

CHAPTER 3
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY ACT EVALUATION

3.0 CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT EVALUATION

The project is subject to federal and state, as well as City and County of Monterey, environmental review requirements because the City of Monterey and California Department of Transportation propose the use of federal funds and/or the project requires a federal approval action. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). California Department of Transportation is the project proponent and the lead agency under California Environmental Quality Act. Because of Federal funding, the project is also subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. The Federal Highway Administration and the California Department of Transportation agree that under the National Environmental Policy Act, the project qualifies for a Programmatic Categorical Exclusion; therefore, this document only pertains to the California Environmental Quality Act.

The California Environmental Quality Act requires the California Department of Transportation to identify each “significant effect on the environment” resulting from the project and ways to mitigate each significant effect. If the project may have a significant effect on any environmental resource, then an environmental impact report must be prepared. Each and every significant effect on the environment must be disclosed in the environmental impact report and mitigated if feasible. In addition, the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines list a number of mandatory findings of significance, which also require the preparation of an environmental impact report. This chapter discusses the effects of this project and California Environmental Quality Act significance.

3.1 Significant Environmental Effects of the Proposed Project

The California Environmental Quality Act Checklist was completed for this project and is included in Appendix E. When considering the questions in the Checklist, Alternative 3A (four-lane roadway with a five-legged intersection with SR 1/17-Mile Drive) was used as the proposed project. Table 3-1 presents a summary of significant environmental effects associated with the project and the level of significance after mitigation or abatement measures. The table also directs the reader to the appropriate section of this Environmental Impact Report for a detailed discussion of those effects.

Table 3-1. Summary of Significant Environmental Effects

Significant Environmental Effect (from CEQA checklist)	Discussion	Significant after mitigation?
<i>Visual</i>		
Significant impact on a scenic vista. Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcropping, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.	The project would permanently change the visual environment. Page 2-24	No. See page 2-30
Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.		
<i>Biological Resources</i>		
Have a significant impact, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.	The project would eliminate a portion of Monterey pine forest. Pages 2-57 and 2-61 Elimination of the Monterey pine forest could affect the Monterey Dusky-footed Woodrat.	No. See pages 2-62 and 2-67
Have a significant impact on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.	Pages 2-61 and 2-67	
<i>Noise</i>		
Expose persons to or generate noise in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies.	Construction equipment could cause excessive noise. This is a temporary construction-related effect. Page 2-70	No. See page 2-70

3.2 Unavoidable Significant Environmental Effects

As shown in Table 3-1, all effects can be mitigated to less-than-significant levels. The proposed project would have no unavoidable significant effects.

3.3 Mitigation Measures for Significant Impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act

Mitigation measures are provided for significant effects to environmental resources. Table 3-1 identifies the location in this Environmental Impact Report where these mitigation measures are discussed.