribal Consultation Policy, staff reviewed Caltrans' tribal consultation efforts for the project and, on December 20, 2024 and January 21, 2025, contacted tribal representatives and individuals identified by the NAHC to inform them about the application, offer consultation, and invite comments for the upcoming hearing. On February 27, 2025, staff met with Chairperson Andrew Salas and other representatives from the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians-Kizh Nation to discuss the high sensitivity of the vicinity and familial ties to it, cultural resource treatment and mitigation procedures (particularly regarding human remains if uncovered), and the potential for encountering tribal archaeological resources during the proposed grading work. **Special Condition 7** requires that Caltrans offer tribal monitoring to tribes with known ties to this area and allow any tribe that accepts the invitation to monitor ground-disturbing activities.

Coastal Act Section 30244 requires mitigation for potential impacts on archaeological resources. To mitigate potential risk of impacting archaeological resources, Caltrans has established cultural resource protection measures, including halting work if

¹² More details regarding Caltrans' Tribal Consultation process are available online in Caltrans' Mitigated Negative Declaration at <https://files.ceganet.opr.ca.gov/282176-2/attachment/yW2tHSWrb1-PogUclEsRaeTJ6JkS5YLgZUkhIviWGuj3fHZCn6xDGfDt4upZ9tNkDtKDnBMWceTrzbfc0>

discoveries are made and protocols should human remains be uncovered, as outlined in the AMMMs (PF-Cul-1, PF-CUL-2, and PF-CUL-3)¹³. **Special Condition 7**, requires Caltrans to submit a report to the Executive Director if archaeological resources are found, outlining proposed modifications or mitigation strategies. The Executive Director will then determine if the changes are permissible under the CDP or if an amendment is needed.

Based on Caltrans' cultural research, tribal consultation between Commission staff and tribal nations, and cultural resource protection measures, the Commission finds that the proposed project, as conditioned, includes reasonable mitigation to protect archaeological and paleontological resources consistent with Coastal Act Section 30244.

K. Other

Property Rights

Construction will occur both inside and outside the Caltrans right-of-way (ROW). Temporary construction easements (TCEs) and additional ROW acquisitions, including five partial easements and nine TCEs, are required. These acquisitions will not necessitate business or residence relocations. Activities may include construction access, staging areas, utility relocation, and revegetation. **Special Condition 8** requires that copies of the TCEs, and other sufficient evidence of a legal right, interest, or other entitlement to use the properties for the proposed development as conditioned, be submitted prior to the issuance of this permit. As conditioned, the project meets the requirements of Coastal Act Section 30601.5.

Other Agency Approvals

The project requires additional authorizations/permits from several other agencies, including, at the least, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Water Resources Control Board, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles County Flood Control District, California State Lands Commission and U.S. Coast Guard. To ensure Caltrans obtains all necessary approvals, the Commission imposes **Special Condition 9**, requiring the permittee to submit evidence of all agency approvals before construction begins. The condition requires that any project changes resulting from any other agency approval not be incorporated into the project until the permittee obtains any necessary amendment to this CDP.

Minor Changes and Deadline Extensions.

While the project has been thoroughly planned, minor unforeseen issues may arise during construction. To address this, the Executive Director may approve minor adjustments to special conditions, including deadline extensions or modification of work windows, without a CDP amendment if such adjustments: (1) are deemed reasonable and necessary; and (2) do not adversely impact coastal resources (**Special Condition**

¹³ Caltrans' AMMMs for the project are available online as Appendix E in Caltrans' Mitigated Negative Declaration at <https://files.ceganet.opr.ca.gov/282176-2/attachment/yW2tHSWrB1-PogUclEsRaeTJ6JkS5YLgZUkhlviWGuj3fHZCn6xDGfDt4upZ9tNkDtKDNBMWceTrzbfc0>

10).

Future Development

The project site involves complex coastal resource issues and past Commission approvals, making it essential that any future development be considered in that context. Thus, **Special Condition 11** ensures that all future development related to this project, this project area, and/or this CDP shall remain under the Coastal Commission's CDP jurisdiction. Limited/minor repair, maintenance and improvements may be covered by this CDP if deemed consistent with its scope and intent by the Executive Director and do not have significant adverse impacts to coastal resources. Any development that the Executive Director determines does not meet such criteria shall require its own CDP authorization.

L. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Section 13096 of Title 14 the California Code of Regulations requires that a specific finding be made in conjunction with CDP applications showing the application to be consistent with any applicable requirements of CEQA. Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect that the activity may have on the environment.

Caltrans, acting as the lead agency under CEQA, adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration with a Finding of No Significant Impact and Section 4(f) Evaluation for the project in December 2022. The Coastal Commission's review and analysis of land use proposals has been certified by the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency as being the functional equivalent of environmental review under CEQA (Section 15251(c)). The Commission has reviewed the relevant coastal resource issues of the proposed project and has identified appropriate and necessary modifications to address adverse impacts to such coastal resources. All above findings are incorporated herein in their entirety by reference.

As such, there are no additional feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse environmental effects that approval of the proposed project, as conditioned, will have on the environment within the meaning of CEQA. Thus, if so conditioned, the proposed project will not result in any significant environmental effects, individual or cumulative, for which feasible mitigation measures have not been employed and complies with the applicable requirements of the Coastal Act to conform to CEQA.

APPENDIX A – Substantive File Documents¹⁴

- CDP Application No. 5-25-0013 and associated materials
- City of Long Beach certified Local Coastal Program
- RE: Finding of No Historic Properties Affected with Minor Phasing for the San Gabriel River Bridge Rail Upgrade and Widening Project in Los Angeles County prepared by Caltrans, dated February 2022
- Stormwater Data Report prepared by Caltrans, dated February 2022
- PAED Hazardous Waste Re-Assessment for Project Report prepared by Caltrans, dated March 2022
- Natural Environment Study prepared Caltrans, dated April 2022
- Air Quality Technical Memorandum for the State Route 1 (SR-1) San Gabriel River Bridge Improvement Project in Los Angeles County prepared by Caltrans, dated April 2022
- LA-1 San Gabriel River Bridge Widening Project (PM 0.98) Sea Level Rise Analysis EA 07-32090 prepared by Caltrans, dated July 2022
- Mitigated Negative Declaration/Finding of No Significant Impact and Section 4(f) Evaluation prepared by California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), dated December 2022
- Jurisdictional Delineation Report prepared by Caltrans, dated August 2023

¹⁴ These documents are available for review in the Commission's South Coast District office.